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THE DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE
RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

Volume VII

Ratification of the Constitution
by the States

MASSACHUSETTS

[4]

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WE, the People of the United States, in a more perfect Union, establish Justice, Tranquility, provide for the common and secure the General Welfare, and secure Liberty to Ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain a Constitution for the United States of America.

ARTICLE I.

Sec. 1. ALL legislative powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Sec. 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of members chosen every second year by the people of the several states, and the electors in each state shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislature.

No person shall be a representative who shall not have attained to the age of twenty-five years, and been seven years a citizen of the United States, and who shall not, when elected, be an inhabitant of that state in which he shall be chosen.

Representatives and direct taxes shall be apportioned among the several states which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers, which shall be determined by adding to the whole number of free persons, including those bound to service for a term of years, and excluding Indians not taxed, three-fifths of all other persons. The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of ten years, in such manner as they shall by law direct. The number of representatives shall not exceed one for every thirty thousand, but each state shall have at least one representative; and until such enumeration shall be made, the state of New-Hampshire shall be en-

RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION BY THE STATES

On 6 February 1788 the Massachusetts Convention ratified the new Constitution, making Massachusetts the sixth pillar in the "Great or Grand Federal Superstructure." This fourth and last volume on Massachusetts continues the story of the ratification struggle with a wealth of material commenting on the Convention's activities. The bulk of the volume, however, covers the aftermath of ratification.

Dozens of private letters written by Massachusetts Convention delegates and observers are a superb source for enhancing our understanding of the Convention. Federalists and Antifederalists, mainly the former, wrote allies in Massachusetts and other states, especially New York and Virginia where ratification was doubtful. They described the prospects of ratification, the principal issues debated, the composition of the parties for and against the Constitution, the personalities and abilities of the principal speakers, the political maneuvers and ploys within the Convention, the political and social activities of the delegates outside the Convention, the composition and behavior of the spectators in the galleries, and the efforts of non delegates—from Massachusetts and other states, such as New Hampshire and Rhode Island—to sway the delegates. Newspapers, diaries, and journals supplement these letters. The diaries and journals provide data on travel to and from the Convention and describe the bitterly cold and snowy conditions affecting the delegates.

Some of the most interesting letters dramatically explain how the Federalist caucus cautiously and cleverly persuaded Convention President John Hancock to endorse and to propose—as his own—amendments to the Constitution that would be recommended to the first Congress under the Constitution. Ratification would not have been possible without Hancock's support of these commendatory amendments. Other fascinating letters illustrate how an express system was established to rush the news of Massachusetts ratification to Poughkeepsie, where the New York legislature was debating whether to call a convention to consider the Constitution.

Many documents describe the widespread dissemination of reports of ratification; the celebrations of Massachusetts ratification; the acquiescence of some members of the Convention's minority; the failure of a Convention-appointed committee to draft an address to the people of Massachusetts explaining the Constitution's principles, the objections to it, and the reasons for its adoption; the post-Convention session of the outgoing state legislature that revealed continued hostility to the Constitution; and the ongoing public and private debate over the Constitution.

(continued on back endflap)

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VOLUME VII

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Organization

The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution is divided into:

- (1) *Constitutional Documents and Records, 1776–1787* (1 volume),
- (2) *Ratification of the Constitution by the States* (15 volumes),
- (3) *Commentaries on the Constitution: Public and Private* (6 volumes),
- (4) *The Bill of Rights* (1 or 2 volumes).

Constitutional Documents and Records, 1776–1787.

This introductory volume, a companion to all of the other volumes, traces the constitutional development of the United States during its first twelve years. Cross-references to it appear frequently in other volumes when contemporaries refer to events and proposals from 1776 to 1787. The documents include: (1) the Declaration of Independence, (2) the Articles of Confederation, (3) ratification of the Articles, (4) proposed amendments to the Articles, proposed grants of power to Congress, and ordinances for the Western Territory, (5) the calling of the Constitutional Convention, (6) the appointment of Convention delegates, (7) the resolutions and draft constitutions of the Convention, (8) the report of the Convention, and (9) the Confederation Congress and the Constitution.

Ratification of the Constitution by the States.

The volumes are arranged in the order in which the states considered the Constitution. Although there are variations, the documents for each state are organized into the following groups: (1) commentaries from the adjournment of the Constitutional Convention to the meeting of the state legislature that called the state convention, (2) the proceedings of the legislature in calling the convention, (3) commentaries from the call of the convention until its meeting, (4) the election of convention delegates, (5) the proceedings of the convention, and (6) post-convention documents.

Microfiche Supplements to Ratification of the Constitution by the States.

With the publication of this volume (RCS:Mass., Vol. 3) separate microfiche supplements will no longer be produced. Instead, all documents in Mfm:Mass. (as well as all past microfiche supplements—Mfm:Pa., Del., N.J., Ga., Conn., and Va.) have been placed on the publisher's website: www.shsw.wisc.edu/ratification. This new method of publication should make the supplemental documents more easily accessible.

Much of the material for each state is repetitious or peripheral but still valuable. Literal transcripts of this material are placed on microfiche supplements. Occasionally, photographic copies of significant manuscripts are also included.

The types of documents in the supplements are:

- (1) newspaper items that repeat arguments, examples of which are printed in the state volumes,
- (2) pamphlets that circulated primarily within one state and that are not printed in the state volumes or in *Commentaries*,
- (3) letters that contain supplementary material about politics and social relationships,
- (4) photographic copies of petitions with the names of signers,
- (5) photographic copies of manuscripts such as notes of debates, and
- (6) miscellaneous documents such as election certificates, attendance records, pay vouchers and other financial records, etc.

Commentaries on the Constitution: Public and Private.

This series contains newspaper items, pamphlets, and broadsides that circulated regionally or nationally. It also includes some private letters that give the writers' opinions of the Constitution in general or that report on the prospects for ratification in several states. Except for some grouped items, documents are arranged chronologically and are numbered consecutively throughout the six volumes. There are frequent cross-references between *Commentaries* and the state series.

The Bill of Rights.

The public and private debate on the Constitution continued in several states after ratification. It was centered on the issue of whether there should be amendments to the Constitution and the manner in which amendments should be proposed—by a second constitutional convention or by the new U.S. Congress. A bill of rights was proposed in the U.S. Congress on 8 June 1789. Twelve amendments were adopted on 25 September and were sent to the states on 2 October. This volume(s) will contain the documents related to the public and private debate over amendments, to the proposal of amendments by Congress, and to the ratification of the Bill of Rights by the states.

Editorial Procedures

With a few exceptions all documents are transcribed literally. Obvious slips of the pen and errors in typesetting are silently corrected. When spelling or capitalization is unclear, modern usage is followed. Superscripts and interlineated material are lowered to the line. Crossed-out words are retained when significant.

Brackets are used for editorial insertions. Conjectural readings are enclosed in brackets with a question mark. Illegible and missing words are indicated by dashes enclosed in brackets. However, when the author's intent is obvious, illegible or missing material, up to five characters in length, has been silently provided. Because of the difficulty of reading Jeremy Belknap's minutes of the Massachusetts Convention debates, all thorns, symbols, and tildes have been expanded and placed within angle brackets. Belknap's abbreviations, when unclear, have been expanded, with the added letters placed within square brackets.

All headings are supplied by the editors. Headings for letters contain the names of the writer and the recipient and the place and date of writing. Headings for newspapers contain the pseudonym, if any, and the name and date of the newspaper. Headings for broadsides and pamphlets contain the pseudonym and a shortened form of the title. Full titles of broadsides and pamphlets and information on authorship are given in editorial notes. Headings for public meetings contain the place and date of the meeting.

Salutations, closings of letters, addresses, endorsements, and dockets are deleted unless they provide important information, which is then either retained in the document or placed in editorial notes.

Contemporary footnotes and marginal notes are printed after the text of the document and immediately preceding editorial footnotes. Symbols, such as stars, asterisks, and daggers have been replaced by superscripts (a), (b), (c), etc.

Many documents, particularly letters, are excerpted when they contain material that is not directly relevant to ratification. When longer excerpts or entire documents have been printed elsewhere, or are included in the microfiche supplements, this fact is noted.

General Ratification Chronology, 1786–1791

1786

21 January	Virginia calls meeting to consider granting Congress power to regulate trade.
11–14 September	Annapolis Convention.
20 September	Congress receives Annapolis Convention report recommending that states elect delegates to a convention at Philadelphia in May 1787.
11 October	Congress appoints committee to consider Annapolis Convention report.
23 November	Virginia authorizes election of delegates to Convention at Philadelphia.
23 November	New Jersey elects delegates.
4 December	Virginia elects delegates.
30 December	Pennsylvania elects delegates.

1787

6 January	North Carolina elects delegates.
17 January	New Hampshire elects delegates.
3 February	Delaware elects delegates.
10 February	Georgia elects delegates.
21 February	Congress calls Constitutional Convention.
22 February	Massachusetts authorizes election of delegates.
28 February	New York authorizes election of delegates.
3 March	Massachusetts elects delegates.
6 March	New York elects delegates.
8 March	South Carolina elects delegates.
14 March	Rhode Island refuses to elect delegates.
23 April–26 May	Maryland elects delegates.
5 May	Rhode Island again refuses to elect delegates.
14 May	Convention meets; quorum not present.
14–17 May	Connecticut elects delegates.
25 May	Convention begins with quorum of seven states.
16 June	Rhode Island again refuses to elect delegates.
27 June	New Hampshire renews election of delegates.
13 July	Congress adopts Northwest Ordinance.
6 August	Committee of Detail submits draft constitution to Convention.
12 September	Committee of Style submits draft constitution to Convention.
17 September	Constitution signed and Convention adjourns <i>sine die</i> .
20 September	Congress reads Constitution.
26–28 September	Congress debates Constitution.
28 September	Congress transmits Constitution to the states.
28–29 September	Pennsylvania calls state convention.
17 October	Connecticut calls state convention.
25 October	Massachusetts calls state convention.

26 October	Georgia calls state convention.
31 October	Virginia calls state convention.
1 November	New Jersey calls state convention.
6 November	Pennsylvania elects delegates to state convention.
10 November	Delaware calls state convention.
12 November	Connecticut elects delegates to state convention.
19 November-	Massachusetts elects delegates to state convention.
7 January 1788	
20 November-	Pennsylvania Convention.
15 December	
26 November	Delaware elects delegates to state convention.
27 November-	Maryland calls state convention.
1 December	
27 November-	New Jersey elects delegates to state convention.
1 December	
3-7 December	Delaware Convention.
4-5 December	Georgia elects delegates to state convention.
6 December	North Carolina calls state convention.
7 December	Delaware Convention ratifies Constitution, 30 to 0.
11-20 December	New Jersey Convention.
12 December	Pennsylvania Convention ratifies Constitution, 46 to 23.
14 December	New Hampshire calls state convention.
18 December	New Jersey Convention ratifies Constitution, 38 to 0.
25 December-	Georgia Convention.
5 January 1788	
31 December	Georgia Convention ratifies Constitution, 26 to 0.
31 December-	New Hampshire elects delegates to state convention.
12 February 1788	

1788

3-9 January	Connecticut Convention.
9 January	Connecticut Convention ratifies Constitution, 128 to 40.
9 January-7 February	Massachusetts Convention.
19 January	South Carolina calls state convention.
1 February	New York calls state convention.
6 February	Massachusetts Convention ratifies Constitution, 187 to 168, and proposes amendments.
13-22 February	New Hampshire Convention: first session.
1 March	Rhode Island calls statewide referendum on Constitution.
3-27 March	Virginia elects delegates to state convention.
24 March	Rhode Island referendum: voters reject Constitution, 2,711 to 239.
28-29 March	North Carolina elects delegates to state convention.
7 April	Maryland elects delegates to state convention.
11-12 April	South Carolina elects delegates to state convention.
21-29 April	Maryland Convention.
26 April	Maryland Convention ratifies Constitution, 63 to 11.
29 April-3 May	New York elects delegates to state convention.
12-24 May	South Carolina Convention.
23 May	South Carolina Convention ratifies Constitution, 149 to 73, and proposes amendments.

2–27 June	Virginia Convention.
17 June–26 July	New York Convention.
18–21 June	New Hampshire Convention: second session.
21 June	New Hampshire Convention ratifies Constitution, 57 to 47, and proposes amendments.
25 June	Virginia Convention ratifies Constitution, 89 to 79.
27 June	Virginia Convention proposes amendments.
2 July	New Hampshire ratification read in Congress; Congress appoints committee to report an act for putting the Constitution into operation.
21 July–4 August	First North Carolina Convention.
26 July	New York Convention Circular Letter calls for second constitutional convention.
26 July	New York Convention ratifies Constitution, 30 to 27, and proposes amendments.
2 August	North Carolina Convention proposes amendments and refuses to ratify until amendments are submitted to Congress and to a second constitutional convention.
13 September	Congress sets dates for election of President and meeting of new government under the Constitution.
20 November	Virginia requests Congress under the Constitution to call a second constitutional convention.
30 November	North Carolina calls second state convention.

1789

4 March	First Federal Congress convenes.
1 April	House of Representatives attains quorum.
6 April	Senate attains quorum.
30 April	George Washington inaugurated first President.
8 June	James Madison proposes Bill of Rights in Congress.
21–22 August	North Carolina elects delegates to second state convention.
25 September	Congress adopts twelve amendments to Constitution to be submitted to the states.
16–23 November	Second North Carolina Convention.
21 November	Second North Carolina Convention ratifies Constitution, 194 to 77, and proposes amendments.

1790

17 January	Rhode Island calls state convention.
8 February	Rhode Island elects delegates to state convention.
1–6 March	Rhode Island Convention: first session.
24–29 May	Rhode Island Convention: second session.
29 May	Rhode Island Convention ratifies Constitution, 34 to 32, and proposes amendments.

1791

15 December	Bill of Rights adopted.
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Calendar for the Years 1787-1788

1787

<p>JANUARY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S M T W T F S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 6</p> <p>7 8 9 10 11 12 13</p> <p>14 15 16 17 18 19 20</p> <p>21 22 23 24 25 26 27</p> <p>28 29 30 31</p>	<p>FEBRUARY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S M T W T F S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p> <p>4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>11 12 13 14 15 16 17</p> <p>18 19 20 21 22 23 24</p> <p>25 26 27 28</p>	<p>MARCH</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S M T W T F S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3</p> <p>4 5 6 7 8 9 10</p> <p>11 12 13 14 15 16 17</p> <p>18 19 20 21 22 23 24</p> <p>25 26 27 28 29 30 31</p>	<p>APRIL</p> <p style="text-align: center;">S M T W T F S</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1 2 3 4 5 6 7</p> <p>8 9 10 11 12 13 14</p> <p>15 16 17 18 19 20 21</p> <p>22 23 24 25 26 27 28</p> <p>29 30</p>
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1788

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Symbols

FOR MANUSCRIPTS, MANUSCRIPT DEPOSITORIES,
SHORT TITLES, AND CROSS-REFERENCES

Manuscripts

Dft	Draft
DS	Document Signed
FC	File Copy
MS	Manuscript
RC	Recipient's Copy
Tr	Translation from Foreign Language

Manuscript Depositories

CtY	Yale University
DLC	Library of Congress
DNA	National Archives
M-Ar	Massachusetts Archives, Boston
MB	Boston Public Library
MH	Harvard University
MHi	Massachusetts Historical Society
MWA	American Antiquarian Society
MeHi	Maine Historical Society
NN	New York Public Library

Short Titles

Abbot, <i>Washington</i>	W. W. Abbot, ed., <i>The Papers of George Washington: Confederation Series</i> (6 vols., Charlottesville, Va., 1992–1997).
Adams, <i>Defence of the Constitutions</i>	John Adams, <i>A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America . . .</i> (3 vols., London, 1787–1788).
Allen, <i>JQA Diary</i>	David Grayson Allen et al., eds., <i>Diary of John Quincy Adams</i> (Cambridge, Mass., 1981–).
Backus, <i>Diary</i>	William G. McLoughlin, ed., <i>The Diary of Isaac Backus</i> (3 vols., Providence, R.I., 1979).

- Belknap Correspondence* "The Belknap Papers," *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, 5th series, Vols. II–III (Boston, 1877).
- Butterfield, JA L. H. Butterfield, ed., *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* (4 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1962).
- Diary*
- Convention Debates* *Debates, Resolutions and Other Proceedings, of the Convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Convened at Boston, on the 9th of January, 1788, and Continued until the 7th of February Following, for the Purpose of Assenting to and Ratifying the Constitution Recommended by the Grand Federal Convention. Together with the Yeas and Nays on the Decision of the Grand Question. To Which the Federal Constitution Is Prefixed* (Boston, 1788).
- Convention Debates* *Debates and Proceedings in the Convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Held in the Year 1788, and Which Finally Ratified the Constitution of the United States* (Boston, 1856).
- (1856)
- DHFFE Merrill Jensen, Robert A. Becker, and Gordon DenBoer, eds., *The Documentary History of the First Federal Elections, 1788–1790* (4 vols., Madison, Wis., 1976–1989).
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- King, *King* Charles R. King, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King . . .* (6 vols., New York, 1894–1900).

- Locke, *Two Treatises* John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government: A Critical Edition with an Introduction and Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Peter Laslett (Cambridge, Eng., 1964). The first edition was printed in 1689.
- Montesquieu, *Spirit of Laws* Charles, Baron de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws* (Translated from the French by Thomas Nugent, 5th ed., 2 vols., London, 1773). Originally published in Geneva in 1748.
- Rutland, *Madison* Robert A. Rutland et al., eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Volumes VIII– (Chicago and Charlottesville, 1973–).
- Shaw-Shoemaker Ralph R. Shaw, Richard H. Shoemaker, and Frances P. Newton, *American Bibliography: A Preliminary Checklist, 1801 to 1819* (23 vols., New York and Metuchen, N.J., 1958–1983).
- Sibley's *Harvard Graduates* Clifford K. Shipton, Conrad Edick Wright, and Edward W. Hanson, *Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College [1690–1774]* (15 vols., Cambridge, Mass., and Boston, 1933–1999).
- Smith, *Letters* Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774–1789* (25 vols., Washington, D.C., 1976–1998).
- Thorpe Francis N. Thorpe, ed., *The Federal and State Constitutions . . .* (7 vols., Washington, D.C., 1909).

**Cross-references to Volumes of
The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution**

- CC References to *Commentaries on the Constitution* are cited as “CC” followed by the number of the document. For example: “CC:25.”
- CDR References to the first volume, titled *Constitutional Documents and Records, 1776–1787*, are cited as “CDR” followed by the page number. For example: “CDR, 325.”
- RCS References to the series of volumes titled *Ratification of the Constitution by the States* are cited as “RCS” followed by the abbreviation of the state and the page number. For example: “RCS:Pa., 325.”

Mfm

References to the microform supplements to the "RCS" volumes are cited as "Mfm" followed by the abbreviation of the state and the number of the document. For example: "Mfm:Pa. 25." All documents in the microfiche supplements are now available on the publisher's website: www.shsw.wisc.edu/ratification.

Massachusetts Chronology, 1773–1790

1773

16 December Boston Tea Party.

1774

19 January News of Boston Tea Party reaches London.
March–June Parliament passes Intolerable Acts.
13 May General Thomas Gage arrives in Boston as royal governor.
17 June General Court elects five delegates to First Continental Congress.
7 October–10 December First Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.
5 December Provincial Congress elects five delegates to First Continental Congress.

1775

1 February–29 May Second Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.
6 February Provincial Congress elects five delegates to Second Continental Congress.
31 May–19 July Third Provincial Congress of Massachusetts.
9 June Second Continental Congress recommends that people of Massachusetts revert to Charter of 1691.
20 June Provincial Congress acts to dissolve itself and calls for election of house of representatives.
19 July General Court meets.

1776

7 June Motion in Continental Congress for independence.
2 July Congress declares the colonies independent.
4 July Congress adopts Declaration of Independence.

1777

17 June–6 March 1778 Massachusetts legislature transforms itself into a constitutional convention.
15 November Congress adopts Articles of Confederation and sends them to states for their approval.

1778

5 March Proposed state constitution submitted to freemen (not approved).
10 March General Court instructs delegates to Continental Congress to sign Articles of Confederation with recommended amendments.

- 23 June Continental Congress rejects Massachusetts amendments to Articles of Confederation.
- 9 July Massachusetts delegates to Congress sign Articles of Confederation.

1779

- 1 September-
2 March 1780 Massachusetts constitutional convention drafts state constitution and submits it to towns.

1780

- 15 June Massachusetts Constitution declared ratified.

1782

- 4 May General Court approves Impost of 1781.

1783

- 20 October General Court approves Impost of 1783.

1784

- 1 July General Court grants Congress commercial powers for fifteen years.
- 13 November Massachusetts cedes western lands to Congress.

1785

- 13 April Report of congressional committee accepting Massachusetts land cession.
- 19 April Massachusetts delegates to Congress deed land cession to Congress.
- 2 July General Court approves 1783 population amendment to Articles of Confederation.

1786

- 24 March Appointment of Annapolis Convention commissioners (Caleb Davis, Benjamin Goodhue, Tristram Dalton, and John Coffin Jones—all eventually resign).
- 17 June Appointment of Annapolis Convention commissioners (Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Stephen Higginson, and George Cabot—all eventually resign).
- 5 July General Court grants Congress supplementary funds requested in 1783.
- 6 July General Court adopts resolution authorizing Governor and Council to fill vacancies taking place among Annapolis Convention commissioners.
- July-August County conventions meet in Berkshire, Bristol, Hampshire, Middlesex, and Worcester counties recommending debtor relief and new state constitution.
- August-September Farmers in armed groups close courts in five counties.

- 11 August Governor and Council appoint Thomas Cushing an Annapolis Convention commissioner.
- post-24 August Governor and Council appoint Samuel Breck an Annapolis Convention commissioner.
- 11–14 September Annapolis Convention meets and calls for a convention to meet in Philadelphia on 14 May 1787.
- 30 November New York and Massachusetts settle land dispute.

1787

- 25 January Militia under General William Shepard routs Shaysites at Springfield.
- 4 February Militia under General Benjamin Lincoln routs Shaysites at Petersham (end of Shays's Rebellion).
- 21 February Congress calls for Constitutional Convention to meet in Philadelphia.
- 22 February General Court adopts resolution authorizing appointment of delegates to Constitutional Convention.
- 3 March General Court appoints delegates to Constitutional Convention (Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham, Rufus King, and Caleb Strong; Dana does not attend).
- 10 March General Court repeals resolution of 22 February.
- 10 March General Court adopts resolution requesting Governor to grant commissions to delegates to Constitutional Convention.
- 9 April Governor James Bowdoin issues commissions to delegates to Constitutional Convention.
- 14 May Constitutional Convention meets, but lacks a quorum.
- 21 May Rufus King first attends Constitutional Convention.
- 25 May Constitutional Convention attains quorum.
- 28 May Nathaniel Gorham and Caleb Strong first attend Constitutional Convention.
- 29 May Elbridge Gerry first attends Constitutional Convention.
- 1 June John Hancock becomes governor.
- 27 August Caleb Strong leaves Constitutional Convention by this date.
- 12 September Elbridge Gerry's motion in Constitutional Convention for committee to consider a bill of rights is defeated unanimously.
- 17 September Constitution signed in Constitutional Convention by Nathaniel Gorham and Rufus King; Gerry refuses to sign.
- 25 September First printing of Constitution in Massachusetts.
- 17 October–24 November General Court meets in Boston.
- 18 October Governor Hancock delivers Constitution to General Court.
- 18 October Elbridge Gerry writes to General Court explaining why he did not sign Constitution.
- 20–25 October General Court debates and calls state convention.
- 24 October James Wilson's speech of 6 October first printed in Massachusetts.
- 31 October Massachusetts Senate reads Gerry's 18 October letter.

- 2 November Massachusetts House reads Gerry's letter.
 3 November Gerry's letter first printed.
 19 November-
 7 January 1788 Towns elect delegates to state convention.
 21 November George Mason's objections first printed in Massachusetts.
 23 November First number of "Agrippa" printed in Massachusetts.
 3 December Benjamin Franklin's speech to Constitutional Convention printed in Massachusetts.

1788

- 7 January Boston tradesmen meeting at Green Dragon Tavern.
 9 January-7 February Massachusetts Convention meets in Boston.
 16 January *Massachusetts Centinel* prints first pillars illustration.
 30 January John Hancock attends Convention for first time.
 31 January Hancock proposes conciliatory proposition recommending amendments.
 6 February Convention ratifies Constitution 187-168 with nine recommendatory amendments.
 8 February Boston procession celebrates ratification of Constitution.
 16 February Governor Hancock transmits copies of Form of Ratification to other states.
 27 February-1 April General Court meets.
 21-24 November General Court elects Caleb Strong and Tristram Dalton as U.S. Senators.
 18 December Election of U.S. Representatives (4 of 8 elected).

1789

- 29 January Election of U.S. Representatives (2 of 8 elected).
 2 March Election of U.S. Representative (1 of 8 elected).
 11 May Election of last U.S. Representative.
 8 June James Madison proposes Bill of Rights in U.S. House of Representatives.
 25 September Congress approves 12 proposed amendments to Constitution and submits them to states.

1790

- 14 January Governor Hancock transmits 12 amendments to Constitution to the General Court.
 29 January Massachusetts Senate adopts 10 of 12 amendments.
 2 February Massachusetts House of Representatives adopts 9 of 12 amendments.
 9 March General Court adjourns without adopting amendments.

Officers of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts 1787-1788

Governor

John Hancock

Lieutenant Governor

Thomas Cushing

Council

Nathan Cushing

Edward Cutts

Thomas Dawes

John Frost

Jonathan Greenleaf

Israel Hutchinson

Peter Penniman

Oliver Phelps

James Sullivan

Secretary

John Avery, Jr.

Treasurer

Alexander Hodgdon

Commissary General

Richard Devens

Commissary of Pensioners

John Lucas

Comptroller General

Leonard Jarvis

Attorney General

Robert Treat Paine

Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court

William Cushing, Chief Justice

Nathaniel Peaslee Sargeant

David Sewall

Increase Sumner

Francis Dana

Charles Cushing, Clerk

John Tucker, Clerk

Judge of the Admiralty Court

Nathan Cushing

Annapolis Convention

Samuel Breck**

George Cabot*

Thomas Cushing**

Tristram Dalton*

Francis Dana**

Caleb Davis*

Elbridge Gerry*

Benjamin Goodhue*

Stephen Higginson*

John Coffin Jones*

John Lowell*

Theophilus Parsons*

James Sullivan*

* Resigned appointment.

** Failed to arrive in time for convention.

Delegates to Congress

Elected 27 June 1786

Nathan Dane

Nathaniel Gorham

Samuel Holten

Rufus King

Elected 27 June 1787

Nathan Dane

Samuel A. Otis

Theodore Sedgwick

George Thatcher

Confederation Secretary at War

Henry Knox

Confederation Board of Treasury

Samuel Osgood

Constitutional Convention

Francis Dana*

Elbridge Gerry

Nathaniel Gorham

Rufus King

Caleb Strong**

* Did not attend.

**Left Convention before 27 August.

U.S. Minister to Great Britain

John Adams

**The Ratification of the
Constitution by
the States**

MASSACHUSETTS

[4]

V. THE MASSACHUSETTS CONVENTION (Continued)

COMMENTARIES: PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

3 January–4 March 1788

Dummer Sewall Journal, 3 January–12 February 1788¹

Dummer Sewall (1737–1832)—a native of York, Maine, and a Bath, Maine, farmer and lumber mill owner—was a veteran of the French and Indian War and a lieutenant colonel in the Massachusetts militia during the Revolution. Sewall held offices in Georgetown prior to the establishment of Bath in 1781. He was town clerk of Bath, 1783–93, 1794–96, treasurer, 1781–96, and postmaster, 1791–1806. He also represented Georgetown in the state House of Representatives, 1775–76, and Lincoln County in the state Senate, 1788–89, 1790–91. In the Massachusetts Convention, Sewall served on the committee of twenty-five that considered John Hancock's proposition to ratify the Constitution with recommendatory amendments and he voted to ratify.

Sewall kept a journal from the time he left Bath for the Massachusetts Convention until he returned home. The journal gives his itinerary, the travel conditions, the weather, the identity of his traveling companions, the taverns in which he stayed, the Convention's proceedings, and his activities outside the Convention, especially the invitations he received and the religious services he attended. (A long-time deacon of the Bath Congregational Church, Sewall went to Congregational and Baptist church services.)

On 3 January 1788 Sewall and fellow Convention delegate Nathaniel Wyman of Georgetown, Maine, left Bath on horseback for the Convention in Boston. They passed through the Maine towns of North Yarmouth, Wells, and York, encountering other Maine Convention delegates along the way. Sewall and Wyman took a ferry across the Piscataqua River to Portsmouth, N.H., then rode to Salisbury, Mass., where they took a ferry across the Merrimack River. After disembarking from the ferry at Newburyport, they continued their journey on horseback through the Massachusetts towns of Rowley, Ipswich, Danvers, and Lynn. At Lynn, on 8 January, Sewall and Wyman stayed the night at a tavern, with about twenty-three other Convention delegates.

After providing for the stabling of their horses outside of Boston, Sewall and Wyman arrived in that town on 9 January, at about 10:00 A.M., and, with many other delegates, took lodgings at Captain Daggett's on Ann Street. Shortly after his arrival, Sewall went to the State House, where the Convention was already in session. He attended the Convention every day until 7 February, the day it adjourned. On 8 February Sewall described the Boston procession celebrating ratification. At about 4:00 P.M. that day, Sewall, Wyman, and Isaac Snow of Harpswell, Maine, left to return home. They traveled through Lynn and Newburyport, where they took the ferry to Salisbury. They journeyed through the New Hampshire towns of Hampton Falls, Greenland, and Portsmouth, again using the ferry at the latter place. In Maine, they went through York, Falmouth, and North Yarmouth. On 12 February, between 7:00 and 8:00 P.M., Sewall arrived at home in Bath.

1788 Janur. 3d, Mr. Nathl. Wimond and my self about 11 oClock mounted our horses at Bath in order to Join the Delegates at Boston, the large fall of Snow that fell the Day before made our traveling heavy, nevertheless about 8 oClock at Night got to the Widow Mitchels² where the Snow the day before was about 4 Intches—

4th. Mounted about Sunrise the Wind at N W Snow very cold at Sunset passed Sawco [Saco] Bridge, traveled to Kenebunk, to our surprise no entertainment at Kimbels or either of them went on to Mr. Barnard where Mr. Fox & Mr. Mc.Lallen³—

5 Brakfast & mounted very cold, Rode on at one called at Capt. Moses Sewalls,⁴ put up—

6 attended Mr. Lyman Preaching⁵—exceeding cold—visi[t]ed my Brothers found them well.⁶

7 after brakfast mounted for Boston, when we came to Porthmouth Ferry, the Boat was ready & we had a good passage, Rode on in pleasant Sun shine got Salsbury Ferry just before Sun set, the boat was ready so that we did not wate one minute, Colo. Cut⁷ passd the Ferry in the same boat, we traveled on to Rowly put up at Juets [i.e., Jewett's]—

8 Mounted early rode to Ipswage [Ipswich], Brakft. at Mr. Homes while there it began to snow, we again mounted the snow increesd. & the Wind at about S.E when we got to Danvis [Danvers] the Snow began to melt & turn to rain the Wind still Increesing & before we arived to an Inn it belw a gale very velolent we got to Mr. Newels about 12, very wet other Members of Convention were ariving till Dark at which time about 25 were in the House, we all Lodged comfortably,⁸

9 before Day some began to arise, brakfast by candel light & mounted, snowd with the wind about N.W. the snow being all swepd away with the rain the day & night before, rode on about 7 Mile to Mr. Prats where we engaged to keep Horses & a Man to repair to FonnesFerry Bridge to carry them back by this time it seased snowing, passed the Bridges & entered Boston about 10 oClock, spoke for lodgings at a Capt. Daggat's,⁹ then repaired to the State House where a Number had Assembled & appointed a Moderator pro tempoor,¹⁰ a Committee was appointed to recive the Certificats & examin the same, Mr. Minot appointed Secretary & assigned 4 [o'clock] afternoon to come to the Choise of Presedent & Vice Presedent, Ajorned—Met, Mr. Handcok Elected Presedent & Mr. W: Cushing Vice Presedent—

10 Afternoon Ajorned to Mr. Thatchers Meeting¹¹

11 after 1½ days trial found it so constructed that those speeking could not be heard—

12 Meet at the State House that day finishd. the examination of Elections, very corsd.

13 Attended Mr. Stilman's Meeting¹²—

14 After a long Debate determined to go into a free Discussing or Conversation on the subject of the Federal Constitution by paragraphs

15 Contested the right of free Election & utility of Biannual Elections &c.—

16 This day Contested the security of Elections. this morning snowed afternoon rained wind S.E the Harbour all Froze over—last night Mr. Strong, King, Mitchel & Merrell Visited us Mr. N: Wymon, Mr. I: Snow, Mr. J: Dunlap, Mr. Low & myself our Conversation was free & open, Dear Mr. Stilman has paid us 2 Visits¹³—

17 This day renewed the Debate of Representation the afternoon adjourned to Mr. Belnap's Meet[ing house]¹⁴ for the convenance of spectators, passed to next paragraph of qualifications—then to Taxations, a very pleasant day, Dined at Mr. Kneeland¹⁵ Recd. 40 Do. from Mr. Parker for [Dad. P?] in B: B. [i.e., Boothbay]—went to Mr. Gears [Gair] Meeting this evening Mr. Niles Preached pungently¹⁶—

18 This day pursued the matter—

19 This day very pleasant morning, but soon come on thick of snow, uneasiness arose about Mr. Gare [Elbridge Gerry] offering his sentiments adjourned till Monday 10 o'clock—Colo. Sumner¹⁷ Invited me to Milton, it rained till midnight, arrived at Milton about 8 o'clock—

20 Went to hear Mr. Robbins,¹⁸ cleared off cold in the afternoon, attended the funeral of Mr. Randel—

21 Very pleasant morning, returned to Boston, & attended the Debates—

22 Settled Mr. Combes account with the Receiver General—Pleasant weather—

23 Last night fell about 8 inches of Snow cleared off cold, good arguments in favour—very cold, Mr. Lincoln buried.

24 This forenoon spent in fruitless Debate whether the Constitution be taken up at large, afternoon continued the Deb[ate], Cold & Clear—

25 This Day the Debates renewed Colo. Smith of Lanesboro exceeded all in favour—Last night high wind & Snow & this morning rained some—

26 The Debates continued on the Importation of Slaves—Cold—went to see our Horses—

27 Went to Mr. Stilman's meeting, the afternoon Dor. Maning Preached excellent—the evening Mr. Baccus preached—Cold, fare—

28 The Debates renewed, ha bus corpus—The restrictions on the several States, very pleasant,—on the right of Pardon & Treety—

29 Last nigh[t] snow, this morning rain the Streets over Shoose—the Debates continued, went on to the Judiciary Power, sun appeared 1 oClock—high Wind at W—half leg in Slash—

30 This morning pleasunt, His Execlency attended as President to great advantage—

31 General regulations under consideration, got through the Parri-grafts this forenoon, the great question was put, the afernoon His Exectrive [i.e., His Excellency] made Proprestions of amendments—fair Weathr very cold—Went to meeting in the eaving at Mr. Geirs—

Febr. 1st. 1788. This day nothing very remarckable, cold—

2 The debates continued—The Proposition made by His Exclency comitted to a Committee of two from each County, if possible one on each side of the question¹⁹—

To set on sunday Morning at oClock—

3 This day insted of attending Divine Worship attinded the Committee at the sencat Chamber—warm pleasunt—

4 Attended in the Sencat Chamber, the report past by Yeas & Nays 16 Yeas & 7 Nays 2 excused 1 absent—Dined at Mr. Bowdoin's²⁰—Reportd at 3 oCl—the motion Debated warm pleasunt, came up cold at Ni[gh]t

5 This Day a Motion to ajorn made by Mr. Dentch to some futur Day which superceded the other motion—Debated till sunset, the question being put—329 present 115 for ajorning—exceding cold & clear Corcos—180—Dined at Mr. Kneeland's—

6 This day big with the fate of Massachusa anxiety sat on every brow, the Galleris crouded, Seller fild & part of the uper Loft to hear the Yes & No, after 4 oClok the grand question called, profound Silence, all attention—at five the Vote Declared 355 voters a Majority of 19 Yeas several of the Minority declared their satisfaction the Convention ajorned—very cold Dind at G Lincolns²¹

7 This forenoon taken up in hearing declarations in favour Voting thanks, ajorned to the Statehouse & Ratified the Constitution Desolved, Punch, Wine, Bread, Cheese—then Dined at Mr. Russels²²—the Bells Rang &c.—

8 This day a very great perade of Husband Men & every Sort of Macanaks with their Utenticls dicatorated, went through the Town in great order & Sang Huszass at every Delicates Door, with a band of Musick, Discharged 13 Cannon, Bells Rang &c. at Funels [i.e., Faneuil] Hall 3 pipes of Wine & 2 Hogets of Punch 15 C. of Bread & Chees answ[er]able prepared for the loca[l] flavor & more above—very pleasunt Day left Boston about 4 oC²³—mounted our Horses about Sunset

& came on My Horse fell & very much hurt my Knee got to Mr. Newells in great pain, Slept but very littel—

9 Rose early & persued my jorny with others no Snow, Ise & bare grownd till we got to Newbury Port, crost the ferry & Rode to Hamton falls put up at Mr. Wells—very cold—

10 Rose early & rode to Greenland before we Brakfast, cold, but very Pleasunt, Crost Portsmouth Ferry & rode to York by the time the afternoon seervice began, put our Horses at Mr. Emersons & attended Divine service, Mr. Parker Preached after service was importuend to tarry till Monday & with some Difficulty perswaded Merss Wimon & Snow to tarry—

11 Rose early & rode to Mr. Moses Sewall's & there brakfast & after renuing freindship persued our journey at Kenebunk over-tuck those that went the upper-way passed on to Mr. Brodoes in Falmouth there slept—very Pleasunt—

12 Rose & brakfast then persued our Journey being 7 in number, at Northyarmouth parted with 3 of our company then Rod. on very pleasunt Weather, at Harriski²⁴ heard of Squire Purington's decease—between 7 & 8 arived home with Joy—

1. MS, Pejepsco Papers, Vol. 10, MeHi. In the manuscript journal, Sewall only used numbers in the margins to designate the days on which he wrote his entries.

2. Possibly Mehitable Mitchel of North Yarmouth, Maine.

3. Joseph Barnard was a Wells, Maine, tavern keeper and the owner of the Portland Mail Stage line that connected Portland to Portsmouth, N.H. John Fox and Joseph McLellan represented Portland in the Massachusetts Convention, where they voted to ratify the Constitution.

4. Dummer Sewall's brother, Moses, a militia captain during the Revolution, lived in York, Maine.

5. Isaac Lyman, a graduate of Yale College (1747), was pastor of the First Congregational Church in York, Maine.

6. Four of Dummer Sewall's brothers—David, John, Moses, and Samuel—lived in York, Maine. David Sewall, a justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, was a strong supporter of the Constitution.

7. Colonel Thomas Cutts represented Pepperellborough in the Massachusetts Convention, where he voted to ratify the Constitution.

8. Either Jacob Newhall's Anchor tavern or Increase Newhall's inn, both in Lynn. "Landlord Newhall's" Anchor tavern was a center of patriot activities during the Revolutionary War, and according to his grandson the tavern was "the most noted and best patronized house in the regions round about." During the war, Increase Newhall's tavern was an alarm station, where militia men assembled when the alarm was sounded.

9. Isaac Backus, a Middleborough delegate to the Massachusetts Convention who lodged at the same boardinghouse identified the house's owner as Captain Samuel Daggett. The Boston city directory for 1789 gives the owner as William Dagget and identifies both Samuel and William Dagget as mariners living on Ann Street.

10. Sewall's journal is the only source indicating that the Convention appointed a moderator pro tempore as its first order of business.

11. The Reverend Peter Thacher's Brattle Street Congregational Church.
12. Samuel Stillman, a Boston Convention delegate who voted to ratify the Constitution, was pastor of the First Baptist Church.
13. Federalist Convention delegates Caleb Strong (Northampton and Easthampton), Rufus King (Newburyport), and Samuel Merrill and probably David Mitchell (both North Yarmouth) probably visited Captain Daggett's boardinghouse to persuade Maine delegates Nathaniel Wyman (Georgetown), Isaac Snow (Harpwell), John Dunlap (Brunswick), Nathaniel Low (Berwick), and Sewall to vote to ratify the Constitution. All but Low voted to ratify. Samuel Stillman was probably visiting fellow Baptist preacher Isaac Backus, who arrived at the boardinghouse on 15 January. Backus, who eventually voted to ratify, was ambivalent about the Constitution at this time. Boston Federalists had elected highly respected Stillman as a Convention delegate, hoping he would influence some of his Baptist brethren to vote for ratification. Not everyone, however, had a high opinion of Stillman. An unidentified foreigner dismissed Stillman as a former Boston shoemaker, who was "a very popular member and vociferous brawler in our late Convention." This foreigner also criticized Stillman for wanting to treat Daniel Shays leniently (*New York Morning Post*, 21 March).
14. The Reverend Jeremy Belknap's Congregational Church in Long Lane.
15. Either Bartholomew Kneeland, a Boston shopkeeper, or John Kneeland, who also had a store in Boston.
16. Convention delegate and Congregational minister Samuel Niles of Abington voted to ratify the Constitution. Thomas Gair's church was the Second Baptist Church of Boston.
17. Probably Seth Sumner, a farmer, militia colonel, Milton town selectman, 1787-94, and member of the state House of Representatives, 1779-80, 1783-84, 1790-92.
18. Nathaniel Robbins, a graduate of Harvard College (1747) and pastor of the First (Congregational) Church of Milton, voted to ratify the Constitution.
19. For this committee, see RCS:Mass., 1410-15.
20. James Bowdoin, a Boston delegate who voted to ratify the Constitution, was chairman of the committee of twenty-five (note 19 above).
21. Convention delegate General Benjamin Lincoln of Hingham had voted to ratify.
22. Convention delegate Thomas Russell of Boston had voted to ratify.
23. For accounts of Boston's celebration of Massachusetts' ratification of the Constitution, see RCS:Mass., 1615-30.
24. The town of Freeport, Cumberland County—incorporated in 1789 from North Yarmouth—was first known as Harraseeket.

William Heath Diary

Roxbury and Boston, 9 January-7 February (excerpts)¹

While a member of the Massachusetts Convention, General William Heath, a Roxbury farmer, continued his regular practice of keeping a diary. He recorded the weather (and travel conditions), described the proceedings of the Convention, and reported news from other states. Since Heath lived in nearby Roxbury (only a mile southwest of Boston), he commuted daily to the Convention, and he does not appear to have socialized with the other delegates when the Convention was not in session. He attended the Convention from 9 to 15 January, but on 16 January he became ill and does not appear to have returned to the Convention until 30 January, when he took part in the debates.

(The official Convention Payroll indicates that Heath was present on fourteen days.)

9th. wind westerly the morning cloudy and a light Snow about half an inch of Snow fell The afternoon and Evening clear and cold, This day the State convention met to consider the System of Government proposed by the federal Convention,—near Three hundred members are already come in,—His Excellency Governor Hancock is chosen. President. The Honble. Wm Cushing Esqr. Vice President,—Minot Esqr Secretary,—

10th. wind westerly fair and cold, towards evening wind Shifted to the Southwest and a Bank of cloud appeared in that Quarter, which afterwards became invisible,—This afternoon the Convention removed their Siting from the State house to the Church in Brattle Street, for the benefit of more room &c. 309 members were present this day. . . .

Janry. 11th. wind northwest fair and cold.—There is now but little Snow on the ground,—The roads very Smooth and in many places Icy.—

12th. wind northwest, fair and *very* cold The last night is Said to have been the coldest night this winter.—The State of Connecticut In Convention have accepted the new System of federal Government,—128 years,—to 40 nays.²—

13th. Lords Day, wind northwest, cloudy and *very* cold, about Sunsit wind came to the northward, but Soon after back to the northwest, and it cleared away,—before Ten oClock began to haize again.—

14th. wind north fair and *Severe* cold,—probably the coldest day this winter.—This morning the Convention took up the New System of Government and are discussing it by paragraphs, without takeing any votes Thereon,

15th. wind Southwest cloudy and raw cold.—

16th. wind Southeast in the morning cloudy and Snowey about half an inch fell about noon wind Shifted to the northeast. then to the South and blew Strong, much rain has fallen during the day the Snow is carried off, and there is a considerable fresh, The State of Georgia have ratified the federal System³

17th. wind west northwest, fair and moderate nearly all the Snow was carried off the last night and much of the Ice,—and the frost taken out of the ground for several inches—The Convention this afternoon adjourned to the meeting house in long lane, yesterday and this day I have been absent from Convention through Indisposition⁴

Janry. 18th. wind Southwest fair moderate and pleasant the evening cloudy.—

19th. wind Easterly moderate and cloudy, about one oClock began to Snow fast which continued awhile and then changed to rain which has been increasing

20th. Lords Day, wind north in the forenoon,—and cloudy, in the afternoon wind northwest fair and grew cold,—my fever which has been for Several days Settled on my lungs Seems this day to be abating—

21st. wind northwest fair and cold—

22nd. wind northeast moderate, cloudy began to rain towards evening, which in the evening changed to Snow, which is now falling in great flakes and very fast.

23rd. wind northwest the morning cloudy afterwards clear and pleasant Eight or ten inches of moist Snow fell the last night, the Trees were exceedingly loaded in the morning and Some branches broken down with the weight of the Snow—There has near Twelve inches of Snow fallen.—

24th. wind northerly the day cloudy, and moderate for the season, The evening Snowey. with wind at northeast.

25th. wind, Easterly in the morning, afterwards South nearly all the day, towards evening Shifted to the west, the day moderate, with a Spitting of Snow and Some rain, a Considerable of Snow fell The last night but it is so blown and drifted that the quantity cannot be precisely determined perhaps Seven or eight Inches—

26th. wind northwest, The day partly clear and partly cloudy, and cold.—This day I went out for a few moments.

Janry. 27th. Lords Day, Southwest and west, the day partly cloudy and partly clear cold in the evening Snowey.—

28th. wind westerly, and Southwest. fair moderate and a fine pleasant day.—a Trifle of Snow fell yesterda the last night,—a bank of cloud rose in the Southwest This afternoon, and fell down again at evening—

29th. wind westerly, and Southwesterly—The forenoon, cloudy Snowey, and rainy—The Snow has Thawed much and the roads are full of water traveling very bad.—The after noon and evening clear—

30th. wind northwest. the forenoon clear, the afternoon and evening cloudy the day moderate.—

31st. Wind westerly fair cold and pleasant—This day the convention closed the consideration of the federal System by paragraphs,—when a motion was made, that the System be ratified and confirmed,—and it was proposed that this should be done fully and compleatly—with an injunction on the members that may be Sent to the first federal legislature—to exert their influence, to obtain Several amendments to the System, or that checks be provided, in the first Laws passed by the

legislature This matter I proposed to the Convention this forenoon, as the probable happy mean of uniting the Convention, and Satisfying the people at large:—In the afternoon, his Excellency the President laid before the Convention his Sentiments in writing coinciding with what I had verbally Submitted in the forenoon,—

Febry. 1st. wind westerly, fair cool and pleasant—

2nd. wind north, northeast the day partly cloudy and partly clear and moderate—

Febry. 3rd. Lords Day, wind Southwest the day partly clear and partly cloudy and moderate,—the evening warm and rainy.—

4th. wind Southwest, and west the morning cloudy. afterwards fair windy and moderate great part of the Snow has ~~thawed~~ gone off—A Squal in the evening, and a little Snow but Soon cleared off cold—

5th Wind very fresh at northwest fair and severe cold, the coldest day this year, Several persons have been frost bitten, a northern light this evening—This afternoon a question was put in Convention whether an adjournment should take place with a view to Consult the People on the adoption of the federal Constitution. There was for the question 115, against it 214—so the question was lost.

6th. wind northwest fair and very cold this afternoon The ultimate question on the federal Constitution was put 355 members were present, The majority in favor of the System was nineteen,—The evening cloudy and a Spiting of Snow

7th. Wind northwest fair and cold—This day the Convention having finished their business, between twelve and one oClock they adjourned, from the meeting house in long lane, to the Representatives Chamber, They then went into the Senate Chamber Where from the Balcony, the Sherif publishd the ratification of the federal Constitution, which the populace received with loud huzzas—

A number of the Citizens of the Town of Boston having given an invitation to the Convention to take a glass of wine with them in the Senate Chamber at one oClock the invitation was accepted, previous to which the Convention was dissolved—

The Conduct of the minority of the Convention on this occasion is truly remarkable and altho the majority on the ultimate question was not great yet the Candid and conciliateing disposition of the minority is Such as to afford the most pleasing hopes, of harmony and good agreement among the People⁵—The wisdom of all orders on this occasion to cultivate such an happy temper is highly commendable and is a fresh proof of the good Sense and enlightned minds of the good People of this Commonwealth.

1. MS, Heath Diaries, MHi.

2. For the arrival in Boston, on 12 January, of the news of Connecticut ratification, see RCS:Mass., 624–25.

3. On 15 January the *Massachusetts Gazette* reported that Georgia had ratified the Constitution (RCS:Mass., 727).

4. On 17 January Heath wrote William Cushing, the Convention's presiding officer, indicating that "great indisposition of body" prevented him from attending the Convention since the morning of 16 January and that he would return to the Convention as soon as his health permitted. If he was unable to return, he hoped that the Convention's decision on "the ultimate question" would "tend to secure, the invaluable rights, and privileges, of these states, redound to their honor abroad, their safety, prosperity, and happiness at home, to the latest generations" (Mfm:Mass.).

5. See RCS:Mass., 1645–47.

John Quincy Adams Diary Newburyport, 10 January (excerpts)¹

Between eleven & twelve Mr. Parsons, went for Boston; Amory goes with him in a Chaise as far as Salem from whence he will proceed in the Stage.² . . . The convention, met at Boston yesterday about 300 members present; They chose Mr. Hancock president, and as his infirmities are such as will probably prevent him frequently from attending, Judge Cushing was chosen vice-president. but they have not yet proceeded to business of any consequence. nor does it appear which party is most likely to prevail: from which we may perhaps infer that in either case, the majority will be small.

1. MS, Adams Family Papers, MHi. Printed: Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 342. See also John Quincy Adams Diary, 9 January (RCS:Mass., 656).

2. Theophilus Parsons represented Newburyport in the Massachusetts Convention. Both Adams and William Amory, Harvard College graduates, were studying law with Parsons.

Winthrop Sargent to Henry Knox Boston, 12 January (excerpt)¹

. . . French & English war, Dutch Interests & every thing else indeed are giving way to the important Business of the Convention.

I dined this Day with some of the Members (Federalists) & altho' they have not *even* settled their Forms & Ceremonials yet they venture to hazard Sentiments & express Fears—Sam Adams^(a) is an arch Devil upon this Occasion & has made a Motion that E. Gerry should have a Seat in Convention.²—Since Dinner & this Eve[nin]g. (by Post) we are told that Connecticut has adopted the Constitution by a very great Majority which will indisputably have good Effect by its Influence here.³ . . .

(a) The Motion was made by Wedgerly of New Gloucester—in Addition to a Motion, “*That* the Lt. Governor & Council should be complimented with Seats in the Convention”; & also [“]Mr Eldridge Gerry”—Mr S. Adams seconded this Motion, & observed that Mr G. might elucidate the Business by Information, &c, that *possibly* had Escaped the Memory of the other Gentlemen of the General Convention—

I have not been present myself—but rec[eive]d the Intelligence from a Friend who was in the House—*Representatives’ Room*; to which, it seems, the Convention have returnd, after having been one Day at Doctor Coopers.⁴—by Reason that it was too large for some of the Members to speak in—

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. This letter was endorsed as answered on 20 January. Sargent (1753–1820), a graduate of Harvard College (1771), was a captain in the Continental Army during the Revolution, who, in 1783, was brevetted a major. In 1786 Sargent was a founder and clerk of the Ohio Company, a group of New England land speculators. In that same year Congress named him a surveyor of the Seven Ranges (of townships) in the Ohio country. In early October 1787 Congress appointed Sargent secretary of the Northwest Territory, and shortly after Sargent and Manasseh Cutler, representing the Ohio Company, signed a contract with Congress for the purchase of 1,500,000 acres in Ohio. In the spring of 1788 Sargent left for Ohio, where he served as secretary of the Northwest Territory until 1798, at which time he became the first governor of the Mississippi Territory.

2. For the invitation to Gerry to attend the debates and his Convention role, see RCS:Mass., 1175–81.

3. See “Massachusetts and the Ratification of the Constitution by Connecticut,” 6–15 January (RCS:Mass., 624–25).

4. The reference is to Dr. Samuel Cooper, former pastor of the Brattle Street Congregational Church, where the Convention met on 10 and 11 January. (See RCS:Mass., 1163–64.)

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard Boston, 13 January (excerpt)¹

I promised in my last² to give you some acco[unt] of our Convention. They began to come together on Wednesday last & they have been growing in Number till they now count 329! The Representative’s Chamber was so crouded with them that they adjourned on Thursday PM to ye meeting House in Brattle str[ee]t for ye Convenience of 2 stoves placed there—but the House being ill-contrived for an assembly of speakers—they found it impossible to hear one another & so adjourned yesterday back again to the State Ho[use]. They do not seem yet to be settled in their seats & have done no business but settling contested Elections & other Preliminaries—Among them are some of

the *Insurgents* of last Winter & it is supposed that when they come to ye Point in hand there will be a hard struggle—This Week will probably produce something—& the ~~Conduct~~ result of the Connecticut Convention wh[ich] was announced by the Post last Evening will I hope have some good Effect. It was yesterday moved to send for Mr Gerry that he might give an acco[unt] of his reasons for not signing the Constitution but a Majority appeared against it—This has a favourable aspect.³ Gorham, King & Strong the other Delegates to the general Convention are members of this body & will doubtless have influence—King arrived here yesterday from N York. . . .

1. RC, Belknap Papers, MHi. Printed: *Belknap Correspondence*, Part II, 5.

2. See Belknap to Hazard, 2 January (RCS:Mass., 587).

3. For the invitation to Gerry to attend the debates and his Convention role, see RCS:Mass., 1175–81.

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington Boston, 13 January (excerpt)¹

Since writing the above which I intended for the last post my son has, I think a little recruited tho he yet remains in a very critical situation.—

We have been four days in convention organizing the house attending to disputed elections &c these things being pretty fully over we expect tomorrow morning to have the proposed constitution read & to proceed afterwards upon a discussion of it. I am now as much at a loss to know what will be its fate as I was the first day we met. Should any thing of importance turn up I will have the pleasure of advising you of it by the next post. . . .

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. Lincoln began this letter on 9 January. The complete letter is printed in Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 22–24. In the 9 January portion of his letter (RCS:Mass., 660–61), Lincoln referred to the “potent adversaries” to the Constitution in Massachusetts and recommended the means by which their minds might be soothed. In his 31 January response, Washington stated, “I am very sorry to find that there is like to be so powerful an opposition to the adoption of the proposed plan of Government with you; and I am entirely of your opinion that the business of the Convention should be conducted with moderation, candor & fairness (which are not incompatible with firmness) for altho’ as you justly observe, the friends to the New system may bear down the opposition, yet they would never be able, by precipitate or violent measures, to sooth and reconcile their minds to the exercise of the Government; which is a matter that ought as much as possible to be kept in view, & temper their proceedings” (Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 74).

Dwight Foster to Rebecca Foster
Boston, 16 January¹

My Dear Mrs. Foster—

I seat Myself in a publick House, a publick Room, in the Midst of a large Circle of People zealous upon Politicks, to write you a short Account of Events since I left you at Brookfield²—We drove to Mason's—refreshed our Horses—came to Worcester—where we dined at Stowers's—then drove to Farrar's in Shrewsbury—made a short Stop & drove to Williams's in Marlborough where we put up for the Night—found good Accommodations & agreeable Entertainment—there we lodged & yesterday Morning after Breakfast went aboard our Sleigh & drove to Waltham there dined—came on as far as your Brother's at Watertown—found all well & heard friends were well at Acton—from Watertown to this Place found the Ground very bare of Snow and very heavy Driving—arrived in Town before Sunset—Took Quarters at the White Horse Tavern, Hatch's³—in the Evening Brother Theodore arrived from Providence⁴—well—. A universal Anxiety prevails respecting the Adoption and Ratification of the new Constitution—The Convention have returned from the Meeting-House in Brattle-Street to the State-House—The Gallery is so exceedingly crouded that there are no possible Conveniences for hearing—fortunately, we got a Seat on the Floor this Afternoon where we had a good Opportunity to hear all the Debates of the Afternoon—The Convention are now discussing the Constitution by Paragraphs—what will be the Determination Time must determine—a very great Proportion of Antifederalism prevails—There is fear of too great a Proportion being against the Adoption—but we still hope there will be a Majority & the sixth Pillar will be reared by this Commonwealth—The Convention propose to adjourn Tomorrow to the Meeting-House in Long Lane—in that Case we hope to be better accommodated—and if so I shall endeavour to attend till next Week—if not I intend to return with Major Goodale⁵ instead of sending this Letter by him—

I shall endeavour to give You as particular a Detail of Circumstances which may take Place as in my Power—I send the Key of the Desk, which I accidentally bro't from home, by Majr. Goodale—With dutiful & affectionate Respects to Mamma, I am, my Dear Becca, Your's in sincerest conjugal Affection

1. RC, Foster Papers, MWA. Foster (1757–1823), a 1774 graduate of Rhode Island College (Brown University) and a Brookfield lawyer, represented that town in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 1791–92. He was a U.S. Representative, 1793–1800,

and a U.S. Senator, 1800–1803. For his speech during the Brookfield town meeting that elected Convention delegates, see RCS:Mass., 941–43. Foster's wife Rebecca (1761–1834) was a daughter of Colonel Francis Faulkner of Acton, a substantial mill owner, town clerk for thirty-five consecutive years, and a member of the state House of Representatives, 1782–86.

2. Brookfield, located in southwestern Worcester County, was sixty-four miles west of Boston on the great post road connecting Boston and New York City. After traveling one day, Foster spent the night in Marlborough, twenty-eight miles from Boston. By sunset the next day, he reached Boston.

3. Israel Hatch's White Horse Tavern was located on Washington Street in Boston.

4. For Theodore Foster, who observed the Massachusetts Convention debates while visiting Boston, see RCS:Mass., 762, 766n.

5. Nathan Goodale, a Brookfield farmer and a former Continental Army officer, moved to Ohio in the spring of 1788.

Rufus King to James Madison

Boston, 16 January¹

We may have 360 members in our Convention, not more than 330 have yet taken their Seats—immediately after the settlement of Elections the Convention resolved that they would consider and freely deliberate on each paragraph without taking a Question on any of them individually & that on the question whether they wd. ratify, each member shd. be at liberty to [discuss?] the plan at large²—This Resolution seems to preclude [the Idea?] of Amendments, and hitherto the measure has not been suggested. I however do not from this Circumstance conclude that it may not hereafter occur—the Opponents of the Constitution moved that Mr. Gerry shd. be requested to take a seat in the Convention to answer such Enquiries as the Convention should make concerning Facts which happened in *the passing of the Constitution*; although this seems to be a very irregular proposal, yet considering the Jealousies which prevail with those who made it (who are certainly not the most enlightened part of the Convention) and the doubt of the issue had it been made a trial of strength, several Friends of the Constitution united with their Opponents and the resolution was agreed to, & Mr. Gerry has taken his Seat.

Tomorrow we are told certain Enquiries are to be moved for by the Opposition, & that Mr. Gerry under the Idea of stating Facts is to state his reasons &c—this will be opposed and we shall on the division be able to form some Idea of our relative Strength³—

From the Men who are in favor of the Constitution every reasonable explanation will be given, and arguments really new and in my Judgment most excellent have been & will be produced in its Support—But what will be its fate I confess I am unable to discern—No question

ever classed the people of this State in a more extraordinary manner, or with more apparent Firmness—

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. On 6 January King sent Madison some material on the New England Confederation (1643) and asked to be kept informed about the course of ratification in the southern states. In turn, King promised to inform Madison about Massachusetts (RCS:Mass., 625–26). King's letter of 16 January was the first of seven letters he wrote to Madison during the Massachusetts Convention. (For King's letters of 20, 23, 27, and 30 January, and 3 and 6 February, see RCS:Mass., 1539–40, 1546, 1553–54, 1561, 1572, 1647.) For Madison's 23 January response to King's 16 January letter, see Rutland, *Madison*, X, 409.

In a 25 January letter to George Washington, Madison quoted King's entire 16 January letter, altering paraphrasing, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling (Rutland, *Madison*, X, 419–20). Madison prefaced King's letter with this statement: "The information from Boston by the mail on the evening before last, has not removed our suspense." In his 5 February response to Madison's 25 January letter, Washington stated, "I am sorry to find by yours, and other accts. from Massachusetts, that the decision of its Convention (at the time of their dates) remain problematical.—A rejection of the New form by that State will enervate the opposition, not only in New York, but in all those which are to follow;—at the same time that it will afford materials for the Minority in such as have adopted it to blow the Trumpet of discord more loudly.—The acceptance by a *bare* majority, tho' preferable to rejection, is also to be deprecated" (CC:499).

2. See Convention Journal, 14 January, A.M. (RCS:Mass., 1182).

3. No such action took place in the Convention on 17 January, or on any other day.

Isaac Backus to Susanna Backus Boston, 17 January¹

Dearly Beloved,

After a tedious travel, I arrived here safe, and attended the Convention on Tuesday afternoon, and each day since. It contains about 360 members, and the greatest politicians therein, discover a full conviction of the importance of satesfying the country members, if possible, that their liberties would be secure, if the new Constitution was established; and therefore they give full liberty to every member to say as much as he pleases upon every article, which will necessarily take up much time. I enjoy my health well, and it is not likely that I shall come home next week; but if the travelling should be tolerable the Saturday next week you may expect brother Briggs,² to preach next day. I have had no time yet to do any private business. Yours in the nearest bonds.

1. RC, Backus Papers, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass. When dating this letter, Backus wrote over the day of the month, and it is difficult to determine whether he meant "17" or "18." William G. McLoughlin, editor of Backus' diary, renders the date "17" (Backus, *Diary*, III, 1218n). Isaac Backus and Susanna Mason (1725–1800) were married in 1749, and shortly thereafter they settled on a small farm in Middleborough.

2. Ordained pastor of the Baptist church in Braintree in December 1787, Brother Joel Briggs was ministering to Baptist churches in the Suffolk County towns of Stoughton and Braintree.

Massachusetts Gazette, 18 January¹

The reverend James Manning, D. D. president of Rhode-Island college, arrived in town the beginning of this week from Providence, and, we hear, this truly great character daily attends to hear the debates in the convention.

1. Reprinted: *Providence Gazette*, 26 January. Manning was pastor of the first Baptist Church of Providence and the first president of Rhode Island College (Brown University), serving from 1765 until his death in 1791. He represented Rhode Island in Congress in 1786. According to Isaac Backus, Manning arrived in Boston on 15 January and left on 31 January. A strong supporter of the Constitution, Manning attended the debates and apparently tried to convince Baptist delegates to vote to ratify the Constitution. He was also invited to preach in churches in and around Boston.

John Forbes to John Quincy Adams Boston, 19 January (excerpts)¹

I wrote you some time since & have been wondering ever since what has been the Cause of your Silence—rather concluded that you had not receiv'd it or were too busy to answer it than that it did not merit your attention—The Convention are now sitting in this Town—I have attended the Debates till I have become quite interested—The weight of Argument offer'd is so much in favor of the Constitution that I cannot but at present beg to dissent with you & term myself a *Fœderalist*—I am sorry to *inform* you that your opinion is so poorly advocated—there is not a man of Education that dare speak in opposition to the Plan—there are but few on that side—& those few, fearing Conviction, are fortifying there prejudiced minds with adamantine obstinacy—the Characters that support it are so respectable that shou'd it be rejected in this State it will retire without a Blush—Dana King, Gorham, Strong—Parsons, Cabot, Ames & Sedgwick—are Characters so pure that Nothing but Gerry's Spirit of Opposition cou'd soil—the Anti— have made every Exertion in their Power & have got Gerry as a Dictionary to use occasionally—they remind me of the old Proverb "give 'em an Inch & they'll take an ell"² they obtain'd a Vote to question Mr G— on certain Articles—from this they wish'd to Add the Priveledges of a Deligate—& allow him to speak to Article wch Motion Fr Dana opposed—with Violence—The Issue was interrupted by an adjournment till Monday Next³ I am sorry to say that the Objections are principally founded on mis-construction—I embark for Lancaster next Tuesday

Morning Shou'd have gone before had not the Debates prevented—please to direct my Letters to W C—⁴ who will forward them—he is well. . . .

NB—many lads from the Country attend the Debates—GLC—TB from Worcester & JD—from Springfield⁵

1. RC, Adams Family Papers, MHi. Adams and John Forbes of Milton (1771–1831) were graduates of Harvard College (1787). Forbes was studying law with John Sprague, a Lancaster delegate to the Massachusetts Convention. Forbes began practicing law in Brookfield in 1791 and three years later he moved to Boston. After 1796 he lived mostly outside the United States, holding several diplomatic posts. Forbes's letter was probably one of those delivered to Adams on 9 February by Adams's legal mentor Theophilus Parsons, who had just returned to Newburyport from the Massachusetts Convention (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 359, 359n).

2. In England, an "ell" was equal to 45 inches. For this proverb, see John Ettlinger and Ruby Day, eds., *Old English Proverbs Collected by Nathan Bailey, 1736* . . . (Metuchen, N.J., and London, 1992), 74.

3. For this incident, which took place on 19 January, see RCS:Mass., 1175–81.

4. William Cranch, Adams's first cousin, was a law student in Boston. Like Adams and Forbes, Cranch graduated from Harvard College in 1787. For Cranch's attendance at the Convention debates and his reference to Forbes, see Cranch to Adams, 22, 27 January (RCS:Mass., 1543–44).

5. Adams and Gardner Leonard Chandler graduated from Harvard College in 1787, while Timothy Bigelow and Josiah Dwight had graduated the previous year. (See also William Cranch to Adams, 22, 27 January, at note 8, and note 8, RCS:Mass., 1544, 1545n.)

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard Boston, 20 January¹

Tho' I have heard nothing from you for a great while I shall continue to write when I have any thing worth communicating.

In my last I began some acco[unt] of our Convention²—this is a fruitful Subject & will be of long Continuance if they go on no faster than they have hitherto done³—They have as yet proceeded only to the article respecting *the Senate*—For a particular detail of the several Speeches pro & con—vide ye News papers—for the Printers have appointed *Delegates* to ye Convention to take short hand minutes & they are very industrious I shall only give you some remarks of my own—

I hope the Body is at length *fixed*—Last Thursday they removed to the meeting house where your Friend officiates in Long Lane wh[ich] is light, sizeable & convenient for Spectators.—Every part of ye Constitution wh[ich] has yet been considered & objected to, has been very ably defended.—Dana, King, Parsons, Dalton, Strong, Sedgwick and Ames are among the best advocates.—The Antifederal Speakers are very clamorous—petulant tedious & provoking.—you will see ye Names of Nason, Thompson, Wedgery, Taylor, Bishop &c but they are Men whose only

force lies in noise & opposition—There is a Number of honest silent Men who wish for Information & on these the Federalists place their hopes of success—The more ye Constitution is canvassed the brighter it shines—& tho' at ye beginning of last Week its friends were vibrating between hope & despair, though some had almost given it up for lost yet the force of Truth has had such Influence that they now feel encouraged.

My worthy friend Judge Dana thunders like Demosthenes—he spoke on Friday with such pathetic Energy that it seemed as if his feeble frame could scarcely have supported him (for you must know he has been sick all last Summer & is but just recruited) he expressed the feelings of an honest mind wh[ich] had taken an early & decided part in ye Cause of the Country—& wished to see its labors & sufferings crowned with success—but wh[ich] would all be lost if this Constitution should be lost.—I need not add yt he was greatly admired.

R King explains every thing in a most clear & masterly manner & is of ye most eminent Service to the Cause—

I wrote you in my last that the Antifeds had miscarried in their attempt to get Gerry introduced—They renewed the attempt on Monday [14 January] & succeeded—The Vote was “that E G be requested to take a Seat in ye Ho[use] that he might answer such Questions as shd be proposed by the Convention (not by particular Members) relative to *matters of fact* which concerned the formation of ye Constitution”—He came on Tuesday & sat biting the head of his Cane till Friday PM.—then began an affair wh[ich] as I was present & in a situation to see & hear very particularly I will recite at large—especially as I suppose it will be differently represented—The Antifeds will say that his Mouth was stopped in order to prevent their receiving that Light & Information wh[ich] he would have given—that the Constitution may be crammed down & c&c—The facts were precisely these—On Friday PM an honest Member who I believe is a Federalist—& I believe you know him Major Fuller of Newtown—desired to know why Georgia had 3 Represent[ative]s allowed in ye new Plan & Massa 8 when in the *last* Requisition for Taxes they were assessed but $\frac{1}{13}$ of what Massa was—One of the Antifeds desired that Mr G might answer this Question—it was put to Vote & passed in ye affirmative—Mr G *himself* then asked the President to reduce ye q[uestio]n to writing wh[ich] he did & gave it to him.—He then took a paper out of his pocket—asked which was the *last* Requisition. was told that it was in October—& was preparing to say something more—when Dana moved yt as G had the q[uestio]n in writg he might have Time to reduce his answer to writing, giving this Reason that as there were 2 Parties in ye Ho[use] his answer might otherwise be differently understood & represented—It was seconded, G acquiesced & a vote passed

desiring him to take his own Time & give his Answer in writing—He delivered it Yesterday AM—it was to this Purpose yt ye mode of apportioning Taxes in Congress was by a kind of Compromise & yt Georgia had lately been increased by Migration—R K. then explained ye matter—at large & much more to every body's Satisfaction. This passed—The debate was on ye equality of ye Senate—Mr Strong said that G was one of ye Comte of ye genl Convention wh[ich] drew that plan—Gerry then (as he sat near ye Secy's table) took his pen & wrote for ½ an hour.—He then rose & told the Presidt yt he had been stating some facts relative to the Senate *in writing*.—Dana observed that as he came there to *answer Questions* & no Q[uestio]n respecting ye Senate had been put to him—it would be improper for him to deliver any thing until a Q[uestio]n was put—& moved yt it be put in writing if any Qu[estio]n was necessary—Then G attempted to speak—Parsons insisted to be heard first as he was a Member & G was not—he objected to ye propriety of G's speaking or offering any thing before he was called upon—One & another & another Feds & antifeds carried on ye Conversation—& tho' Wedgery drew a Q[uestio]n & ye Presidt read it—it was not voted nor put—but a desultory debate on ye propriety of G's conduct held till one oClock when the all prevailing Cry for adjournmt came & Mr G's intended Communication dropped of course—After ye adjournmt Dana & he had some very high Words—but friends interfered & took them off different ways⁴—

Thus stood ye matter at Noon yesterday—& here I must end my Letter as tis growing late—& a friend is waiting for me—so adieu—ye shall have more next week

Love to Mrs H

[P.S.] Please to send ye inclosed or its value to Aitken⁵—5 Dollars—

1. RC, Belknap Papers, MHi. For Hazard's 3 February response, see RCS:Mass., 848–49.

2. See Belknap to Hazard, 13 January (RCS:Mass., 1527–28).

3. On 24 January the *Worcester Magazine* noted that “The State convention now sitting in our metropolis, meet at the Rev. Mr. Belknap's Meetinghouse in Long lane, and we are told it will be a *long time* before they get through with their deliberations.”

4. For the invitation to Gerry to attend the debates and for his Convention role, see RCS:Mass., 1175–81.

5. Robert Aitken, a Philadelphia printer and bookseller.

From Tristram Dalton

Boston, 20 January (excerpt)¹

. . . Every day brings new conviction. Each paragraph appears better on strict examination. The whole is a masterpiece. If the Governor

comes forward, we shall be much indebted to him for the adoption of the Constitution. If it should be rejected, we must thank Mr. Gerry. Of how much importance, sometimes, is the voice of a single man! . . .

1. Printed: Eben F. Stone, "A Sketch of Tristram Dalton," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, XXV (1888), 19–20. Stone identified the excerpt printed here as having been written on 20 January 1788. He did not identify the recipient, however. After the excerpt, Stone inserted ellipses and quoted a longer excerpt and a postscript from Dalton's 30 January letter to Michael Hodge (RCS:Mass., 1560), parts of which he published and identified in "Parsons and the Constitutional Convention of 1788," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, XXXV (1899), 94. For facsimiles of the letters as published by Stone, see *Tristram Dalton Letters*, 20–30 January 1788 (Mfm:Mass.).

Nathaniel Gorham to Henry Knox
Charlestown, 20 January (excerpt)¹

. . . it was very evident that the mode of treating the subject yesterday agitated Mr. Gerry very much. at length he rose & attempted to speak to the President which brought up Judge Dana & Messr Parsons & Sedgwick &c. who with spirit denied his right to speak one single word except in answer to questions put to him by order of the House—The debates became so warm that They adjourned after which some warm words passed between Dana & Gerry in which the former told the latter that he would suffer no man to represent Cambridge who was not properly chosen—Gerry then went of[f]—perhaps it will not be best to say much of our critical situation—but never give me as the author

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Dated only "Sunday Noon," the letter's contents reveal it was written on Sunday, 20 January. The first part of the letter is printed in RCS:Mass., 752.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 20 January (excerpt)¹

my dear Harry—

. . . Last Wednesday was a week the Convention meet here agreeably to the order of the General Court, their number being so large they found it inconvenient to sit in the Representatives Room, and they accordingly adjourned to Mr. Thachers meeting house, they sat there one day. & finding it impossible to hear each other, they returned back to their Old Room—The inhabitants of the Town being very anxious to hear the debates, proposed to some of the members Mr. Mooreheads Meeting house, as a very suteable place, & the Gentlemen of the Town would build a pair of Staires in the porch, to prevent the spectators

going on the floor of the house.—this was accepted off by the convention, & they accordingly removed there.² it is very convenient for them, & gives great satisfaction to the Town & County round, as the gallerys will accomodate 6 or 800 spectators a number of the first Characters, from New Hamshire & Rhode Island attend the debates,³ the gallerys are so crowded, that in order to get in you must be there an hour before the seting of the Convention.—

For the debates I refer you to the inclosed papers, the printers are allow'd seats in the house, for the purpose of taking down and publishing the debates, from day to day, you will therefore receive more information from that quarter than is other ways in my power to give you—

It is astonishing to see the weight of *respectability, integrity, property, & ability* on the side of the proposed constitution, and on the other side the ——— Characters that oppose it—my god the contrast—Harry it is too much, to think off—as at present It is impossible to determine how the question will be carried—the *anti's* give out they have a majority of 40 on their side, but of this I doubt much, the following is a pretty near calculation, & from the arguments made use of in Convention, the *Federals* increase daily—so that we hope for the best—

	Fed	Anti
Suffolk	32	6
Essex	38	6
Middlesex	23	20
Worcester	8	44
Hamshire	20	33
Berkshire	12	11
Plymouth	18	8
Barnstable	8	2
Bristol	12	12
Dukes	1	1
York	5	12
Cumberland	12	1
Lincoln	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>
	194	166

If the above account is just we shall do well. I pray god it may be the case—Mr. Sedgwick informed me yesterday, he had not the least doubt but that in the final question it would be determined by a large majority in its favor—that a number that came down fully against it were now convinced of the necessity of its adoption—he desired me to make his

best compliments to you, & tell you from him, it will do well & you must not be affraid—a Chair is assigned Mr. Gerry on the floor of the house to hear the debates & to answer any questions that may be asked him. he has constantly attend[ed]. not one question has yet been asked him.⁴ it has been observed by some of the members *out of the House* that Mr. Gerry takes *minutes* of the debates—which is considered as very indelicate on his part—and yesterday he injured himself very much with his friends—in a debate in which Judge Dana and some other able men took a conspicuous part, near the close Mr. Gerry observed [by hand some?] objection to the V. Presidt in answer to what had been said—Mr. Dana instantly rose & in a spirited manner objected to any observation Mr. G. had to make, & from every quarter of the house Mr D— was supported—in this situation the Convention adjourned to Monday—at the door Mr. G— charged Mr D— with having insulted him—warm words took place which caused a little altercation—Mr. G—'s conduct is considered as very officious & forward—they are no farther in their debates than the formation of the Senate—every inch of ground is disputed, and it is the opinion of some it will be a month from this time before the final question will be taken—Mr. S. Adams has not yet come out, if he is against it I believe he will say but little, as the meeting of the mechanics of the Town—& their proceedings must and will have an influence over him.⁵ his son Doctr. Adams died last week & was buried yesterday—

Benja. Lincoln Junr. the Lawyer *die'd* yesterday after a short Illness, he was a good Man & is universally lamented, his family & friends have meet with a very heavy loss. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. For the movement of the Convention from place-to-place, see RCS:Mass., 1163–65.

3. The Rhode Islanders who attended the Massachusetts Convention debates included George Benson, John Brown, Theodore Foster, Enos Hitchcock, Benjamin Hoppin, and James Manning. New Hampshire was represented by John Langdon.

4. Jackson was mistaken about Gerry's not having been asked a single question.

5. See RCS:Mass., 629–35.

Rufus King to Horatio Gates Boston, 20 January¹

Our Friend Gerry I think will not disappoint us, if the Constitution is not ratified he may be Governor or Lt. Governor²—this however is uncertain, for Hancock has been confined to his Chamber ever since the Convention met—I have called on him several Times, and been indulged in common with every other person, to see him in his Chamber—he is not yet able to attend the Convention, but I hope he will

improve in his Health as soon as a majority shews itself on either side of the convention—A warm altercation yesterday took place between Mr. Dana and Mr. Gerry, the latter attempted to speak in the course of a Debate and was hindered by the Former, with the countenance of almost every respectable man in the Convention—This Dispute may throw us into confusion, Gerry I am told intends addressing a letter to the Convention complaining of his situation—the Federalist will support Dana, their Opponents will countenance Gerry; this may shew us a true division of the House which hitherto we have not seen—Gerry's conduct in my Judgment cannot be excused, and convinces me of one thing that he will not hesitate at small matters—I can not conjecture the probable result on the final Question—my mind rather balances in favor of the Idea that we shall ratify the Constitution—perhaps we shall adopt, and recommend to the Delegates chosen under the Constitution certain alterations—Genl. Jackson³ will be more particular—the Constitution is immensely popular in this Town—

1. RC, Emmet Collection, NN. Gates (c. 1727–1806), a Berkeley County, Va., planter, was a major general in the Continental Army, 1776–83; president of the Continental Board of War, 1777–78; and vice president of the national Society of the Cincinnati, 1784–87.

2. In the spring 1788 elections, Elbridge Gerry ran for governor against John Hancock and received only 19 percent of the vote. Gerry carried 43 towns, only one of which had voted to ratify the Constitution (Van Beck Hall, *Politics Without Parties: Massachusetts, 1780–1791* [Pittsburgh, 1972], 300).

3. Henry Jackson, a colonel in the Massachusetts Line of the Continental Army, was possibly under Gates's command when Gates headed the Eastern Department, 1778–79.

Rufus King to James Madison Boston, 20 January¹

Our convention proceeds slowly—an apprehension that the liberties of the people are in danger, and a distrust of men of property or Education have a more powerful Effect upon the minds of our Opponents than any specific Objections against the constitution—If the Opposition was grounded on any precise Points, I am persuaded that it might be weakened if not entirely overcome—But every Attempt to remove their fixed and violent Jealousy seems hitherto to operate as a confirmation of that baneful passion—The Opponents affirm to each other that they have an unalterable majority on their side; the Friends doubt the strength of their Adversaries but are not entirely confident of their own.

An Event has taken place relative to Mr. Gerry, which without great Caution may throw us into Confusion; I informed you by the last post²

on what Terms Mr. G. took a seat in the Convention—Yesterday in the Course of debate on the construction of the Senate, Mr. G. *unmasked* informed the Convention that he had some Information to give the Convention on the Subject then in discussion—Mr. Dana and a number of the most respectable Members, remarked upon the Impropriety of Mr. G.—’s conduct—Mr. G. rose with a view to justify himself; he was immediately prevented by a number of Objectors; this brought on an irregular Conversation whether Mr. G. shd. be heard—the Hour of Adjournment arrived and the President adjourned the House—Mr. Gerry immediately charged Mr. Dana with a design of injuring his Reputation by partial Information, & preventing his having an Opportunity to communicate important Truths to the Convention; this charge drew a warm reply from Mr. Dana, the Members collected about them, took sides as they were for or against the Constitution, and we were in Danger of the utmost Confusion—However the Gentlemen separated—and I suppose Tomorrow Morning will renew the discussion before the Convention—

I shall be better able to conjecture the final Issue by next Post³—with real Esteem & Regard I am &c

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. In his 28 January letter to George Washington, Madison quoted King’s entire letter, altering paragraphing, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling (Rutland, *Madison*, X, 437–38). For Madison’s prefatory and concluding remarks about King’s letter, see RCS:Mass., 1091. For “other letters of the same date” from Boston, see Jeremy Belknap and Henry Jackson (RCS:Mass., 1533–35, 1536–38); and Nathaniel Gorham to Henry Knox, 20 January (RCS:Mass., 752). For Washington’s 5 February response to Madison’s 28 January letter, see King to Madison, 16 January, note 1 (RCS:Mass., 1531).

2. See King to Madison, 16 January (RCS:Mass., 1530).

3. See King to Madison, 23 January (RCS:Mass., 1546).

Rufus King to George Thatcher Boston, 20 January¹

I thank you for your favor by the last post—Our convention continues at about 330 Members, *Wegery* & Nason with the aid of Doctr. Taylor are the Champions of our Opponents—Mr. Turner from Scituate is with the Opposition, and General Thompson from the County of Lincoln is as loud as any of them against the Constitution—No question has been taken which can in any measure shew the Division of the House—The Opponents say they have a large and unalterable Majority; the Friends doubt their Opponents assertions, but do not appear entirely confident of their own Strength—The Issue is conjectural—I find that my own mind, notwithstanding its Doubts, balances in favor of the

Idea that the constitution will be adopted—Hancock is still confined, or rather he has not yet taken his Seat; as soon as the majority is exhibited on either side I think his Health will suffer him to be abroad—

[P.S.] Our Brother Ben Lincoln died on Friday; his loss is important to the public, irreparable to his Family—

1. RC, J.S.H. Fogg Autograph Collection, MeHi.

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington
Boston, 20 January¹

In my last, I mentioned to your Excellency the critical situation in which I considered my son though I entertained hopes that appearances were in his favor; my hopes were alive untill friday morning last; a manifest change then took place in him—He died at four in the afternoon.—

In him I have lost a beloved son, an agreeable companion, and a sincere and confidential friend—With him expired the fond and pleasing hope that he would have lived [as] a support to me in the evening of life.

My feelings which are alive on this occasion are rendered, if possible, more poignant when I see the distressed situation of my daughter, the widow, with two babes in her arms and observe the silent grief of a tender and most affectionate mother—Our loss is great our wound is deep—I must not proceed I must not cause a momentary uneasiness in your mind—We have a source from which we may draw the most substantial consolation if we reflect justly—

Having been detained from convention for a number of day[s] I requested one of my friends to give me a general state of matters which statement I do my self the pleasure to inclose² with the last papers from them your Excellency will learn in what stage the business of convention is in—I hope the constitution will be adopted I think matters wear a better face than they did—

My dutiful respects to Mrs. Washington & regards to my young friend³—I will write again next week

[Enclosure:] On Monday it was moved that Mr Gerry shoud be requested to attend the debates of Convention, and answer any questions of fact touching the proposed frame of Govt—the federalists wish'd that he might be requested to attend and give his reasons for not putting his signature to the Constitution—but so many, were anxious to gratify the opponents in attaining, what they thought information on the subject, that the first motion pass'd, as a compromise—on tuesday he attended having been waited upon by a committee, from the body,

to request his attendance for this purpose—the C[o]mmittee was composed of men, by name, Wedgery Nason & Spring, whom, six months since Mr Gerry & evry good man heartily despised, as devoid of principle & fomenters of faction—men who are indebted to the late tumults⁴ in this Commonwealth for their present situation—

In the afternoon of Monday, the first paragraph of the Constitution was read—objections were stated, that in so important a concern, an invocation of the deity ought to have preceded the plan—this was passed sub silentio—No objections were raised to the first section of the first article—the second was warmly opposed, & most of the arguments pro & con, are in the papers—the second paragraph met with like observations—3d paragraph was the object of much discussion, but was explaind much to the satisfaction of good & reasonable men—these & the two last sections took up the attention of the house till friday night—when a question, for the first time, was proposed to Mr Gerry viz Why Georgia was entitled to three reps, under this Constitution, and Maßts but to eight, when in former requisitions on Maßts, she had been requir'd to pay thirteen times the amount Georgia was assess'd—a motion was made by Mr Dana, at the request of Mr G— as he declar'd in Convention, & Mr Gerry acceded to, that the question shoud be reduced to writing, & the answer in writing be laid on the table—this was complied with on saturday morning—a debate then ensued on the first paragraph in the 3d section—and an objection was raised against the equality of the representation of the states in the senate—Mr Strong stated that this was a matter of long debate in the fed. convention—& that a committee consisting of a member from each state in the Convention was appointed to consider the subject—that, in regard to an equality of representation of states in the senate the committee ~~unanimously~~ agreed & so reported to Convention—soon after Mr G. attempted to address the Convention, saying he had stated in writing some observations on the section in debate—this produced an argument warm, but decent, on the propriety of Mr G, or any other person obruding sentiments on the house—and a question, by one Wedgery, was proposed in writing, desiring Mr G. to communicate information & opinion on the proposed section—this was opposed on the following ground—That Mr Gerry was called to that body merely to answer questions of fact—that if the opinion or reasons of any man not a member were taken in that house, it was a delegation of power the Convention had no authority to delegate, & appointing one a member, who was not a rep. of the people—in the heat of debate a motion for adjournment prevaild—after which Mr G. in great warmth

observ'd to Mr Dana that he woud not be sacrific'd by partial representation Mr Dana replied he woud not sacrifice the dignity of the Convention to any man—that he, Mr G. was appointed by the Legislature—to them he stated his objections⁵ & offer'd to give the reasons of his objections—but they who alone had a right to make this enquiry declin'd it—Mr Gerry said he was obliged to attend Convention—this was denied by Mr Dana—and the debate growing warm, Mr King interfered & the gentlemen retir'd to their lodgings—Mr Dana attended by good men of all classes—& Mr Gerry by the opponents of the present constitution, who to say the least, are in patriotism, property & morality of no certain estimation—

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. In his 11 February response to Lincoln's letter, Washington stated, "I thank you, my dear Sir, for the information you forwarded me of the proceedings of your Convention.—It is unhappy that a matter of such high importance cannot be discussed with that candour & moderation which would through [i.e., throw] light on the subject, and place its merits in a proper point of view: but in an Assembly so large as your Convention must be, & composed of such various & opposite characters, it is almost impossible but that some things will occur which would rouse the passions of the most moderate man on earth.—It is, however, to be hoped that your final decision will be agreeable to the wishes of good men, and favorable to the Constitution" (Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 107). Washington also expressed his condolences about the death of Lincoln's son.

2. The enclosure that follows, written by an unidentified person, is concerned with Gerry's role in the Convention. (See RCS:Mass., 1175–81.)

3. Probably Tobias Lear, Washington's private secretary.

4. Although Gerry feared military intervention by the Confederation Congress when Shays's Rebellion broke out, he became increasingly fearful of the possibility of a popular uprising and by January 1787 he was much opposed to the Shaysites. Early in the Constitutional Convention, Gerry denounced the democratic excesses of Shays's Rebellion (George Athan Billias, *Elbridge Gerry: Founding Father and Republican Statesman* [New York, 1976], 149–53, 155, 156, 190–91, 203).

5. See Elbridge Gerry to the General Court, 18 October (RCS:Mass., 94–100).

William Cranch to John Quincy Adams Boston, 22, 27 January¹

I received yours of the 18th. yesterday & hope that the subject of it may rest in oblivion. You are the only person to whom I have said anything upon it, yet, & I wish that it may not extend farther than to Charles² himself, & not to him unless you think necessary.

I deliver'd your letter to Nat Freeman yesterday.³ He stays in town for the purpose of hearing the debates in Convention, which I assure you are really worth it.

[Mr?] Dana has made several very fine speeches. They sit in Mr Belnap's meeting house & the Galleries are crowded every day. I have

attended almost constantly since they have removed from the state-house.

January 27th. Since I began this I have been to Braintree and seen some letters from *Your* mother to *mine*.⁴ The last Dates are 20th October, Your father by Intense application to books has contracted a nervous pain in his head, which troubles him much. The second volume of the Defence of the Constitutions is come.⁵ I will send it either by Mr Parsons or Mr Atkins if he is not yet gone. The Convention have proceeded only to the 9 §. of Art. 1. But the more I hear upon the subject the better I like it. And I am positive that if you were to attend the Debates *you* would as heartily hold up your hand for it as any member of the Convention will. The opposition decreases every day & the party themselves confess that they have not a majority of more than 15. whereas a few days since they boasted of a majority of an hundred. Several who had instructions from their towns, convinced of the Goodness of the Constitution, have returned home & have resolved that if the town will not withdraw their Restrictions & allow them to vote according to the dictates of their Consciences, they will not return to the Convention.⁶ Our Governor the President, has not yet been able to attend. It is supposed by some people that he has not declared his opinion upon the subject yet because, he wishes first to know, on which side the majority will be. but now he begins to favour the Constitution because he hears that the majority is like to be upon that side. If he should come out fully in favour of it, it is the general opinion that his popularity will draw a large majority in its train. Had I time I would endeavour to give you some account of the debates; But I suppose that you will read a much better in the Newspaper.

We lads who are students in the law in town have form'd ourselves into a club, meeting once a week, for the purpose of cultivating & encouraging forensice ex tempore disputation; we consist of eight only. The plan is something like our A. B. at College. Jack Forbes has gone to Lancaster.⁷ I saw Gardner Chandler, *Benny* Beale—Judd—Bigelow & Williams last week.⁸

Yours In Æternum

[P.S.] I send a letter which came by Capt Folgier.⁹

1. RC, Adams Family Papers, MHi. On 9 February this letter was probably among the letters delivered to Adams by his legal mentor Theophilus Parsons, who had just returned to Newburyport from the Massachusetts Convention (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 359, 359n).

2. Possibly Adams's brother Charles, a student at Harvard College, who had been disciplined by the college administration the previous year (*ibid.*, 356n).

3. Adams's 18 January letters to Cranch (mentioned in the previous paragraph) and Nathaniel Freeman, Jr., a Medford teacher and law student, were carried to Boston by Dudley Atkins, Jr., of Newburyport (*ibid.*, 346–47). Like Adams and Cranch, Freeman

graduated from Harvard in 1787. (See RCS:Mass., 1551, for Freeman's 27 January response to Adams.)

4. Cranch's mother Mary and Adams's mother Abigail (then living in London) were sisters.

5. The second of Adams's three-volume *Defence of the Constitutions* was published in London in August 1787 (CC:16).

6. See, for example, John Sprague of Lancaster (George Benson to Nicholas Brown, 3 February, RCS:Mass., 1567).

7. See John Forbes to John Quincy Adams, 19 January (RCS:Mass., 1532-33).

8. Like Adams and Cranch, Gardner Leonard Chandler, Benjamin Beale, William Samuel Judd, and Samuel Williams, Jr., graduated from Harvard College in 1787. Timothy Bigelow graduated in 1786.

9. Captain Folger of the ship *Rebecca* had just returned from London to which he had sailed in July 1787 (*Massachusetts Centinel*, 28 July 1787, and 19 January 1788). The letter was probably Adams's mother Abigail's 12 October letter to him (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 359, 359n).

Samuel Nasson to George Thatcher

Boston, 22 January (excerpt)¹

My Dear Friend

I Acknowledge your kind favour of the Second Instant your Information Comes opportunly as we are now Looking over the New Creature (as Exprest by Genl. Thompson)² your Desier of its beaing Excepted With a or Refused by a full Majority is allso my full Wish but I Confes to you unless I am better Convinced then I am at Present I Shall Vote against it However I at Present think it will not be adoptd by the Present Convention I Concluded that is I Guess thir is against it about 192. for it 144 Some more are Returnd and have arrived how it will Turn at Last I Cannot tell for your Friend and mine I mean mr Oatiss³ Can tell you what Influence the Boston Members has over that of the Country therefore it is impnable to Read its doom at Present time and that alone must Discover you Desiar me to inform you as to the County of York I answer that I am Convinced that 18 out of 20 is against it, Like a true Friend would in Private that is I would Whisper in your Ear that a Letter wrote by you to a Gentelman in the Same County I fear will not help Your Influence in Pollitck but anough of that it is not proper for me who Stood forth for you at a Ceirtan Time Should find fault with you Nay I Can take a few Reflection any time if it will Save my Friend but I Stop . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB. Postmarked Boston, 3 February, this letter was addressed to Thatcher in New York, where he was a Massachusetts delegate to Congress.

2. For Samuel Thompson's reference to the Constitution as "a new creature," see RCS:Mass., 1291.

3. The reference is to Samuel A. Otis, a Massachusetts delegate to Congress.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 23 January (excerpt)¹

my dear Harry

. . . The Convention are still setting They have now under debate one of the most important articles, that is, the powers of Congress,—this is advocated by all the able & most senceable men in the Convention—The Federal party are gaining ground every day, so much so, that the *Anti's* are much alarmed & talk of proposing an adjournment in Order to influence the Country at large against the Constitution,² but I flatter myself they will not be able to carry their point—If they should in that instance, it will be a total distruction of it—

I mentioned to you Mr. Gerry[']s conduct, since which he has written a Letter to the convention which you will observe in this days paper.—Judge Dana felt himself so much reflected on by Mr. G[']s observations, that after speaking a few words, on the subject left the house, with a determination not to return unless the Convention justified his conduct—nothing has as yet been done, nor has he been within the walls³—he is one of the firmest, & most able supporters of the Constitution in the Convention,—his absence will be a great point gained by the other side of the question.—

Mr. G[']s conduct is very extraordinary & unaccountable, his friends are at a loss what can be his motives. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. For the defeat on 5 February of an Antifederalist motion to adjourn the Convention to a future day, see RCS:Mass., 1443, at note 2 and note 2.

3. After the altercation between Francis Dana and Elbridge Gerry on 19 January, Dana did not return immediately to the Convention. Dana was back in Convention by 26 January, when he spoke in the debates.

Rufus King to James Madison
Boston, 23 January¹

Our prospects are gloomy, but hope is not entirely extinguished—Gerry has not returned to the Convention, & I think will not again be invited—We are now thinking of amendments to be submitted not as a condition of our assent & Ratification, but as the opinion of the Convention subjoined to their Ratification—this scheme may gain a few members, but the issue is doubtful—

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. In Madison's 1 February letter to George Washington, he quoted King's entire letter, altering capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. After quoting King's letter, Madison stated, "In this case as in the last Mr. King's information is accompanied with letters from other persons on the spot which dwell more on the

favorable side of the prospect. His anxiety on the subject may give a greater activity to his fears than to his hopes; and he would naturally lean to the cautious side. These circumstances encourage me to put as favorable a construction on his letter as it will bear" (CC:491). For an example of a more "favorable" letter, see Henry Jackson to Henry Knox, 23 January (immediately above).

Cumberland Gazette, 24 January

By papers received last evening from Boston, it appears that the Convention were, on Thursday last, debating on the 4th section of the Constitution: But as no question had been taken on either of them, it is impossible to determine whether the new plan of government will be adopted or rejected.—The report, lately circulated, that there was a decided majority against it, must therefore have been premature.

Should the Convention proceed as *slow* and as *sure* through the whole, as through the four first sections of the constitution, it may be considered as a lucky circumstance that their operations happened to commence with the year; and luckier still, should they end with it.

Why gentlemen should be opposed to the introduction of Mr. Gerry to the Convention, we are unable to determine.—His greatest enemies allow him to be a man of ability, integrity, and to use their own expressions, "a politician of mathematical nicety:" Add to this, his thorough knowledge of the subject in debate, acquired too from the source, the very fountain-head of information; and we may venture to conclude, that among those who would wish to exclude Mr. G. from the Convention, are to be found but very few honest enquirers after truth.

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard Boston, 25–26 January (excerpts)¹

Yours of ye 11th & 16th inst recd last Eveng proved a great Refreshment to me.—I have much to say on the several Subjects mentioned therein² as well as on the Subject of our Convention wh[ich] has been in session now 16 days & have not got through the first article yet. I counted no less than 313 on the floor to day—Some of them are the very Men who were in arms last winter ag[ains]t Government³ & they have brought all the inveteracy of their Opposition along with them. The federal Speakers are obliged to combat them with the same arguments over & over again & their objections appear to arise more from an Enmity to all or any Government than from any defects in the proposed form. They *will* not be convinced—they *will* not be silenced—Sometimes they get their Passions raised at some trifle or other—Yesterday a boy clapped his hands in the Gallery & some who

were by cried *hush* with a continued sound of the *sh*—this was interpreted a *hiss*—they sd they were insulted & were for removing or shutting up the galleries & it was above an hour before they would let the matter subside.⁴

Gerry has disappeared ever since Saturday but he sent in a Letter wh[ich] you may see in the Papers—Dana & he are at variance.—Opinions are different on ye matter—I think Gerry is all in ye wrong—however as the grand affair turns so will his Character—if the Constitution is adopted he will be neglected—if not—he may be Governor or Lt Govr next year.⁵

It gives us great Pleasure to hear some of the honest sensible independent yeomanry speak in favor of the Constn. Their feelings, their natural Language—their similies—are highly entertaining—We had such a Speaker to day—a Mr Smith of Lanesborough in Berkshire—“I know (sd he) the worth of a good Government by the Want of it—I live in a part of the Country where Anarchy has prevailed & that leads to Tyranny—We were so distressed, last winter that we should have been glad to submit to any body who would have set up his Standard even to a Monarch—& this monarchy might have led to Tyranny—but better have one Tyrant than many at once” In answer to the objection, that learned & monied men were not fit to be trusted with the Government—he sd “Suppose you have a farm of 50 acres & your Title is disputed & you join on a man who has 5000 acres & his title is involved in the same dispute—Is it not better to have him for your friend than to defend yourself alone?”—again—“Suppose you were to join with 2 or 3 Neighbours in clearing up a rough Piece of ground & sowing it with Wheat—would you let it lie unfenced because you could not all agree what *sort* of a fence to make? Is it not better to have a fence tho’ it does not please all yr fancies than to have none?” In answer to ye objecn. Let it alone for the *present* & be not in a *hurry*—he sd—“Take things when they are ripe. There is a time to sow & a time to reap⁶—we have sowed our seed by sendg Men to the federal Convention—Now the fruit is ripe let us gather it—This is the Harvest & if we dont improve this oppo[rtunity] I am afraid we shall never have another.”

Is not this true natural Eloquence? & forcible reasoning? This Speech was received with the highest Pleasure—it was addressed to his “Brother ploughjoggers” as he called them—& it nettled the Insurgents—who called him to order—but their Voice was overruled & he went through—

How much longer this Assembly may sit we can but conjecture. The friends to ye Constn. say that many Converts have been made—& they intend if they cannot get a clear Vote to carry it “all hollow”⁷ as ye

Phrase is—to annex some amendments *recommended* to be adopted by the first Congress—if the other States agree & in this way they expect to carry it by a considerable Majority.

Rufus King shines among the Feds with a superior Lustre—his Speeches are clear, cool, nervous, pointed, & Conclusive—Parsons distinguishes accurately & reasons forcibly—but I need not give the particular merits of each—you will have them in ye papers, for the Printers are vigilant & keep a scribe constantly employed to take Minutes, tho' they cannot copy the energy & pathos of the Speakers. . . .

Saturday PM—The Convention have advanced no farther than ye. 9th Sect of 1st Article—I suppose the Antifeds begin to be weary Adieu! Love to you & yours

1. RC, Belknap Papers, MHi. Printed: *Belknap Correspondence*, Part II, 9–13. For Hazard's 3 February response, see RCS:Mass., 848–49.

2. In this letter (begun on the 11th and continued on the 16th), Hazard apparently asked Belknap several questions, one of which concerned the status of slaves and slavery in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Belknap answered these questions in the portion of his letter not printed here.

3. Shays's Rebellion.

4. For the behavior of the spectators in the gallery, see RCS:Mass., 1335, 1461–62. See also "An Auditor," *Massachusetts Gazette*, 25 January (RCS:Mass., 1550).

5. See Rufus King to Horatio Gates, 20 January (RCS:Mass., 1539, note 2).

6. See RCS:Mass., 1348, note 5.

7. Colloquial: "Thoroughly, completely, out-and-out" (*Oxford English Dictionary*).

Massachusetts Gazette, 25 January¹

It is to be lamented, says a correspondent, that the hon. mr. G. has so far apostatized from that line of conduct which once gained him the esteem of those whose esteem is to be desired, as now to become an object of censure in the view of those whose censure must give pain to the man of sense. It may now be said of him, what was said of Lord North; he is

“fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,

fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen

from his high estate, and compelled to take shelter from oblivion and insignificance, under the protecting shield of that party”² which he himself cannot but secretly despise, for a man of mr. G's penetration must be sensible of the merits of his opponents, and the demerits of his votaries. It is true, he is the idol of a party—but, good God! of whom is that party composed? The devotees of prejudice and ignorance. It is not to those men who once considered him an ornament to society that he can again look for countenance and support, he must therefore sink to the vale of obscurity, with this only consolation (if it

can possibly console him) that he has obtained the unenvied applause of those who are no honour to themselves or to their country.

1. Reprinted: Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 1 February; *Newport Herald*, *Pennsylvania Mercury*, and *Pennsylvania Packet*, 7 February; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 9 February. See also "Elbridge Gerry and the Massachusetts Convention," 12–22 January (RCS:Mass., 1175–81).

2. The reference is to Lord North's resignation as British prime minister in 1782. The quoted text from "fallen" through "estate" was taken from John Dryden's ode, *Alexander's Feast* . . . (London, 1697).

Dryden's text reads,

"Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high Estate
And weltring in his Blood:
Deserted at his utmost Need,
By those his former Bounty fed:
On the bare Earth expos'd He lyes,
With not a Friend to close his Eyes."

An Auditor

Massachusetts Gazette, 25 January¹

A HINT.

The citizens of this metropolis have always been celebrated for preserving GOOD ORDER and DECORUM in their publick assemblies. This character they will doubtless be solicitous to preserve.

As large numbers daily attend the debates of the honourable Convention, it is scarcely necessary to suggest the propriety of observing PROFOUND SILENCE in the galleries, and carefully suppressing every demonstration either of *approbation* or *dislike* to whatever takes place in that very respectable assembly.

1. Reprinted: *Pennsylvania Packet*, 7 February. "An Auditor" appears to be a reaction to an incident that occurred in the Convention on 24 January. (See RCS:Mass., 1335, 1547–48).

Joseph Crocker to George Thatcher

Boston, 26 January (excerpt)¹

. . . What are you about at Boston? I think you must say. Convention is all the Topick. The masterly speeches of a Dana, Parsons, King, Ames, Gorham, in favor of the excellent Constitution with a Number of others who wou'd add a Lustre to any Parliment in Europe, must bear down the noisy opposition of a Thompson, Wedgery, Nason &c who are as troublesome as Homer's babling speakers. The honest, wise & judicious

are steadfast in Accepting; the Friends to Anarchy & Confusion in non-acceptance: But, I think, I can assure you that the Constitution will be adopted, & that the opposers will soon sink into their primitive Nothing. I am sorry our quondam Librarian² has exerted himself so much in opposition, for notwithstanding, his Foibles I do esteem him, as you must remember our former Intimacy. . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB. Crocker (1749–1797), a Boston shopkeeper and a graduate of Harvard College (1774), was a captain in the Continental Army during the Revolution and assistant secretary of the Massachusetts Society of the Cincinnati, 1794–97. Crocker and Thatcher probably became friends at Harvard, from which Thatcher graduated in 1776.

2. A reference to James Winthrop, the alleged author of the Antifederalist “Agrippa” essays, who was librarian of Harvard College from 1772 until he resigned in the summer of 1787. (See RCS:Mass., 303–4.)

**Nathaniel Freeman, Jr., to John Quincy Adams
Medford, 27 January (excerpt)¹**

Our friend Cranch handed me your favour of 18th. instant last wednesday.² I should have answered it before but I have spent the week past in Boston to hear the debates of the Convention, and my time has been so entirely occupied by my attention to the interesting subject of their deliberations & to company, that I could find a moments leisure for writing. The speeches of a King, a Parsons, a Dana, & a number of other respectable characters would do honour to any assembly on Earth. I verily believe that if you had been present, with a mind open to conviction as I am sure yours is, you would have found an essential alteration in your sentiments respecting the Constitution. Mr. Parsons has discovered a capaciousness of mind, stupendous. The debates are to be published in a pamphlet, and the perusal will afford you pleasure. Judge Dana spoke with a pathos which drew tears into the eyes of admiring auditors before they were aware that their souls were on fire. The present appearance is favourable to the Constitution. 'Tis however impossible to predict its fate with tolerable precision. I cannot notwithstanding avoid anticipating a public festival on the successful erection of the sixth pillar of the federal structure in this State within two weekes.—It is impossible for me fix'd in apathy to view with indifference the exertions [of my?] Countrymen to establish a Government which shall protect their persons & property from the rapacity and violence of a lawless invader, & at the same time secure to a community all that liberty which is compatible with energetic Government.

The Devil takes the meeting bell—it interrupts my progress—& calls me to the house of the Lord. . . .

1. RC, Adams Family Papers, MHi. On 9 February this letter was probably among the letters delivered to Adams by his legal mentor Theophilus Parsons, who had just returned to Newburyport from the Massachusetts Convention (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 359, 359n).

2. See William Cranch to John Quincy Adams, 22, 27 January, at note 3 (RCS:Mass., 1543).

Nathaniel Gorham to James Madison
Charlestown, 27 January¹

Never was there an Assembly in this State in possession of greater ability & information than the present Convention—yet I am in doubt whether they will approve the Constitution—there is unhappily three parties opposed to it—first all Men who are in favour of paper money and tender Laws—those are more or less in every part of the State—secondly all the late Insurgents and their abettors; & in the three great Western Counties they are very numerous—we have 18. or 20. who were actually in Shases Army now in the Convention—thirdly a great majority of the members from the Province of Main—many of them & their Constituents are only squatters upon other Peoples Land & they are afraid of being brought to account—they also think though erroneously that their favorite plan of being a seperate State will be defeated—ad to those the honest doubting people—and they make a most powerfull host the Leaders of this party are a Mr Wedgery Mr Thompson & Mr Nason from the Province of Main—& a Doctor Taylor from the County of Worcester & Mr Bishop from neighbourhood of Rhode Island—you need only to ask our Delegates their characters to judge of the opposition—to manage the cause against them are the present & Late Governor²—3 Judges of the supreme Court³—15 Members of the Senate⁴ 20 from among the most respectable of the Clergy⁵—10 or 12 of the first characters at the Bar—Judges of Probate High Sheriffs of Counties & many other respectable people Merchants &ca—Generals Heath Lincoln Brooks & others of the late Army—with all this ability in support of the cause—I am pretty well satisfied we shall loose the question—unless we can take of[f] some of the opposition by amendments—I do not mean those to be made the condition of the ratification—but recommendatory only—upon this plan I flatter myself we may possibly get a majority of 12 or 15—& not more—you need not mention my name as your informant—

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. On 3 February Madison wrote George Washington that “Another mail has arrived from Boston without terminating the conflict between our hopes and fears,” whereupon, he quoted a paragraph from a 27 January letter of Rufus King, in which King expressed doubts about ratification of the Constitution. (See the last paragraph of King to Madison, 27 January, RCS:Mass., 1554.) Madison then said, “Another letter of the same date from another member gives the following picture,” after

which he quoted Gorham's more optimistic 27 January letter, altering paragraphing, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling. Madison omitted only Gorham's final statement requesting that he not be identified as Madison's "informant" (Rutland, *Madison*, X, 464-65).

2. John Hancock and James Bowdoin.

3. The three judges from the five-member state Supreme Judicial Court were Chief Justice William Cushing, Increase Sumner, and Francis Dana.

4. The twenty senators from the thirty-six member Senate who also served as delegates were Samuel Adams, president, Tristram Dalton, Elijah Dunbar, Thomas Durfee, Elijah Dwight, John Hastings, Joseph Hosmer, William Phillips, Amos Singletary, Thompson J. Skinner, Holden Slocum, Thomas Smith, Joseph Stone, Caleb Strong, Samuel Thompson, Cotton Tufts, Charles Turner, Joseph B. Varnum, Abraham White, and Aaron Wood. In the end, only thirteen of the twenty voted in favor of the Constitution.

5. For the eighteen clergymen who sat in the Convention, see the Convention Roster (RCS:Mass., 1152-60).

Rufus King to Henry Knox

Boston, 27 January¹

Our Hopes do not diminish, although our confidence is not complete—The opposition are less positive of their Strength, & those Few among them who are honest & capable of Reflection appear uneasy concerning the Fate of the Question—yesterday's centinel contains a proposal for a conditional Ratification, said to have come from Sullivan,² The Opposition give it some Countenance—I mention the Circumstance rather to shew that our Opponents are not so confident of their Numbers, since hitherto they have reprobated the Suggestion of Amendments and insisted among their Party on a total Rejection of the Constitution—

From motives of Policy we have not taken any Question which has divided the House, or shewn the strength of sides—

Hancock is still confined, he appears to me to wish well to the Constitution but don't care to risque any thing in its favor—Gerry has not returned, & no motion has been made to reinvite him—We shall probably continue ten or twelve days longer together before the Question receives it[s] Fate—

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. The reference is to "Hampden" (James Sullivan?), *Massachusetts Centinel*, 26 January, which said that the Constitution should not be adopted without amendments. "Hampden" proposed seven amendments (RCS:Mass., 806-10).

Rufus King to James Madison

Boston, 27 January¹

I hope your information will be confirmed, that the Tide is again turning in favor of the Constitution in Virginia²—We make but slow

progress in our Convention, the Friends of the Constitution who in addition to their own weight, are respectable as they represent a very large proportion of the Good Sense and Property of this State, have the Task not only of answering, but also of stating and bringing forward, the Objections of their Opponents—The Opposition complain that the Lawyers, Judges, Clergymen, Merchants and men of Education are all in Favor of the constitution, & that for this reason they appear to be able to make the worst, appear the better cause—But say they if we had men of this Description on our Side we should alarm the People with the Imperfections of the Constitution, & be able to refute the Defence set up in its favor—Notwithstanding the superiority of Talents in favor of the constitution, yet the same infatuation, which prevailed not many months since in several Counties of this State, and which emboldened them to take arms ag[ains]t the Government³ seems to have an uncontrollable authority over a numerous part of our Convention—their Objections are not directed against any part of the constitution, but their Opposition seems to arise from an Opinion, that is immoveable, that some injury is plotted against them, that the System is the production of the Rich, and ambitious; that *they* discern its operation, and that the consequence will be, the establishment of two Orders in the Society, one comprehending the Opulent & Great, the other the poor and illiterate—

The extraordinary union in favor of the Constitution in this State, of the wealthy and Sensible part of it, is a confirmation of their Opinion; and every Exertion hitherto made to eradicate it has been in vain—

—We have avoided every Question which would have shewn the division of the House, of consequence we are not positive of the numbers on each side, by the last calculation we made on our side, we were doubtful whether we exceeded them or they us in Numbers—they however say that they have a majority of Eight or twelve agt. us—We by no means despair—

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. In Madison's 3 February letter to George Washington, he quoted the last paragraph of King's letter, altering punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. To counter King's doubts about ratification, Madison also quoted the 27 January letter he received from Nathaniel Gorham (Rutland, *Madison*, X, 464–65). See RCS:Mass., 1552, for Gorham to Madison, 27 January.

2. Responding to King's 16 January letter (RCS:Mass., 1530–31), Madison wrote King on 23 January that George Washington believed that "a large majority" in Virginia supported the Constitution and that the Virginia Convention would ratify the Constitution if, by the time it met, nine states had already ratified (Rutland, *Madison*, X, 409).

3. Shays's Rebellion.

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington
Boston, 27 January¹

I have the pleasure of enclosing two news papers in which are the debates of the convention to saturday the 19th.² they are not forward enough to give your Excellency a just state of the business I therefore am inclined to observe that yesterday we were on the 9th. sect.—The oposition seem now inclined to hurry over the business and bring on as soon as possible the main question—however this they are not permitted to do it is pretty well known what objections are on the minds of the people it becomes therefore necessary to obviate them if possible we have hither to done this with success The oposition see it and are alarmed for there are a vast many people attending in the galleries (we now assemble in one of our meeting houses)³ and most of the arguments are published in the papers both are of use—

Your Excellency will see in the paper propositions for adopting the constitution on conditions, this will not be attended to⁴—It is possible if we adopt it absolutely that the convention may recommend certain amendments—It will never I presume be adopted on any conditions, It will pass absolutely or be rejected. I have now higher expectations that it will pass than when I last wrote I think the friends to it increase daily, however I would not raise your Excellencys expectations to[o] high—it is yet impossible to determine absolutely its fate—

Mr. Gerry as mentioned in my last left the convention in du[d]g-
 eon—he has not since returned to it I presume he will not return

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC.

2. Probably the *Massachusetts Centinel* for 23 and 26 January, which printed the debates for 16, 17, 18, and 19 January. (See note 4 below for the identification of the *Centinel* as the newspaper.)

3. The Reverend Jeremy Belknap's church in Long Lane.

4. The reference is to "Hampden" (James Sullivan?), *Massachusetts Centinel*, 26 January (RCS:Mass., 806–10).

New York Journal, 28 January¹

By private letters from Boston, of the 20th inst. we are assured, that "the proceedings of the convention, and several speeches therein made, have been erroneously and partially represented." That "the resolve, so appointing a committee to request the honorable Elbridge Gerry, Esq. to take a seat in convention, for the purpose of answering to such questions as might be asked him, was carried by a majority of *two thirds*."²

Our information, by this letter, further states that “the opponents to the constitution have made out their list, and say, they have 201, out of 320; the supporters say, they have a majority. On the whole, there is no ascertaining facts. Many are for adjourning several months, &c. &c.”³

1. Reprints by 13 February (5): N.J. (1), Pa. (2), Md. (1), Va. (1). New York Antifederalist Charles Tillinghast stated that the excerpt of the Boston letter of 20 January printed here was sent to Thomas Greenleaf, the printer of the *New York Journal*, by “one of his Correspondents” (to Hugh Hughes, 27–28 January, RCS:Mass., 812. See also note 3, below.).

2. For conflicting accounts of the vote, see RCS:Mass., 1175–76.

3. On 28 January New York Antifederalist Melancton Smith wrote that “Letters from our Friends there [Massachusetts] state that the numbers stand in the convention, 201 against the Constitution to 119 that are for it—on the other hand those who are for it say that there will be a majority in its favour and that the opposition is lessening. It is impossible in this variety of reports to form an opinion that may be relied upon” (to Abraham Yates, Jr., RCS:Mass., 1091).

George Benson to Nicholas Brown

Boston, 29 January¹

We Came last Evening as far as Daggetts 27 Miles from Providence, & Started again this Morning at 5 O Clock & made no Stage 'till our Arrival at Bracketts at half past 8, Our ride was very Disagreeable this Morning thro a Heavy Damp Storm of Snow from the so. East however we had Time to Dry ourselves, Breakfast & attend the Convention in Due season—as this scrawl will be Deld. by Mr. Foster² shall refer to him for intelligence—I send a Number of Papers, could not obtain all the Debates in Course—the Editor of the Centinel takes them Down in short hand & from his Paper the other Printers Transcribe they are several Days in the rear, but will be up soon—a Subscription is Open to publish the whole in a Pamphlet—'tis an Object worthy of attention & will Diffuse a very great Degree of Political Knowledge in the State—the Opposition to the Constitution is extremely Obstinate—Mr. Stillman “says they have had a fiery Trial”—the Federal Party Certainly wax *Stronger & Stronger*—of this the Opposite Characters are Conscious—at the adjournment of the Convention this Evening Deacon Davis one of the Members for this Town informed me that he hears the antifederalists intend to try their strength to morrow by Moving for an adjournment³—this evinces that their hopes Decline—Mr. Stillman says that last Thursday afternoon they (the antifederalists) assembled early & mov'd for a reconsideration of that regulation which prescribes a *Distinct Discussion of every Section* & that the whole system should be

Considerd in one point of View⁴—this he suppos'd was Done to prevent the increasing Conviction which was very apparent—He Mr. S—address'd the President & oppos'd the motion, Confess'd that he at first had some Doubts himself but the Blaze of Evidence in its favour which its advocates had Display'd had Dispers'd his Doubts & fully Confirm'd him in his attachment to the System⁵—a Vote was Call'd & not more than 30 appeard for the Motion—he Desires his Love to you, has not time to Write—is very attentive to the Convention thinks he has not been absent more than 10 Minutes the whole time—Elder Alden is gone home *unwell*⁶—Mr. Backus is now right has Din'd with Govr. Bowdoin Mr. Russell—&c.⁷ I am highly pleas'd in attending Convention & heard *Parsons, Sedgwick, & King* this Day with *Unspeakable pleasure*, tis emphatically “*a feast of reasons*” —Mr. Arnold⁸ will tell you why he is Certain the Constitution will be adopted—I Confess my hopes are “*Quivering on a point*” —I have no pen fit to write & no less than six Persons are now near me

1. RC (incomplete), Brown Papers, John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R.I. Providence merchant George Benson dated this letter, “Boston 29th Jany 1788—/Tuesday Evening.” Only the first two pages of this letter have been located.

2. Providence lawyer Theodore Foster arrived in Boston on 15 January.

3. A motion to adjourn was not made until the morning of 5 February, when it was defeated. (See RCS:Mass., 1442–43, 1443, at note 2 and note 2.) For what is possibly an earlier reference to the threat of an Antifederalist motion to adjourn, see Joseph Savage to George Thatcher, 1 February (RCS:Mass., 1565).

4. This motion was made and defeated on Wednesday afternoon, 23 January. It was revived and again defeated the next morning (RCS:Mass., 1332–36).

5. No note taker recorded such remarks by Stillman.

6. Baptist minister Noah Alden of Bellingham returned to the Convention and voted against ratification of the Constitution.

7. Baptist minister Isaac Backus represented Middleborough in the Convention. Initially ambivalent about the Constitution, Backus, like other Baptist delegates, was courted by Federalists, in the Convention and outside that body. On 19 January Backus, Noah Alden, and Valentine Rathbun of Pittsfield (another Baptist minister) dined with James Bowdoin, a Boston delegate and former governor. (Alden and Rathbun voted against ratification of the Constitution.) On 23 January Backus dined with “many gentlemen” at the home of another Boston delegate, Thomas Russell. Two days earlier, Backus had dined with Federalist delegates Nathaniel Gorham and Rufus King at the home of Boston delegate Thomas Dawes, Jr. (RCS:Mass., 1596). For more on Federalist efforts to influence the Baptist delegates to support ratification, see RCS:Mass., 1108–9, 1112–13.

8. Possibly Welcome Arnold, a Providence merchant and strong supporter of the Constitution.

George Benson to Nicholas Brown Boston, 30 January¹

I wrote a scrawl last evening² expecting Mr. Foster would have proceeded this Day for Providence, but the badness of the road prevented

and as the Post will Certainly leave Town in the Morning shall Commit my Letters to his Care—

Have attended the Debates this Day in Convention & as I went early in the forenoon & afternoon I fortunately possess'd myself of a very advantageous situation for *seeing & hearing*—and have been richly entertain'd, & wish I had time to expatiate—The Governor this Day appear'd at 11 o'Clock which Diffus'd much pleasure in the Gallery & below—in the forenoon, Judge Sumner³ made a long & excellent speech, which he concluded by saying with a *Solemn emphasis* that he Conceiv'd on the final Decision of the important Question it Depended “wether the People of America should be an industrious flourishing Happy & respectable People or a *Divided, Disunited, miserable & ruin'd Country.*” He observ'd in the Course of his speech that he came to the Convention perfectly unbiass'd & he is Certainly an able advocate of the system

—Thompson from the Eastward, ridicul'd the Idea of Persons altering their opinions and adverted to Mr. Dunbar a Member of the Senate & a Gentleman of Liberal education who had Come oppos'd to the Constitution & instructed to vote against it & that he had changd his opinion & was resolv'd to support it⁴—this produc'd a very important & seasonable reply from the Revd. Mr. West—who Deliverd his sentiments with a Zeal & Solemnity becomeing the important subject⁵—the Gentleman animadverted on the impropriety of the Towns instructing their representatives in Convention—Demonstrated the absurdity of such instructions—& insisted that Gentlemen in that Predicament were obligd in Duty to their Country, their Conscience & to the Great Judge of all to act in Conformity to the evidence they receivd & to the Dictates of their own Conscience, for this end he prov'd that we were endow'd with reason by our Great Creator & Delineated a Striking Contrast between the Brutal & the rational Creation & the Consequent Obligations of the Latter to Comply with the Dictates of reason & Conscience he was very Diffusive—pregnant with Sentiment & express'd with an ardour that I am fully persuaded made a *very Deep & happy impression*—

The new Constitution experiences in this Convention a perfect investigation & the Gentlemen who appear its advocates merit the highest encomiums for their unremitting attention & Candour—it must be adopted—'tis impossible for the most *harden'd antifederal infidel* to repel the soft & persuasive addresses, of a *Strong*—the Cogent & nervous reasoning of a *Parsons*—the perspicuous & emphatical Arguments of a *Sedgwick* & the irresistible Eloquence of a *King*—*nothing—nothing*—but insuperable ignorance can withstand such a Torrent of good Sence

embellish'd with all the Charms of the most engaging & winning Manner—I am enrapturd with the enjoyments—to hang upon their Lips is a Luxury which absorbs all my attention—I almost forgot that I have numerous friends in Town to see & many engagements already made—if the important Question is Call'd this week which I expect will be the Case I must Tarry several Days longer unless you should inform me that my presence at home is Necessary—Mr. Holroyd⁶ wish'd me to write to him but all my Time in the Day is engagd at Convention & in the evening I wish to Scribble to you & to find Conveyances for my Letters—do tell him what I say as I would not wish to Neglect a friend I so much Esteem—Mr. Thatcher⁷ open'd the Convention yesterday by an Excellent Prayer—in which he ardently Desird—“that we might have brought home to our Bosoms that Religion which would Prompt us faithfully to Discharge every Obligation Publick & private”—if this principle effectually & universally prevail'd it would supersede the Necessity of a New Constitution—I wrote last evening⁸ Doubtful of the event because I did not wish to Cherish a fallacious hope—& I wrote from the impressions I then felt—but Sir I can almost venture to Congratulate you—at the adjournment of the Convention this Evening I ask'd the Secretary⁹ (with whom I'm acquaint'd) if the Constitution would be adopted—he reply'd in the affirmative—& you may Depend if adopted by *any* Majority it will be acquiesc'd in I have reason to *assert* [*this?*] Mr. J. C. Jones¹⁰ spoke this Day in a very able Manner he tells me this Evening I may inform you the Constitution will be adopted—I wish some or rather all our Paper Money advocates were present at the Debates I could tell you instances of Conviction in some Persons who were resolv'd not to be Convinc'd that would fully evince the astonishing Defence & elucidation of the New Constitution—but I've not time—you may perhaps think it unnecessary for me to be thus minute when several of our Friends intend to return to morrow who Can more explicitly inform you but I must observe that some of them were not in Convention this afternoon & if I may Judge of your by my own feelings—the most Trivial Circumstances may Derive some importance from the Magnitude of an Object with which they are Connected—I suppose you will by all means have me subscribe for the Pamphlet that is to Contain the Debates—best regards & respects to my good friend Mrs. Brown & all the family

in haste I am but with the most perfect Esteem & affection Your
assurd Friend

1. RC, Brown Papers, John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R.I. Docketed: “Abot. Convention.” Benson dated this letter, “Boston 30th Jany. 1788/Wendsday Evening.”

2. Immediately above.
3. According to delegate Justus Dwight, Increase Sumner spoke on the morning of 30 January about the independence of judges and the inferior courts (Mfm:Mass.).
4. Samuel Thompson incorrectly stated the position of the town of Stoughton. On 1 January 1788 Stoughton voted that delegates Elijah Dunbar, a Suffolk County senator, and Jedidiah Southworth use their own discretion when voting on the Constitution (RCS:Mass., 1044). See also note 5 (below).
5. For another summary and praise of Samuel West's speech, see RCS:Mass., 1373. According to Henry Van Schaack, Dunbar himself replied to Samuel Thompson (to Peter Van Schaack, 4 February, RCS:Mass., 1576).
6. William Holroyd was probably a Providence merchant or broker.
7. Peter Thacher, pastor of the Brattle Street Congregational Church, was Convention chaplain on 15 and 29 January.
8. Immediately above.
9. George R. Minot.
10. No note-taker recorded any remarks made on 30 January by John Coffin Jones of Boston.

**Tristram Dalton to Michael Hodge
Boston, 30 January (excerpts)¹**

... This day Governor Hancock attended as President in Convention, and, if he may be depended on, he will give countenance to the proposed Constitution, which will carry a large majority in favor of it. . . . My love to your good family and mine, as I have not time to write Mrs. D., snatching a moment now while in a caucus.² It is thought the grand question will be put to-morrow and determined on Saturday: perhaps it may be on Tuesday—great and important indeed the day on which the vote will be determined! I will tell you, as a confidential communication, that Mr. S. Adams will come out in favor of the Constitution. This and the Governor on the same side will settle the matter favorably. All this is scarcely known out of our caucus, wherein we work as hard as in convention. God bless you all, and give us success in the present undertaking. Never,—never were men more anxious than we are. All that is dear is at stake. Mr. Parsons is with us this evening, thoroughly well and ardently engaged. I am well, of which please to advise. Pray remember me to my kind mother, Mr. Hooper,³ and all friends, and believe me, your most aff. friend,

T. D.

[Theophilus Parsons' Post Script] P. S. Our friend D's communication will give you all the information we are at liberty to put on paper. We have stolen a moment in caucus to write this.

Yours,

T. P.

1. Printed: Eben F. Stone, "A Sketch of Tristram Dalton," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, XXV (1888), 20; and Stone, "Parsons and the Constitutional Convention of

1788," *ibid.*, XXXV (1899), 94. The document printed below has been created from the two aforementioned sources. In his sketch of Dalton, Stone published the entire text printed above except for the first sentence about Governor Hancock. Stone published the sentence on Hancock and most of text printed above in his Parsons article. (For facsimiles of the relevant pages from both of Stone's articles, see Tristram Dalton Letters, 20–30 January, Mfm:Mass.)

2. For the Federalist caucus, see also Nathaniel Gorham to Henry Knox, 30 January (immediately below). These are the earliest references to this caucus.

3. Probably Stephen Hooper, Dalton's brother-in-law. (See Dalton to Hooper, 31 January, RCS:Mass., 1563.)

Nathaniel Gorham to Henry Knox
Boston, 30 January¹

say nothing

Wisdom & patience were never more necessary than at the present time—some of our People are so opposed that there seems to be no means of convincing them—The Govr. got out & took his seat this day—We allmost got through the discussion in paragraphs—we cannot gain the question without some recommendatory amendments—with them I presume we shall have a small majority—they are preparing and will be ready for tomorrow—we shall then there present them—if a proper pause offers—we are now in Caucuses²—& King who is with us—cant write—but makes his compliments to you—

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Gorham dated this letter "in the Evening/ Boston Jany 30. 1788."

2. For the Federalist caucus, see also Tristram Dalton to Michael Hodge, 30 January (immediately above).

Rufus King to James Madison
Boston, 30 January¹

⟨This day for the first [time] our President Mr. Hancock took his Seat in convention, and we shall probably terminate our business on Saturday or Tuesday next—I cannot predict the issue, but our Hopes are increasing—if Mr. Hancock does not disappoint our present Expectations our wishes will be gratified)⟩—But his character is not entirely free from a portion of caprice—this however is confidential—Farewel

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. In an 8 February letter to George Washington, Madison quoted most of King's letter (see text in angle brackets), altering punctuation and capitalization. Madison prefaced the excerpt with this statement: "The prospect in Massts. seems to brighten, if I view in the true light the following representation of it." Following the excerpt, Madison declared that "Several reflections are suggested by this paragraph

which countenance a favorable inference from it. I hope from the rapid advance towards a conclusion of the business, that even the project of recommendatory alterations has been dispensed with" (CC:512).

Rufus King to George Thatcher

Boston, 30 January¹

Our Business approaches to a crisis and the result is still uncertain—we shall Tomorrow finish our Discussion by Paragraphs and probably shall take the final Question on Saturday or Tuesday next—the Question will be to ratify, and recommend at the same Time certain Amendments to be adopted agreeably to the constitution but not as a condition of the ratification

1. RC, Foster Autograph Collection, MHI.

Thomas Russell to John Langdon

Boston, 30 January¹

As you requested me to give my sentiments, whether the Advocates for the proposed Constitution of the United States of America, Increased or not, in convention, it is with pleasure I tell you, that I have reason to believe converts to this Excellent System, are daily making, I have no doubt this moment, of a decided majority in favour of it—Governor Hancock took his Seat in Convention as president this day—if he Appears Openly in favour of the Federal System, there will be I dare say a handsome majority in favour of the question, in which Event, he will in my opinion do himself [famous?], and gain a great many Friends—to morrow the debates on the several Sections of the Constitution will be finished when it will be taken up at large, which probably will take three or four days—I expect by Tuesday next this business will be compleated²—God grant, we may be the sixth State that Ratifies the Federal System, and that your State may be the seventh, on which I hope soon to Congratulate you—please to make my regards Acceptable to Mrs. Langdon—and give your Charming Daughter a Kiss for me—

1. RC, Langdon Papers, Portsmouth Athenaeum, Portsmouth, N.H. Earlier in the month of January, John Langdon of New Hampshire, a signer of the Constitution, had attended the debates of the Massachusetts Convention because he believed that Massachusetts ratification would favorably affect the New Hampshire Convention, scheduled to meet on 13 February.

2. On Wednesday, 6 February, Convention delegate Russell wrote Langdon that "It is with Infinite satisfaction, I tell you, the grand question was this day, gained by a majority of 19 In favour of the Federal Constitution. I congratulate you upon it, hope soon to hear your State adopt this Excellent System" (*ibid.*).

New York Independent Journal, 30 January¹

The latest advices from Boston inform us, that the clause in the New-
Constitution, respecting the SENATE, was then under consideration of
the Convention of Massachusetts;²—that such parts of the Constitution
as had been objected against, had been ably defended;—that the hon.
Mr. Gerry had been admitted into the House to answer such questions
as should be proposed by the Convention, relative to matters of fact
which concerned the formation of the New Constitution;—that the
more the Constitution was canvassed, the brighter it shone—and that
its friends were encouraged by the influence which the force of truth
had upon the opposition.

1. Reprinted: *Gazette of the State of Georgia*, 28 February.

2. For the debate on the U.S. Senate, see RCS:Mass., 1255–64.

**Tristram Dalton to Stephen Hooper
Boston, 31 January¹**

DEAR BROTHER:—Just returned from caucus. I cannot avoid ac-
quainting you, in addition to my advice last Eve'g to our friend Hodge,²
that the Governor, this afternoon, came forward in full support of
adopting the Constitution—and accompanied the proposed ratifica-
tion with *recommendatory* amendments, which the old Patriot, Mr. S. Ad-
ams, seconded warmly—this plan, the Feds hope, will cause a party to
leave the Antis. We are not idle by Night or Day—and sacrifice every-
thing but moral Honesty to carry our point.

The grand Question is now before us, and will probably be decided
on Saturday—if not then, Tuesday will be the important day. I tremble
at the approach, and dread the feelings I shall have when the Names
and Answers are called and marked! Yea—Yea, Nay—Nay³—says the
Scripture! Heaven will determine in our favor, unless we deserve Ruin.

Adieu: Love, Compliments, &c., &c.

1. Printed: Eben F. Stone, "Parsons and the Constitutional Convention of 1788," Essex
Institute *Historical Collections*, XXXV (1899), 94. Dalton wrote this letter on "Thursday
Eve'g, 11 o'clock." Hooper (1741–1802), a graduate of Harvard College (1761) and
Dalton's brother-in-law, was a Newburyport merchant, grist mill owner, and justice of the
peace. He actively supported American independence and outfitted privateers during the
Revolution. On 30 January John Quincy Adams noted that Hooper "is very sanguine in
his hopes for the adoption of the Constitution" (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 354).

2. See Dalton to Michael Hodge, 30 January (RCS:Mass., 1560).

3. Matthew 5:37.

Jonathan Sayward Diary, 31 January¹

Saw Elbridge Gerry Esquire's Letter to the Convention now Sitting
in Boston Signif[y]ing his intention not to Sit in the Convention any

longer it is a masterly Performance and doth Great Honor to his abilities.

1. MS, Sayward Diaries, MWA.

Independent Chronicle, 31 January¹

The Convention have discussed the Constitution as far as the fifth article, and it is expected the grand question of ratification or rejection will come on the beginning of next week.

We are happy to inform the public, that his Excellency JOHN HANCOCK, Esq. President of Convention, has so far recovered his health, as to be able to give his attendance at that honorable Body.

1. The entire piece was reprinted in the *Hampshire Chronicle*, 6 February, and in seven other newspapers by 8 February: R.I. (1), Conn. (6). The first paragraph only was reprinted in the *Providence Gazette* on 2 February; while the second paragraph only was reprinted in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 1 February, and *Hampshire Gazette*, 6 February, and in three other newspapers by 19 February: N.H. (1), N.J. (1), Pa. (1).

Worcester Magazine, 31 January¹

☞ A desire to gratify our readers with as much of the Proceedings of the State Convention as we possibly could, has induced the Editor to omit many articles which otherwise would have appeared in this week's Magazine. The free debates in Convention throw great light on the proposed Federal Constitution; by them shall we be enabled to discover its imperfections as well as its perfections, and thereby form a better judgment of its answering the end intended.

1. Publisher Isaiah Thomas devoted almost fourteen of the magazine's sixteen pages to printing the Convention debates for 15, 16, 17, and 19 January, and Elbridge Gerry's 21 January letter to Convention Vice President William Cushing. The remaining space in this issue of the magazine consisted mostly of advertisements.

Isaac Backus to Susanna Backus Boston, 1 February¹

Dearly Beloved,

Thro' divine goodness I am preserved in health, and have steadily attended the debates of the Convention, in which the Constitution hath been largely and thoroughly canvassed, and the final question will likely be descided next Monday or Tuesday, and I suppose it will be in favour of the Constitution, with a recommendation of some amendments; this I believe will be for the best upon the whole.

It is very disagreeable to be detained here so long, and not to have been able to send any supply to our people; but I can't think it advisable

to leave the Convention until the great point is turned; which is of vast importance. It hath engaged the attention [of] all sorts of people, in town and country.

I would have my mare sent to mr. David Linfield's² on Monday, to be sent in to Boston on Tuesday next, to mr. Sherborn's near mr. Gair's, as I hope to be released that day. It is likely that I shall then receive pay for my service,³ and so may be able to get some articles if you send account of what to get.

Yours most heartily,

1. RC, Backus Papers, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass.

2. Probably David Linfield, Sr., a Braintree farmer, at whose home Backus preached and lodged when on his travels.

3. On 8 February Backus noted that he received about one-third of his pay (RCS:Mass., 1597).

Joseph Savage to George Thatcher Springfield, 1 February (excerpt)¹

. . . Convention goes on but slow it is generally imagined the *anti* party will push for an adjourment till aprill. its much fear'd by the Fed party they will be too strong for them in Voting—

if any thing should turn up respecting me I wish you would inform me—I am fearfull if this constitution does not go down, I am no more a soldier—but I hope, I have a friend at *Congress*.² . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

2. Savage, a Revolutionary War veteran, was a captain of the artillery battalion of the U.S. Army, who remained in the army until he resigned in October 1791. Since Thatcher was a member of Congress, Savage hoped that Thatcher would look out after his interests.

Editors' Note

John Hancock's Conciliatory Proposition Massachusetts Centinel, 2 February

On 2 February the *Massachusetts Centinel* became the first newspaper to print the amendments to the Constitution that John Hancock proposed in the Massachusetts Convention on 31 January (RCS:Mass., 1387–88). According to Hancock's conciliatory proposition, designed to obtain ratification of the Constitution, the Convention was to ratify the Constitution unconditionally, while recommending that the form of ratification include amendments that would be considered by the first federal Congress. The Convention, acting in the name of the people of Massachusetts, would instruct the state's delegation to the first federal Congress to pursue these recommendatory amendments. On 2

February Hancock's amendments were submitted to a committee composed of two delegates from each county; one of the members in each county was to be a Federalist, the other an Antifederalist. For the appointment, composition, and work of this committee, see RCS:Mass., 1410-15.

Between 2 and 13 February, nine Massachusetts newspapers printed Hancock's recommendatory amendments. Massachusetts Convention delegates and others, as attested by many letters dated 3 February (below), sent copies of the *Massachusetts Centinel* of 2 February to correspondents in other states.

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard
Boston, 3 February (excerpt)¹

. . . You will see by Saturday's Centinel ye Operations of last Week in Convention—Hancock is the ostensible Puppet in proposing amendments—but they are ye product of the Feds in Concert & it was tho't that coming from him they would be better rec[eive]d than from any other Person—should they finally take, it will greatly help his Popularity & ensure his Election ye next year—

Yesterday they chose a Committee of 2 from each County a Fed & an Anti as nearly as they could guess who are to consider the proposed amendments & report tomorrow—Tuesday is the day appointed but it may be Wedy or Thursday before the final determination—As ye day approaches & the Strength of both sides is so great that neither can *certainly* depend on a Majority the anxiety of every friend to governmt & Justice is increased—“Life & Death are before us”.²—Heaven grant a favorable issue. One of the most sanguine of the Feds & best informed told me yesterday that he could not count on a Majority of more than 5 for ye Constitution—

The antifeds say now—“You have told us of the Perfections of the Constitution—now you acknowledge defects & want amendments *yourselves*”. The Feds answer “We are quite willing to take it as it is trusting to amendments hereafter, but to accomodate some Gent[leme]n of a delicate mind propose them now & think there is a better chance of success, because those States who have not yet adopted the Plan may follow our Example & instruct their Representatives in the same Manner”—

You will have the whole Course of Debates by & by. . . .

1. RC, Belknap Papers, MHi. Printed: *Belknap Correspondence*, Part II, 15-16. This letter was carried to Hazard in New York City by Paine Wingate, a New Hampshire delegate to Congress on his way to attend that body. Wingate arrived in the city on 9 February.

2. Deuteronomy 30:19. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live."

George Benson to Nicholas Brown
Boston, 3 February¹

I wrote by Post—but did not think it necessary to add any thing by your Brother John as he attended the Debates and had also other means of information—The Paper which accompanys this Contains the Governors Conciliatory Propositions which appear'd in their first stage to operate unfavorable & I thought on Fryday [1 February] gave the Constitution a *retrograde* motion—its opposers seem'd to exult in a Conscious Ascendency—that Day the speaking was principally confin'd to the Antifederalists, they Perverted the Idea of the propos'd amendments and retorted on the federalists in a strain like this—"that it was manifest there were Defects in a system which they had Celebrated as Perfect but that it could not be adopted unless the amendments were absolutely inserted in the Resolve of Ratification & made Conditional of it &c. &c."—I suppose they richly enjoy'd their fancy'd advantage in their nocturnal Meeting that night—but next Morning (ie yesterday) Mr. Strong advanced to a Conspicuous part of the House and made a very Long & excellent speech on the articles propos'd as amendments—he was very Persuasive & soon follow'd by Parsons whose *subtle Genius* can Demonstrate almost any thing it attempts he Disclaim'd the Idea of the amendments being essential to render the Constitution a Good Form of Government and engag'd to prove if necessary that in the exercise of the Federal system most of those amendments would be actually involv'd & fully evinc'd that the Probability of the amendments being made by the first Congress was much greater if annex'd only as recommendatory than if made a Condition of the ratification &c. &c.—He was follow'd by Collo. Orne of Marblehead who Contemplated the General Plan of the Federal Government, on which he Lavish'd many Encomiums in a very animated Manner—Mr. Sprague (Lancaster) a Gentleman of Ability & reputation inform'd the President that he was Chosen to Oppose the Constitution & for that Purpose was instructed & that his Constituents had specified their objections &c. but that in the Course of his attendance in Convention he had heard the respective articles of the Constitution so amply Discuss'd & the Propriety evinc'd with such Perspicuity & Candour, that he had obtain'd Leave of the Town to exercise his own Judgment &c. &c.² I discoverd the antifederalists were alarm'd and in the Course of their Declamations express'd a wish to suspend the prosecution of the Business to a

future Day, that they might return to their respective Houses & Consult the People &c. this I Construe as an apprehension of their being the Minority³—

The Business of the Day was finally concluded by appointing a Committee Consisting of two Members from each County to examine if any other amendments of Consequence were advisable & to report—in this Committee the *Federals have a singular advantage*, the others *suppose the Numbers of each are equal*—(this I'm inform'd *sub rosa*) on the part of the Federals are Govr. Bowdoin, Parsons, Strong Sedgwick &c. they met this Day in the senate Chamber

I imagine the Yeas & Nays will not be Call'd before Wensday or Thursday—I intend returning this week—I am so fortunate as to Tarry in the same House with Mr. Sedgwick—Mr. Stillman intends speaking on the Grand Question⁴—their will be some Capital Displays of the most Distinguish'd Speakers—at present I think their is a small but Decided Majority in favour of the Constitution—the Leaders in the opposition are Men of Despicable Characters & abilities but there are Persons who mingle in their Meetings & aid & encourage them—they frequently read their speeches being in Manuscript.—as there are those in Providence who are in Pain to Counteract the Meritorious exertions of our Friends here, I'm Confident you will not let the Contents of this scrawl transpire if it Contains any thing that will afford a Moments gratification to Govr. Bowen or any Select friends you will of Course Communicate—respects to Mrs. Brown—

[P.S.] Have Just heard from the Committee who are proceeding agreeable to the wishes of the federals—

1. RC, Brown Papers, John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R.I. Brown dated this letter "Boston 3d Febry. 1788—/sunday Evening."

2. Sprague's instructions have not been located. (For his election as a Convention delegate, see RCS:Mass., 975.)

3. An Antifederalist motion to adjourn was made during the morning session of 5 February, but it was defeated in the afternoon.

4. On the morning of 6 February Baptist minister Samuel Stillman made a lengthy speech supporting the Constitution (RCS:Mass., 1454–60).

From Tristram Dalton

Boston, 3 February (excerpts)¹

The propositions were then read. As soon as the Governor had read them and sat down, Mr. Adams arose and moved that they might be made the subject of debate, which being seconded was agreed to. They gave a shock to the *Antis* and caused an agreeable surprise in some of the *Feds*; however, they have not yet had the desired effect, but they are

esteemed so important that on the motion of a half-converted *Anti*,² at 2 o'clock yesterday, they were committed to a committee of two from each county, one from each side, to take up and report. Parsons and Hutchinson are for Essex . . . From the support of the Governor, and the plausibility of his plan, we promise ourselves a large majority. Until this the balance of power was each day vibrating, as the mercury in a thermometer. Never! Never was a more ardent struggle! Learning, Merit, Dignities, Wealth and Honesty pitted against their opposites!

Governor Hancock has hazarded his whole interests to the support of a Constitution, which, alone, must save his country. We must, whether successful or not, support his interest. Are you willing that we should pledge yours? Do not say, 'I will be damned first. He shall never have my vote.' Will you not if the Judge,³ Parsons and myself pledge ourselves? You will!

1. Printed: Eben F. Stone, "Parsons and the Constitutional Convention of 1788," Essex Institute *Historical Collections*, XXXV (1899), 87-88. Stone does not identify the addressee, but, during the Convention, Dalton corresponded with Michael Hodge, Stephen Hooper, and John Langdon.

2. The "half-converted *Anti*" was Josiah Whitney of Harvard who voted against ratification of the Constitution on 6 February.

3. Probably Benjamin Greenleaf, one of Newburyport's Convention delegates, who was a graduate of Harvard College (1751) and the chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas and judge of probate for Essex County.

Christopher Gore to George Thatcher Boston, 3 February¹

The convention will probably decide the fate of Massachusetts within three days from the date hereof—I think there is a fair probability of an adoption—Governor Hancock is the proponent of the plan, which you see in the Centinel of yesterday—this was first proposed by him—afterwards a regular motion was made by Mr Saml Adams grounded upon the proposal of the president, this being seconded is now the subject of debate before the convention—a committee of two from each county was chosen yesterday, for the purpose of considering this proposition—they are now, notwithstanding ye sacredness of the day, sitting on the business of their commission—this committee is composed [of] men who will be nearly divided on the great question—Integrity abilities & patriotism seem to declare for adopting the constitution—while vice & poverty, with few exceptions, mark the opposition—Farewell Your friend

1. RC, J.S.H. Fogg Autograph Collection, MeHi.

Nathaniel Gorham to Henry Knox
Charlestown, 3 February¹

The amendments which I mentiond in my last² were offered to the Convention by the Governor as the inclosed paper will inform you—they have been the subject of debate and are now committd—the Majority of which Comt. are federalists—some People are so attachd to home that nothing will keep them in Town on Sunday—in order therefore to prevent a surprize the Convention when full determined that the main question be not taken before tuesday—I presume however it will not be put before wednesday or Thursday—& I think the numbers will be about 185 for to 160 or a few more against it—though the Antis. say they shall have a majority of 10—I confess that I shall be more mortified if they are right in their conjecture than I have ever been in my Life

I cannot think but we shall carry the question—I will give you the earliest notice—I thank you for your last communication
 [P.S.] the paper gives a pretty just acct of the fracas between Mr Dana & Mr Gerry

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. See Gorham to Knox, 30 January (RCS:Mass., 1561).

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 3 February (excerpt)¹

my dear Harry

. . . The Convention are still seting and is supposed the *final vote* will not be taken untill Wednesday or Thursday next—on Wednesday Noon his Excellency was so well, that he attend[e]d the Convention, & took his seat as President of that Honble. Body—in the afternoon they closed their debates by paragraphs, & immediately proceed'd to the General question.—Thursday Noon his Excellency communicated to the house his intentions of making a proposition to them on the business then under consideration—the people were so anxious on this occasion, to obtain good places in the *Gallery*, that hundreds continued there the whole of the adjournment, and sent home & had their *dinners* brought them—accordingly in the afternoon his Excellency open'd the business, for which I refer you to yesterdays *Centinel*—his Conduct, & that of *S. Adams's*, who seconded his motion, is highly applauded, & they both stand *firm* in *Ratify[ing] it*, without the least clog, when so *Ratified*, to *recommend only*, the proposed alterations—

a Committee of two from each County, (one of them *Fed*, & one *Anti*) are chosen to take up the proposed alterations, and report tomorrow afternoon.—the *Antis* are affraid & very skittish, for fear they may be lead into a *trap*, by the proposed amendments—indeed they are so damnable stupid & ignorant they cannot trust themselves—you may be assured that the *whole opposition*, in this Commonwealth, *is that cursed spirit of Insurgency* that prevailed the last year²—& will never be rooted out of their minds, but by a firm & energetic government.—this is what they dread, because they have so much reason too—

Next Wednesday will be four weeks since the Convention first met—the whole race of the *Antis* are a set of *poor devils*, without one farthing in their pockets, & it will be impossible for them to leave the Town, unless they receive their pay—they begin to be alarmed and talk of their *Pay Roll*. some of them have been to the Treasurer, he informs them *he has not a dollar* in the public Chest—nor does not know where to borrow one—

We have circulated.—If the Constitution is adopted, there will be no difficulty respecting the Pay—If it *is not* they must look to the Treasurer for it³—

I am of the same mind, as when I wrote you last,⁴ that it will be adopted by this State, but the majority will be small.—yesterday I talked with your friend Mr. Sedgwick. he is clear it will pass, & requested me to inform you so, from him, he also desired me to make you his best compliments. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. Shays's Rebellion.

3. For the payment of the delegates, see RCS:Mass., 1498.

4. See Jackson to Knox, 23 January (RCS:Mass., 1546).

Rufus King to Henry Knox **Boston, 3 February¹**

Hancock has committed himself in our favor, and will not desert the cause—Saturday's Centinel will give you an Idea of his Plan; the Federalists are united in that system, & as Adams has joined us on this Plan, we are encouraged to think our success is probable—Gerry keeps close at Cambridge and his Adherents have made no motion for his recall—Mr. Hancocks propositions were yesterday committed to a committee of two Members from each County, they meet Today and we hope favorably from their Deliberations a majority being Fedaralists.

The final Question will probably be taken in 5. or 6 days—

[P.S.] You will be astonished when you see the list of names, that such an Union of men has taken place on this Question—Hancock will hereafter receive the universal support of Bowdoin's Friends, and we tell him that if Virginia does not unite, which is problematical that he is considered as the only fair candidate for President—

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

Rufus King to James Madison
Boston, 3 February¹

I inclose a newspaper (of yesterday) containing the propositions communicated by Mr. Hancock to the Convention on Thursday last—Mr. Adams² who contrary to his own Sentiments has been hitherto silent in convention, has given his public & explicit approbation of Mr. Hancock's propositions—

We flatter ourselves that the weight of these two characters will ensure our success, but the Event is not absolutely certain—yesterday a committee was appointed on the motion of a doubtful Character to consider the propositions submitted by Mr. Hancock, and to report Tomorrow Afternoon—We have a Majority of Federalists on this Committee and flatter ourselves the result will be favorable—(I have not Time to add except that I am with Esteem &c yours &c.)

P.S. We shall probably decide on Thursday or Friday next, when our numbers will amount to about 363—(Gerry has kept at Cambridge & Our Opponents say nothing of his reinvitation—)³

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. On 11 February Madison enclosed a copy of King's letter (without identifying King) in a letter to George Washington. Madison omitted the text in angle brackets and altered paragraphing, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. He prefaced King's letter with this statement: "The newspaper inclosed with the letter which follows, comprises the information brought me by the mail of yesterday" (Rutland, *Madison*, X, 498–99).

2. In the margin, Madison identified "Mr. Adams" as Samuel Adams.

3. At the bottom of the letter James Madison wrote, "Read the above i'mediately & send it back by the bear[er] who will wait for it. I shall be glad of the newspaper in about an Hour & an half." This comment was addressed to Alexander Hamilton, whose name ("Col. Hamilton") Madison wrote on the blank facing page of King's letter. At this time, Madison and Hamilton were writing and publishing *The Federalist* essays (CC:201).

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington
Boston, 3 February¹

Your Excellency will find by the papers of yesterday, which I do myself the pleasure to inclose, that the Governour has taken his seat as President of the Convention and that he came forward with a motion for

the adoption of the constitution and subjoined a recommendation that some alterations may take place in it; The motion has taken up a considerable time; those in the opposition want the constitution to be accepted *upon condition* that the alterations be made; this they will not be able to carry—Yesterday noon, a motion was made that the motion under consideration should be committed. This was agreed to, and a large Committee was raised, consisting of two members from each of the large Counties, and of one for two small ones. It was also agreed that each County should nominate their own members & that they should take one who had given his opinion for, and one who had given his opinion against the constitution, in each County wherein two were chosen; I expect they will report tomorrow afternoon to which time convention stands adjourned. I hope Good will arise from the measure & that the main question will be taken by wednesday next.—The Gentlemen in the opposition urge that the Governour's motion ought to be divided, and that the first question be taken simply "whether they will or will not accept the constitution"; They are opposed in this, and I hope the large Committee will adjust the matter and put an end to any further dispute upon the question—

We find ourselves exceedingly embarrass'd by the temper which raged the last winter in some of the Counties. Many of the insurgents are in Convention, (even some of Shay's Officers) a great proportion of those men are high in the opposition; We could hardly expect any thing else, nor could we, I think, justly suppose that those men who were so lately intoxicated with large draughts of liberty and who were thirsting for more would in so short a time submit to a constitution, which would further take up the reins of government, which in their opinion were too strait before; I hope people abroad will consider this matter and make proper allowances for a clog of this kind.—I think the constitution will pass.

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC.

Winthrop Sargent to Henry Knox
Boston, 3 February (excerpts)¹

. . . We all here have our Apprehensions from the Consequences of laying aside the proposed Constitution, & with you I am of Opinion that it would produce something very like Perdition—but Thanks to Strong, King, Parsons, Dana & some other honorable & good Characters I flatter myself that we shall adopt it—those Gentlemen & Mr Sedgwick & Mr West have very eloquently advocated the Business;—& in the Opposition are, *very few* but the, merist *Black* in the world—tho' in Point of Numbers

they are not Contemptible—Old Thompson howls, whines & whistles alternately & eternally—a little Fellow who was a Quarter Master in our Army by Name of Nason is a great Speaker on their Side of the Question, but I think a good deal ignorant & much illiterate—The Convention stands adjourned to Monday 3 oClock—They chose a *Conciliating Committee* on Saturday of one *Fed.* & A— *Fed.*: from each County, to whom they Committed at large the Motion of Mr Hancock published in yesterday's Centinel—“that we should ratify &c. & propose certain Amendments”—the Committee are this Day sitting on the Business & will report 3 oClock to-Morrow—& as it consists of Men of Ability & good Sentiments on the one Part, & *bitter* Antifed's: of the other there probably may be some Conversions & a great Deal of Good. . . .

[P.S.] we expect the *Grand Question* in Convention on Tuesday Mornng

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

James Sullivan to John Langdon
Boston, 3 February¹

The matter respecting the constitution remains much as it did. The Constitutionalists say they have a majority. This is denied by the anti-Constitutionalists, which is nearest the Truth I cannot inform you, because I have not had the means of investigation within my reach since I returned to Town. next tuesday is agreed upon for deciding the question. G Hancock has made a motion to accept it, and then to propose eight amendments.² but how, or when they are to be made is not as I understand it within the expression of the Motion. a Committee consisting of two Members from each County I am told was appointed yesterday to consider it. should I be able to obtain any thing more decisive before the mail is closed you shall have it.

Since I began this Letter I have seen your friend Mr Russell³ he says that he has no doubt but that the Constitution will be ratified I have also seen the Governor he is of the same mind. his proposals are for the amendments which are general to be made by Congress provided the other States agree to them⁴

please to consider me with Sentiments of regard & Friendship to yourself & Lady

1. RC, Langdon Papers, Portsmouth Athenaeum, Portsmouth, N.H.

2. On the afternoon of 31 January Governor John Hancock made a motion that the Convention ratify the Constitution with nine commendatory amendments.

3. See Thomas Russell to Langdon, 30 January (RCS:Mass., 1562).

4. For speculation about Sullivan's possible involvement as an advisor in drafting Hancock's amendments, see RCS:Mass., 1120. For a discussion of Sullivan as the alleged author of "Hampden," *Massachusetts Centinel*, 26 January, an article in which amendments were recommended, see RCS:Mass., 806-10.

Henry Van Schaack to Peter Van Schaack
Pittsfield, 4 February¹

I wrote you on Saturday last since which one of my neighbors has returned from Boston—He left it the 30th—Every thing was then in a promising situation for the adoption of the Constitution. Governor Hancock had come to the Convention and declared himself decidedly in favor of the System, and which had an amazing influence over a great number of wavering Members—Ill health had prevented the Governors attendance in Convention before. The opposition took advantage of this and industriously reported that his Excellency was opposed to the Constitution and advised them to reject it. There is room to conjecture that the Governor would not have come out so soon if it had not been for those reports as he was extremely unwell at the time he went out. Capt. Polly² told me the moment Mr Hancock had declared himself the opposition dispaired of success. Several names who were last Spring in the Interest of the Insurgents he mentioned to me (all of whom I know) had declared to him that the prospect of success was at an end. A Mr. Dunbar, one of the Senate and Member of Convention had made a public Confession of his error in opposing the Constitution.³ In short Captain Polly is Cock sure. This I shall not be until I hear of the actual Ratification—Though I am much Encouraged since my last letter. The Captain says that it was expected that the great question would be taken in the Course of this Week. I shall continue to let you know how matters are by every opportunity—If the Accounts we get do not agree this is not my fault. Sedgwick was so engaged when Polly came away that he had not time to write a Scrap to his Wife or any body Else but was ful of hope to Succeed.

The day after you left us I saw Colo: Williams on his return from Hatfield. I told him your Errand about the Lath and asked him whether he could get you split ones—He could not tel but would enquire and write you.

[P.S.] The Publication⁴ I mentioned to you or read to you here has been pursued so far as to oblige the Author to discover himself. it is a Colo Donaldson. He says

"Finding that a well intended publication in the Boston Gazette signed Centinel, through the pe[r]turbation of the public mind, has

been misconceived and conclusions drawn therefrom which never entered the heart of the Author; In order to satisfy as far as possible, the candid enquirer, he feels himself called upon to gratify the public, by narrating some of the causes that induced it:—The Author heard a Citizen of this town declare to another Citizen ‘a plan is on foot to silence Mr. N’⁵ a Credible person now in town informed the author that he was told at Providence about a Week ago, by a reputable Gentleman there, That a bag of money had been sent to Boston to quiet the members in Convention in opposition to the New Constitution.—From these and some other corroborating circumstances, the author thought it serious; and actuated by the best motives sent that piece to the press; not conc[e]iving it would have been noticed in any other manner than he intended”

So much for Bribery and Corruption

NB

I have again saw Capt. Polly

Governor Hancock attended the Convention last Wednesday and was to go again the day following to make a long Speech.⁶ A Mr. Elijah Dunbar a person I know, made a public confession in the Convention for the part he had taken agt. the proposed New Government. This irritated the opposition, particularly a General Thompson from the Province of Mayne, who made use of Illiberal reflections which were answered by Dunbar in an able satisfactory manner.⁷ Capt. Polly put up in the same house with a Colo. Grout and Mr Peckham from Peter-sham⁸ who both in the presence of the Capt. declared that the Constitution would now (after Hancocks Speech) go down in spite of all opposition and gave up the matter—

1. RC, Van Schaack Family Collection, Columbia University Libraries. Henry Van Schaack noted on the address page that if Peter Van Schaack was absent, the letter was to be delivered to David Van Schaack. Peter and David Van Schaack, Henry’s brothers, both lived in Kinderhook, N.Y.

2. Captain Prosper Polly was a deputy sheriff of Berkshire County.

3. For Elijah Dunbar, see George Benson to Nicholas Brown, 30 January, at note 4 and note 4 (RCS:Mass., 1558, 1560n).

4. The reference is to a brief item, signed “Centinel” and entitled “Bribery and Corruption,” that appeared in the *Boston Gazette* on 21 January. “Centinel” charged that “Large sums of money” came from “a neighbouring State” (i.e., Rhode Island) to bribe Antifederalists in the Massachusetts Convention. On 28 January the *Boston Gazette* published another statement by “Centinel” (Colonel William Donnison) that Schaack quotes here. See RCS:Mass., 759–67, especially pp. 760, 763–64.

5. The text within single quotation marks was italicized in the *Boston Gazette*. “Mr. N” was Antifederalist Samuel Nasson of Sanford.

6. On the afternoon of 31 January John Hancock proposed recommendatory amendments to the Constitution.

7. This debate apparently took place on 30 January.

8. Jonathan Grout and Samuel Peckham, both of whom also represented Petersham in the state House of Representatives, voted against ratification of the Constitution. Grout, a lawyer, was elected to the first federal Congress in 1789.

**Henry Van Schaack to Theodore Sedgwick
Pittsfield, 4 February (excerpt)¹**

How could you be so cursed cruel as not to write me by Captain Polly. The perturbation of mind we are in can be better conceived than discribed. I can bring myself to think of nothing but this important matter it is the last of my thought when I go to bed & the first in the morning when I wake. Your letters of the 18th to Mrs. S and me elevated us but on Saturday last my Dear Mrs. S wrote me "I have letters by Mr Bacon from Boston as late as the 25th. Mr. S appears by no means to be so sanguine with regard to the adoption of the Constitution as in the letter I inclosed to you—He is not without hope. Mr B says it is doubtful but thinks upon the whole it will be accepted"—I yesterday morning, though Sunday, posted away to Polly's who told me that our Governor had come forward decidedly, on wednesday last, in Convention in favor of its adoption. The Captain is Confident but I am ful of fears.—Our friends in the State of New York are anxious beyond discription. I gave them a lift in a large circle of both discriptions a few days ago in Albany where I was loaded with applause for the part I took. Mr. Rensselaer, the patroon desired me to procure an Express at Boston to bring forward an Account of the Ratification—I have requested Mr Williams to have an Express ready to bring the Account to Albany he is to call on me in his way there²—By the Express I must have a line wrote me by you that it is adopted by a majority of ____ the Express must be told not to loose an hour. The proceedings of the Legislature in our Neighborhood I believe are suspended until our determination is known³—In short every thing depends on us about this important object.—I have seen some of your debates in the abstract when they are reprinted I shall expect great gratification in the perusal of them.—My Name goes down as a Subscriber for the Debates—our compatriots will make a figure in the history of this blessed Country let the fate of this question be what it will. . . .

1. RC, Sedgwick Papers, MHi. The letter was addressed to Sedgwick in Boston, where he was Stockbridge's Convention delegate.

2. For more on this express, which was established, see Henry Van Schaack to Peter Van Schaack, 12 February (RCS:Mass., 886). Stephen Van Rensselaer, known as "The Patroon," was the very wealthy lord of the Manor of Rensselaer in Albany County, N.Y. Deacon William Williams, a graduate of Yale College (1754) and a lawyer, lived on a farm

in Dalton adjoining Pittsfield. He was president of the board of the Free School (later Williams College) in Williamstown.

On 7 February the *Albany Gazette* informed its readers of the arrival of a letter, dated 6 February, to an Albany gentleman from his friend in Williamstown, Mass., stating that the Massachusetts Convention had adopted the Constitution by "a large majority" (Mfm: Mass.). On 9 February the *Albany Journal* reported that "Since this paper went to press, an express has arrived in this city from Boston, with a confirmation of the IMPORTANT NEWS, of the adoption of the New Constitution by the Convention of Massachusetts. It was ratified on Tuesday evening last, by a majority of 19." This express was probably the one established at the request of Van Rensselaer.

3. On 31 January the New York legislature meeting in Poughkeepsie began debating whether or not to call a state convention to consider the Constitution. On 1 February it adopted resolutions calling such a convention.

William Pynchon Diary, Salem, 5 February¹

Tuesda. The day appointed for finishing ye. debates of the Convention as to the new Constitution² but nothing done—Boreas blasts havg equalled Gen: Thompson's

1. MS, Pynchon Papers, MHi.

2. Perhaps a reference to the motion made on the afternoon of 1 February that the Convention not make a final decision on whether to adopt or reject the Constitution before Tuesday, 5 February.

Bob Short

Massachusetts Gazette, 5 February

MR. ALLEN, In the HERALD of yesterday, I observed a column, headed "Proceedings of Convention, January 22, P. M." followed by the speech of mr. SYMMES, and nothing more—It may be natural to enquire whether the whole business of the convention for a whole afternoon was merely to attend to the short declamation of *one* individual, and that against the constitution?—Fie! fie! mr. Powars! boast no more of the *impartiality*—the independence of your paper—Nor of your regard to the publick—when you lead the people to suppose that the speech of mr. Symmes cost the commonwealth two hundred dollars.

New York Packet, 5 February¹

We are informed, from good authority, that the anti-fœderal interest is declining in the Massachusetts Convention; and, that that party finding this to be the case, moved for the general question; which motion was over-ruled by a majority of nearly two to one.² The Convention, therefore, continued debating upon the proposed constitution, by paragraphs, with much candor, information, judgment and ingenuity. Many members, who came to the Convention, with prepossessions

against the constitution, it is said, now candidly confess, that they have been deceived by representations and arguments, calculated to inflame the mind, and pervert the judgment; and which, when impartially examined, vanish into air before the scrutinizing eye of TRUTH. The best of men may be deceived by specious reasonings, offered under the affected shew of patriotism: But how worthy of a free man, in the exercise of his faculties, to relinquish ERROR, when convinced—disdaining to persist in opposition, from a mere spirit of contradiction, to the clearest dictates of propriety, common sense, and the *public good*.

1. Reprinted nine times by 7 March: N.Y. (2), Pa. (4), Md. (2), Va. (1).

2. Probably a reference to a motion made by Antifederalist Samuel Nasson on 23 January, to wit, "That this Convention, so far reconsider their former vote to discuss the Constitution by paragraphs, as to leave the subject at large open for consideration." After some debate, Nasson withdrew his motion, noting that he would make it again the next day. On 24 January he renewed his motion, which was soundly defeated (Convention Debates, 23 January, P.M., and 24 January, A.M., RCS:Mass., 1333–36).

Massachusetts Centinel, 6 February¹

The Massachusettensian PILLAR is *reared*:—But as the *arch* which will connect it with those already erected, is not *yet* sprung; we have it not in our power to announce its ESTABLISHMENT as one of the SUPPORTERS of the FEDERAL SUPERSTRUCTURE—but, in our next, we hope to do it fully.

1. This item was printed under a Boston, Wednesday, 6 February dateline, in a column headed "AUSPICIOUS OMEN." The paragraph immediately below this heading described (with pleasure) the defeat of Antifederalist Gilbert Dench's 5 February motion calling for the Massachusetts Convention to adjourn to a future day. (For this item, see RCS:Mass., 1452.)

The paragraph printed here followed this paragraph on the Dench motion, and, in turn, was followed by a paragraph headed "SIXTH PILLAR raised," which incorrectly stated that the North Carolina Convention had ratified the Constitution. (See RCS:Mass., 860; and CC:Vol. 4, pp. 507–9, for the documents related to this topic.)

Tristram Dalton to John Langdon Boston, 6 February¹

Lest particular accounts should not be handed you by the post, I take the liberty of announcing to you the important News—that this afternoon at 5 Clock, the Convention, sitting in this Town, consented to ratify the federal Constitution agreed upon at Philada. The numbers were 187 for—168 against—Thus is decided this great Question—much to the Satisfaction of the friends to good Government. When we met four weeks since the Numbers were manifestly the other way—

Ardent have been the labours of the Federalists—anxious their Nights as well as days—They are amply rewarded—

From the opinion you expressed to me, when here,² I flatter myself that the Convention of your State will adopt this Constitution by a much larger majority—

I congratulate you most sincerely on the happy prospect of the federal Government's being established & in exercise in the year 1788—

Time will not permit me to add, or even to be correct, having Letters to dispatch to the Southward by this Evening's Post—your Candor will excuse—

1. RC, Langdon Papers, Portsmouth Athenaeum, Portsmouth, N.H. Dalton dated this letter "Boston Wednesday Eveng/Feby. 6th. 1788."

2. In the month of January, Langdon had attended some of the debates of the Massachusetts Convention, believing that Massachusetts ratification would have a favorable effect on the New Hampshire Convention, scheduled to meet on 13 February.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 6 February¹

my dear Harry

HUZZA—HUZZA—

as you must be anxious, & to keep you from suspence a moment, I have the *extream pleasure* to inform you, that the grand question was put this Afternoon at 5 OClock by yeas & nays, and was determind *in favor* of the Constitution by a Majority of 19—the whole number present when the vote was taken was 355—of that number 187 were yeas—and 168 nays, by which you will observe the majority was only 19 as mentiond above—I attend in the Gallery from 9 OC in the morning until within a half an hour since, & eat my dinner there on *Ginger bread & Cheese*, which I sent a boy to buy in a Neighbouring Shop—the Gallerys remain'd full the whole time of the Adjournment of the Convention from 1. to 3. OC—such was the anxiety of the minds of the people on this important question—

The moment the *Ratification* was declared outdoors, the whole of the Bells in Town were set a Ringing & a general Joy & Congratulation took place throughout the Town—every class of people, assembled as it were in an instant in State Street, which was crouded with thousands, & to express their Joy with one heart & soul, sent three *Huzza's* to *Heaven* which made all nature tremble, to the very centre,—had the wind been fair, it must have reached your ears in New York, and some of the *Voices* wou'd have brought to your recollection that it was your native Town, that was thus rejoicing

I will now begin where I left off[f] in mine to you on Sunday²—I then informd you a Committee was appointed from each County to take up the proposals made by his Excellency Govr Hancock and report thereon. on Monday afternoon at three OC they reported nearly the same as recommended by his Excellency, to which I refer you in yesterday's paper here inclosed³—you will please to observe that the *Ratification* is compleat as proposed by the *Federal* Convention, and the alterations are a *separate matter* from the *adoption*—

yesterday Noon the *Antis* discovered their weakness and proposed an adjournment for several months to consult their *constituents* on the subject—this brought forward by those Rascals for the sole purpose of *damning* this business—but it was so well managed, that after debating near the whole day, it was carried against the motion by a Majority of 99—

Harry, there never was a subject came before a body of Men on earth that was more critically examined & debated than this has been, by this Convention—it is four weeks this day since they first meet.—

great credit is due to Govr. Hancock—Mr. Bowdoin—Mr. King—Mr. Parsons—Dalton—Sedgwick—Dana—Cushing—Gorham—S. Adams, C. Jarvis J C Jones—indeed was I [to] enumerate them all it would fill up another sheet of paper—you will observe it is Wednesday Evening—& I am wanted at the [*Loo table*?]⁴ & as I have eat no dinner yet, you will excuse me from sayg any more at this time—my love—& god bless you

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Jackson dated the letter "Boston Feby 6. 1788/6 O Clock Eveng."

2. See Jackson to Knox, 3 February (RCS:Mass., 1570–71).

3. Probably the *Massachusetts Gazette* of 5 February, which reprinted the amendments John Hancock proposed to the Constitution on 31 January.

4. "Loo" is short for "lanterloo," a card game.

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington Boston, 6 February¹

The convention this evening ratified the constitution. present three hundred and fifty five members One hundred & Eighty seven Yeas & one hundred & sixty eight Nays 19 majority in favor of the adoption—

As I mentioned to you in my last² the spirit which operated the last winter³ had its influence in the appointment of members for the convention and was a clog upon us thro' the whole business, to this source may be ascribed the great opposition we have experienced through the

long debates, and the smallness of the majority. I hope the neighbouring States will consider this and not suffer it to weigh in their decisions—

Yesterday there was a motion for an adjournment which cost us the whole day Upon the question at evening there were about 100 Majority against it this was a damper upon the opposition and they had little hope after.—When this evening the question went against them some of the leaders arose and assured the convention that they were convinced that the debates had been conducted with fairness and candour and that they should return with dispositions to satisfy the minds of their constituents and to preserve the peace & order of the people at large I hope and trust they will and that we shall soon enjoy the blessings of [a?] good government—

I shall continue to write to your Excellency whilst any thing relative to this great subject shall turn up here worthy your notice forgive the haste [as the] post office will be shut

[P.S.] Upon the issue of the question every demonstration of joy was discovered among the people

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC.
2. See Lincoln to Washington, 3 February (RCS:Mass., 1573).
3. Shays's Rebellion.

**Anthony Paine to Henry Van Schaack
Worcester, 6 February¹**

Yesterday being the day for the Gre[at?] Question to be put in the Convention whether they would Ratify the Constitution or not—the Antifederalist was not for having the Question put—but wanted to have the Convention Adjourn'd. they could not get a Majority to Adjourn—the Question then was put & passed by a Majority of Nineteen in favour of the Constitution—this I think is Good News for honest Men—in-closed I send You one of our Magazines²—for Your Perusal—

In haste am Your friend—

NB—we have not heard all the particulars or I should write You more fully—upon ye Subject—Mr. Williams³ desired me to send a person on purpose to inform You—this will be handed You by a Son of Mr. Pease's⁴—whom I *have agreed to pay Ten Dollars to for going*—

1. RC, Henry Van Schaack Scrapbook, Newberry Library, Chicago. Paine (1760–1788) was a Worcester apothecary. According to several accounts, the vote on ratifying the Constitution took place about 5:00 P.M. on the same day that Paine wrote this letter from Worcester, about forty-five miles west of Boston, making the letter's dating questionable.

2. Probably a reference to Isaiah Thomas's newspaper, the *Worcester Magazine*. In the most recent issue of the *Magazine* (31 January), Thomas devoted almost fourteen of the magazine's sixteen pages to news about the Massachusetts Convention.

3. For William Williams of Dalton, see RCS:Mass., 1577-78, note 2.
4. Mr. Pease was probably stagecoach operator Levi Pease.

William Pynchon Diary, Salem, 6 February¹

Wednesda. last night proved an exceeding cold one—This mornng. clear & cold but ye. wind subsided wholly this mornng.—& if the political blasts subside also we hope to have some good News from ye. Convention—Thompson's vehemence, 'tis said, being somewt. abated— from Boston we hear at 8 in ye. Evng.² that a Vote passed this in favr. of the Constitution thus—

Voters in Convention	355	
for ye. Constitutn.	187	}
against it	168	
majority of Voters	19	—all ye. bells

in Boston rang on ye. Occasion

1. MS, Pynchon Papers, MHi.
2. The vote was completed in the Convention in Boston by 5:00 P.M.

Winthrop Sargent to Henry Knox Boston, 6 February¹

This Afternoon 4 o'Clock came on the grand & important Question, which was (*happily*) determined, by a Majority of twenty one, in the affirmative—I have not Time by this Conveyance to say more, but that Taylor & Wedgery two Champions of Opposition, by way of extenuating their Guilt I suppose, declared to the Convention their determination to support *firmly*, & endeavour to make acceptable to their Constituents, the Doings of the Majority—Convention stands adjourn'd to to-morrow 10 o'Clock

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Sargent dated the letter "Wednesday Evg 6th Feby 1788."

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard Boston, 10 February (excerpt)¹

... S Adams had almost overset the apple-cart by *intruding* an amendment of his own fabrication on ye mornng of the day of ratification—it was to this purpose "That Congress should not infringe the Rights of *Conscience*, the Liberty of the *Press*, the right of peaceable citizens to bear arms, nor suffer unwarrantable seizure of persons, papers nor

property &c”² Feds & Antis were alarmed—the former because they saw the fatal Tendency of creating such apprehensions as immediately appeared in the latter, Some of whom said that such a Man as Mr A would not have guarded against these Evils if he had not seen a foundation for them in ye Constitution—When A perceived the mischief he had made he withdrew his motion, but some of the anti leaders revived it—& he was obliged finally to *vote against it*—it was thrown out by a very general Vote, but it is apprehended this manoeuvre lost the Constitution several Votes—Some suspect his *Intention* was to upset the whole, but “Charity hopeth all things”³ & I am seriously of the mind that it rather proceeded from a vanity of increasing his *own* popularity as Hancock had his by the midwifing the other amendments into ye World—Had it not been for this step the whole exertion had been in vain; A has made himself unpopular.

Some of the Delegates from Maine were converted,⁴ but I believe not a greater Proportion of them than of the other Counties—there were near 100 in all—Some of ye most virulent Opposers were Mainites viz Nason, Wedgery & Saml Thompson—ye last is implacable & I fancy has a kind of distraction about him—Parsons gave him a Caution against indulging his opposition now ye matter was settled & reminded him of the danger of being punished for Treason—His answer was he should not fear being hanged if he could have *him* for his Lawyer!

The Antis would have had the Question called much sooner but the fed’s protracted the debates on paragraphs till they were *sure* of a Majority—The address with wh they conducted both in public & private does them much honor.

Gerry is crest-fallen but acquiesces. . . .

1. RC, Belknap Papers, MHi. Printed: *Belknap Correspondence*, Part II, 17–19. For other excerpts from this letter, see RCS:Mass., 1625.

2. For Samuel Adams’s proposed amendment, see RCS:Mass., 1453.

3. 1 Corinthians 13:7. “[Charity] Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

4. Maine’s delegates voted 25 to 21 in favor of the Constitution.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox Boston, 10 February (excerpts)¹

my dear Harry—

Your favor of the 3d Inst. came to hand by the post last Eveng—mine of last Wednesday Evening² must have given you the highest g[r]atification & pleasure, and removed all your doubts with respect to the adoption of the Constitution in this State—If you will refer to mine three weeks since, you will observe that the *Majority* stands nearly what I then wrote you,³—I attend the debates & had good information,

or should not have written you so positive on the subject—I am pleased that I did, in the highest degree, because I put it in your power, to give *comfort* to the *Fed's*—and *blast* the expectations of the *Antis*—

after the Vote was decided on Wednesday Eveng—the Convention adjourned to Thursday Morg: 10. OC. for the purpose of completing their Pay Rolls &c. &c. a Number of the Principle leaders of the *Antis*, beg'd to have an opportunity to speak a few words to the Convention, before they dissolved—which was granted them—they all declared that the whole business of the Convention had been conducted with the most perfect fairness & impartiality, they were beaten by clear reasoning & unequivocal argument, & altho they were in the *Minority*, they wou'd conduct as peaceable & good Citizens, & do every thing in their power to reconcile their constituents to the Constitution, as much, as if they had been of the Majority—this discovered a candid temper & will have a very good effect.⁴ . . .

Governour Hancock has gained himself immortal Honor, in his conduct on this occasion—it is certain if he had not taken an active—indeed a very active part in favor of the adoption, we never should have gained a vote in favor of it—all the first & leading Characters in the Town & State have pledge'd themselves to him, to support him to the utmost [of] their power, & ability—for he has acted a most noble part in this business—& he never stood so high with the people as now—its true he lost some of the influence of the Insurgent party—but let the Fedral Constitution take place & their song will soon be over—

that party talk of Mr. Gerry to be Governour, & Genl. Warren Lt. G. next year—but poor dogs their day is past—

I will attend to the small map & send it you—write Govr. Hancock it will please him—

your friends are all well—my love to Lucy & the Children—
god bless you—from your ever affectionate

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. For the remainder of this letter, see RCS:Mass., 1614, 1625–26.

2. See Jackson to Knox, 6 February (RCS:Mass., 1580–81).

3. See Jackson to Knox, 20 January (RCS:Mass., 1537).

4. See RCS:Mass., 1645–47.

Henry Knox to Robert R. Livingston
New York, 10 February¹

I send you a summary statement of my last information from Boston. In a few days I expect to be able to congratulate you on the adoption of the new constitution by Massachusetts—

On Wednesday the 30th ultimo, Mr Hancock was well enough to take his seat in the convention. On thursday he brought forward the proposition for adopting the constitution, and for recommending certain alterations agreeably to the paper herein enclosed. The propositions were seconded by *Mr Saml Adams*, and committed to a large committee of two members from each county, a majority of the committee being federalists—As the propositions were the production of the federalists after mature deliberation there cannot be a doubt that the committee will report in favor of the propositions as they are stated

The final question was² most certainly taken in the convention somewhere between the 5th and 8th instant. The members of the convention and others who wrote to me on the 3d³ instant have no doubt with respect to the adoption of the constitution, but they do not flatter themselves with a large majority

a most perfect Union was effected between the friends of Mr Hancock and Mr Bowdoin Handsome things are said of the open and decisive conduct of Mr Hancock, and also of Mr S Adams, notwithstanding his neutrality in the first part of the business. please to Let Mr Benson⁴ see this letter

1. RC, Livingston Papers, New-York Historical Society. See note 2 for a significant difference between this copy sent to Livingston and Knox's retained draft, which is in the Henry Knox Papers, The Gilder Lehrman Collection (GLC 2437), on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Livingston (1746–1813), a lawyer and owner of a large estate (Clermont) in Columbia County, N.Y., was in the Dutchess County town of Poughkeepsie, where the New York legislature was meeting. (See also note 4, below.) He was a delegate to Congress, 1775–76, 1779–80, 1784–85; chancellor of New York state, 1777–1801; and Confederation Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1781–83. In July 1788 he voted to ratify the Constitution in the New York Convention. On 17 February Livingston wrote Knox, thanking him for his letter and congratulating him on Massachusetts ratification (J. S. H. Fogg Autograph Collection, MeHi).

2. In the recipient's copy, Knox replaced "may" with "was."

3. See the 3 February letters from Nathaniel Gorham, Henry Jackson, Rufus King, and Winthrop Sargent (all four above). For a brief discussion of Knox as a clearing house of information on national and state politics, see RCS:Mass., 28n.

4. Egbert Benson was a member of the New York Assembly (meeting in Poughkeepsie), which, on 1 February, voted to call a state convention to consider the Constitution. Knox himself wrote Benson on 20 January, reporting on the Massachusetts Convention (RCS: Mass., 753).

Henry Knox to George Washington New York, 10 February¹

I thank you my dear Sir for your favor of the 10th of last month which I duly received.²

The constitution has labored in Massachusetts exceedingly more than was expected. The opposition has not arisen from a consideration

of the merits or demerits of the thing itself as a political machine, but from a deadly principle levelled at the existence of all government whatever—; The principles of insurgency expanded, and deriving fresh strength and life from the impunity with which the rebellion of last year was suffered to escape.

It is a singular circumstance that in Massachusetts, the property, the abilities, and the virtue of the state are almost solely in favor of the constitution—Opposed to it are the late insurgents and all those who abetted their designs constituting $\frac{4}{5}$ ths of the opposition³—a few very few indeed well meaning people are joined to them

The friends of the constitution in that state without overrating their own importance conceived that the decision of Massachusetts would most probably seal the fate of the proposition—They therefore proceeded most cautiously and wisely—debated every objection with the most guarded good nature and candor but took no questions on the several paragraphs and thereby prevented the establishment of parties—This conduct has been attended with the most beneficial consequences—It is now no secret that on the opening of the convention, a majority were prejudiced against it—But the federalists are now well assured that the scale is turned in their favor—The question to approve and ratify in the form contained in the enclosed papers⁴ was most probably taken somewhere between the 5th & 8th instant⁵—Although the federalists presume on a majority they do not flatter themselves with a large one—The recommendatory alterations are to be considered as conciliatory propositions, and in no degree militating with an unconditional adoption As the form of ratification, and the propositions for alterations were the *mature* productions of the federalists, it is probable that they will pass without any material alterations—

Mrs Knox desires me to associate her in the most affectionate respects to you and Mrs Washington

[P.S.] Mr *Saml Adams* seconded Mr Hancocks motion⁶—

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. For Washington's response to this letter, see note 5 (below).

2. See CC:434 (long excerpt); and Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 28–29.

3. In Knox's 14 January letter to Washington, he estimated that the insurgents represented " $\frac{4}{5}$ ths" of the total number of delegates (RCS:Mass., 707).

4. Probably a reference to the *Massachusetts Centinel* of 2 February, which printed the text of the recommendatory amendments to the Constitution that John Hancock proposed to the Convention on the afternoon of 31 January. On 3 February Nathaniel Gorham, Henry Jackson, Rufus King, and Winthrop Sargent each wrote Knox and each referred to that issue of the *Centinel* (all above). Gorham, in fact, enclosed a copy of the paper in his letter. It is possible that one or more of the other three did the same.

5. On 14 February Knox wrote Washington, informing him that Massachusetts had ratified the Constitution (RCS:Mass., 1698–99). On 3 March Washington replied to this

letter and Knox's letter of 14 February, offering congratulations on Massachusetts ratification. "Had this been done without its concomitants [recommendatory amendments]," declared Washington, "and by a larger majority, the stroke would have been more severely felt by the antifederalists in other States.—As it is, it operates as a damper to their hopes, and is a matter of disappointment & chagreen to them all.—Under the circumstances enumerated in your letters, the favorable decision which has taken place, in that State, could hardly have been expected.—Nothing short of the good sense, sound reasoning, moderation & temper of its powerful advocates, could have carried the question. The decision of which will be very influential on the equivocal States" (GLC 5638, The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York).

6. See RCS:Mass., 1384–85.

Jeremy Belknap to Benjamin Rush Boston, 12 February (excerpt)¹

. . . In our late Convention something was said by way of objection to the Constitution because "it *established*" (as the speakers said) "the importation of Slaves for 20 years" Several of the antifederal Party urged this, but none more violently than a certain Quaker Preacher who went so far as to predict that the same measure should be meted to us—i.e that we should lose our Liberties as the Africans lost theirs²—He was answered very ably by Mr Parsons³ who construed that article into a dawn of hope for the final abolition of the horrid Traffick & spoke of it as a great Point gained of the southern states. However the Quaker remained inflexible & as I know him to be a Man of influence in the Circle of *Friends* at the Eastward I suppose he will prejudice the minds of a great Part of that fraternity against the Constitution. The reason of my mentioning this to you is to desire you to inform me whether among the Quakers of Pennslva: any such Construction is put on that article wch respects the Migration or Importation of Foreigners⁴—I think there must be some Men of Sense among them who cannot be so prejudiced, but I wish to be made certain of it & I think I shall be able to make a good use of the Information. . . .

1. RC, Rush Papers, Library Company of Philadelphia. Printed: CC:Vol. 2, pp. 529–30 (longer excerpt).

2. See James Neal's speech of 25 January (RCS:Mass., 1354).

3. Theophilus Parsons' remarks have not been preserved, but for a summary of responses to Neal and others, see the last paragraph of Convention Debates, 25 January, P.M. (RCS:Mass., 1354).

4. On 28 February Rush responded that "They [the Quakers] consider very wisely that the Abolition of slavery in our country must be gradual in order to be effectual, and that the Section of the constitution which will put it in the power of Congress twenty years hence to prohibit restrain it altogether, was a great point obtained from the Southern States" (CC:573).

Nathaniel Barrell to George Thatcher
York, 20 February (excerpt)¹

My good friend

Major Nason delivered me your two last favors of 27th. & 28th. ultimo, the day after the *Great*, the *Important*, Question was decided²—and tho I blush to think of the trouble I have given you on this subject, yet I am pleased—much gratified, to find we at last agree in sentiment on this matter, and that I have this further confirmation of your attachment.—

Your friend, *our Eastern Cicero*, will give you more perfectly the particulars of the Convention, than this little instrum't in my hand is capable off³—and save me the pain of exposing my folly,—he can tell you with what zeal I push'd the opposition, till powerful reason flash'd conviction on my mind, and bore down all before it, in spite of the almost invincible resistance of deep rooted prejudice.—

I recolect with pleasure the Candour which appear'd in your conduct at the period you point at, when Whigg & Torry ran so high;—and tho at that time I was branded with the opprobrious epithet of the one—my soul rejected the charge⁴—knowing there never was a time since I have been able to wield the sword that I would not cheerfully expose my life in defence of my Country—but my friend tho there be no other reward for this, than what springs from the consciousness of the action, I can assure you I place as first among the most meritorious acts of my life, my assent to the federal Constitution, notwithstanding I see serious consequences attendant on it⁵—and that by thus doing I create in this town (at least) temporary enemies, of those I considered two months since as disinterested friends.—there are various sorts of opposers to this system; and all of them dangerous.—some wish to be under a British Government, which if this takes place, they can have no chance for—some were ill treated as torrys and are now ready to sacrifice all for revenge—others are more in debt than they have property to discharge, and fear they shall not have paper money to cheat their creditors with—some are in debt, & tho they have property to pay, yet the fear of tender acts ceasing, cuts off[f] their hopes—while some honest ignorant minds, whome my soul pitys, become dupes to the above group, who persuade them that their libertys are in danger, and they will be made slaves of others there are who wish for power in the persons of representatives, and join all those as the surest channel to obtain their ends—aside from all these are not a few of those Insurgents, who have neither property nor principle, consequently want no Government but that Anarchy which may in its confusion give them a

chance of shareing all property amongst them—this lesson I have learnt by being in the minority, where I was oblig'd to mix wth. a set of the most unprincipled of men—all these worthys are united in sparing no pains to influence the minds of all, and persuade me to believe what they themselves do not—that the proposed amendments will not take place—should this be as they wish—I dread the consequence—perhaps little short of a revolution may take place—as such deceptions will not be easily swallowd—I feel for myself—there is a something which whispers within—that tho more than fifty five years has silverd my head, I should be one of the first that would sound the alarm, and call to Arms—may Heaven prevent it! . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB. Printed: Goodwin, "Thatcher Papers," 339-40. This letter was postmarked at Portsmouth, N.H., on 26 February.

2. The day after the Massachusetts Convention ratified the Constitution was 7 February.

3. See Samuel Nasson to George Thatcher, 26 February (RCS:Mass., 1707-9).

4. Barrell was a Sandemanian, a religious sect that believed obedience to the King was a Christian duty. Hence, Sandemanians refused to take up arms against Great Britain and were treated as Loyalists.

5. Elected as an Antifederalist by the town of York, Barrell changed his mind and voted for ratification. Upon his return to York, he "was much Abused" (RCS:Mass., 1072-73, 1448-50, 1707-8).

**Bossenger Foster, Jr., to Andrew Craigie
Boston, 24 February (excerpt)¹**

My dear Uncle & Friend

. . . You seem, my Friend, very much pleased, with the new Constitution, & with the conduct of this State respecting its adoption,² I was as you are exceedingly gratified, to observe so much Candor & Liberality exhibited, by our convention, during their session I was however chagrin'd, to find at the decision of the Question; so small a majority in favour of its adoption; since it is esteemed, by our greatest Characters; & profoundest Politicians, to be a System compleatly adapted to our present Exigences, one which will preserve to us & our Posterity, the blessings of Liberty & Independence firm & indissoluble—The House in which the Convention sat, was so very small; & the Air so exceedingly Noxious & disagreeable, in consequence of the immense Number of People, which continually crowded the Galleries, that I thought it unadvisable to attend the debates so often as inclination prompted which however, was no small Mortification; as I look'd upon it, the most important subject, that had ever been canvassed, since the civilization of America;—I did not, however; miss hearing some of the best & most elegant Addresses, particularly those of Messrs King, Parsons, Sedgwick, Ghorham, Dana & others; the opponents, however Numerous, were not very eminent Characters,—the most influential

among them, were Messrs Thomson, Wedgery Nason, Taylor, &c—The debates I'm informed are soon to be published in a Pamphlet as they are not uninteresting; I will forward you one immediately on their Publication. . . .

1. RC, Craigie Papers, MWA. Foster (1767–1816), a graduate of Harvard College (1787), was the son of Craigie's sister Elizabeth and Bossenger Foster, Sr., a Boston merchant with whom Craigie had business dealings. In September 1788 the younger Foster joined his Harvard classmate John Quincy Adams in the office of Theophilus Parsons in order to begin his law studies, eventually becoming a lawyer. (For Adams's sketch of Foster, see Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 188.) Craigie (1743–1819), a native of Boston and Continental Apothecary General during the Revolution, was a New York City wholesale apothecary, a speculator in land (Scioto Company) and public securities, and a member of the Society of the Cincinnati of both New York and Massachusetts.

2. Craigie's letter has not been located, but his state of mind and interests at this time are reflected in a 20 February letter to Daniel Parker, a former Watertown, Mass., merchant and army contractor then living in Europe. Although Craigie did not mention the Constitution, he stated, "I am the more convinced every day, that great things, very great things may be done in this Country, if certain Interests in Europe & in this Country are combined. the advantages of certain speculations may be made sure, and it will be in your power to connect the most usefull characters in this country with such characters in Europe as you may think proper to engage with" (Craigie Papers, MWA).

Ephraim Ward to Enos Hitchcock
Brookfield, 2 March¹

Revd. sir,

I improve the opportunity by D. Foster Esqr.² to give some account of our Journey from Providence. we expected the Sleying wou'd be bad for a few miles, but we found it so for more than half the way: but tho the travilling was bad, & the weather extreme cold; we got within a Mile of Boston that night; & went in, the next morning before breakfast. I attended the debates wednesday A.M. was much pleased with Observats. made by Judge Dana, Mr. Cabot, & some others.—discoverd. Mr. White, Brig: Thomson & several Others by the description you gave of them. Mr. Stilman delivered an elegant Speech towards the close of ye debates.³ The President (Govr. Hancock) made a very handsome address to the Convention, & people in the gallery just bef[or]e the final question was taken.⁴ the taking of that was, I believe, a period of peculiar anxiety on all Sides. but there was the greatest propriety observed by all. the Procession on friday was beyond description humourous, novel, & expressive. there was ye most general Satisfaction appeared in the countenances of all ranks of people that I ever saw upon any Occasion.⁵ we arriv'd safe at Brookfd. on Saturday Eve found all well. The Antifeds. among us are pretty still at present.—Mrs. Ward joins me in affectionate regards to you & Mrs. Hitchcock. Complemts. to Dr. Throop⁶ & Lady & proper Salutats. to all Friends

1. RC, Ms. 46.55, Brown University Library. Ward dated this letter "March 2d, 1788 Sab[bath]. Eve." Ward (1741–1818), a Harvard graduate (1763), was pastor of the West Parish Congregational Church in Brookfield from 1771 until his death.

2. Dwight Foster of Brookfield, who had attended the Massachusetts Convention debates, delivered this letter to Hitchcock in Providence, R.I. The address page is docketed, "Hond by D. Foster Esqr."

3. For Samuel Stillman's speech of 6 February, see RCS:Mass., 1454–60.

4. For John Hancock's speech of 6 February, see RCS:Mass., 1475–76.

5. For newspaper descriptions of this procession, which took place on 8 February, see RCS:Mass., 1617–22.

6. Amos Throop, a physician, represented Providence in the Rhode Island Assembly in 1788.

David Sewall to George Thatcher Boston, 4 March (excerpts)¹

Yours of the 9th. and 24th. ultimo came to hand yesterday, the former after having Travelled to York, and the latter with the Paper Containing Mr. Adams Letter,² and several Antifederal remarks, some of Which I think are destitute of any foundation—and in especial Manner the paragraff respecting the Province of Mayne Members in our Convention, Who are said in this paragraff to have been gained over by a promise of a Separation,³ no such thing, for the Persons that have been Sticklers for this Separation Voted in opposition—and tis the first time I ever heard of the Suggestion, so that your observation of its being a truly Antifederal Paper I think fully Verified and that the propagation of untruths, are a needfull Support of the Cause it means to fortify—I was mistaken in my last respecting N. Hampe. but it is Suggested that the Pillar will rise there after having Seasoned a little.⁴ . . . The Printers here have really mended the diction and some of the Sentiments of A. federal Speakers If I may Credit some members of the Convention as well as some of the Spectator[s]—General T——⁵ you may Suppose for one—The Speakers on that Side in general was really Contemptible in every Sense indeed some of them had Speeches made out of Doors Which they read, but read & pronouncd in an awkward manner—Who fabricated Mr. N. last Speech I am uncertain—one thing I am satisfied of he never made it himself not that I conceive it an Elegant one⁶

But I can ad no more at present

1. RC, Foster Autograph Collection, MHi.

2. A reference to John Adams's 26 December 1787 letter to his son-in-law William Stephens Smith, which is printed in the third volume of Adams's *Defence of the Constitutions* (CC:16). In the last two paragraphs of this letter, Adams expressed strong support for the Constitution. The letter was printed in the *New York Journal* on 23 February (CC:557) at the behest of Rufus King, who had received a pre-publication copy from Smith. Thatcher, then in New York City, sent Sewall a copy of the *New York Journal*. (See also note 3 below.)

For a discussion of the publication of Adams's letter in the *New York Journal* and its subsequent reprintings in Massachusetts, see RCS:Mass., 1721–22.

3. On 23 February the Antifederalist *New York Journal* reprinted an item from the Antifederalist Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*, 20 February, which stated that "It appears that notwithstanding the province of Main was gained over by the promise of a separate state, yet there would have been a decided majority in the convention of Massachusetts against the new constitution, if it had not been for the *deceptive amendments* included in the ratification. The members for, were 187, against 168, majority 19—so that had ten of the majority voted against it, the constitution would have been rejected by that state; which it appears was the wish of above three-fourths of its inhabitants. The rejoicings of the town of Boston on this occasion, is similar to those of the people of Sweden, when (tired of the oppressions of an aristocratic senate) they made their king *absolute*" (CC:Vol. 4, p. 522).

4. On 22 February the New Hampshire Convention adjourned without ratifying the Constitution, thereby surprising many who thought it would ratify easily (CC:554). On 11 February Sewall had written Thatcher that "I cannot Conceive there is a doubt But they will ratify the federal Constitution" (RCS:Mass., 1692).

5. Samuel Thompson.

6. For Samuel Nasson's speech of 1 February, see RCS:Mass., 1396–1400.

Reminiscences of the Massachusetts Convention

With the exception of the Backus diary, the four documents printed below by Convention delegate Isaac Backus (two documents), Convention secretary George R. Minot, and Convention observer Jeremy Belknap were written some time after the Convention adjourned.

Isaac Backus Diary (excerpts)¹

Tuesday Jan. 1. 1788, I went and prt. [i.e., preached] at capt. Starr's in Bridgwater,² with some freedom.

Lordsday Jan. 6, a cold day, & a dull time.

Lordsday Jan. 13, prt. twice to a few people.

A journey to Boston.

A New Constitution for the United States of America, was finished at Philadelphia, Sept. 17. 1787; and our town met on Dec. 17, and chose four delegates³ to meet in Boston Jan. 9. 1788, with others in Convention, to establish or reject it; of which delegates I was the first, without the least motion of mine that way. When I was first informed of it on Dec. 20, I thot. I should not go; but as religious liberty is concerned in the affair, and many were earnest for my going, I consented, & went as far as elder Briggs's Jan. 14, and went into Boston the 15, and met with the Convention that day and the next in the State house; but as we had not room enough there, we removed the 17th. to mr. Belknap's meetinghouse in Long lane, where we continued our

meetings from day to day, until the Constitution was ratified on Feb. 6, by 187 yeas, against 168 nays, being a majority of 19. Each delegate had full liberty, in his turn, to say all he pleased, for or against the Constitution; by means of which I obtained much more light, about the extensive affairs of our Country, the nature of the proposed Constitution, and the security of the rights of the people therein, than I had when I went from home, and therefore voted for it. And yet elder Alden of Bellingham, elder Rathbun of Pittsfield, elder Tingley of Waterborough (county of York) all voted against it,⁴ and so did two thirds of the baptist members of the Convention, of which there were above twenty. Elder Stillman, and I, with twelve congregational ministers, voted for it; though doubtless with very different views. The exclusion of any hereditary lordly power, and of any religious test, I view as our greatest securities in this Constitution; but perhaps many mean no more thereby, than the exclusion of such lordship as they have in England, & of requiring any assent to any prescribed forms of faith or worship. By the covenant of circumcision, the seed of Abraham were born with a right to buy others as servants, and the seed of Aaron were the only priesthood in that church, which was to be governed wholly by the revealed will of God, given in writing by the immediate inspiration of his holy Spirit. But the mystery of iniquity, by putting common parents in the place of Abraham, religious teachers in the room of the seed of Aaron, and the inventions & laws of men, in the place of the infallible laws of God, has filled the world with confusion, blood and slavery; from which the only way of deliverance, is by allowing rulers no power but what the voice of the people can again take from them, & teachers no power but what is given and supported by the laws & Spirit of Christ, our one Lawgiver, James 4. 12,⁵ without any law of man in the case.

More light concerning these things is now breaking forth, than ever hath appeared before in our land. President Manning came to Boston January 15, and stayed till the 31st. and was treated with great respect by the chief leaders of our country. Lordsday Jan. 20, I heard him preach in the forenoon at elder Gair's, & elder Alden in the aftn., & I prt. in the evening at elder Stillman's to a large audience. Jan. 27, at the request of the honorable Nathanael Goreham, dr. Manning prt. at Charlestown in the forenoon, as I did in the aftern.,⁶ and in the evening at elder Gair's.

Lordsday Feb. 3, I prt. for elder Stillman in the foren., and in the evening at mr. Nutting's.⁷ The grand question was taken in the Convention the 6th., we dissolved the 7th., I came to Braintree the 8th. & home the 9th. 40. m[iles]

Nymphas Marstin esq; a delegate from Barnstable, appeared at the point of death in Boston, when I came away. (He died the 11th. aet. 60, much lamented) . . .

Lordsday Feb. 10 prt. twice to our people, tho' some are very uneasy at my voting for the new Constitution. My daughter Sibel appears to be in a consumption, & her flesh is much wasted since I have been gone.⁸

1. MS, Backus Diary, Vol. 11, Rider Collection (2-ZZN B12d), Brown University Library.

2. Possibly James Starr, at whose home Backus had preached since the 1770s.

3. For the Middleborough election of Convention delegates, see RCS:Mass., 983.

4. Noah Alden was pastor of the Baptist Church in Bellingham from 1766 until his death in 1797. As a delegate to the state constitutional convention, 1779–80, he championed the cause of religious liberty. Pelataiah Tingley, a graduate of Yale College (1761), was pastor of the Baptist church in Sanford, Maine, until 1782, when he moved to what became the town of Waterborough. For Valentine Rathbun, see RCS:Mass., 1007, note 12.

5. "There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?"

6. Convention delegate Nathaniel Gorham invited James Manning to preach before the First (Congregational) Church in Charlestown, which Gorham attended.

7. Possibly Jonathan Nutting, a Charlestown trader, or Samuel Nutting, a Cambridge physician. Baptist preachers often held services in private homes.

8. Sibel Backus died in March 1788.

Isaac Backus: Minutes about the Constitution (excerpts)¹

Public credit failed so far, and the difficulty became so great, in the United States of America, that, by the advice of Congress, a Convention of delegates met at Philadelphia in May, and on Sept. 17. 1787, they published a new Constitution of Government for these States, to be established or rejected, by Conventions elected in each State for the purpose.

At a meeting of the town of Middleborough, Dec. 17. 1787, four delegates were elected for the purpose, viz. Isaac Backus, deacon Benjamin Thomas, Isaac Thompson, esq; & Isaac Soule.²

The cause why a new Constitution was needed, was given in the State Convention at Philadelphia Nov. 24th. by James Wilson esq; in these words,

"The evil has stolen in from a quarter little suspected, and the rock of Freedom, which stood firm against the attacks of a foreign foe, has been sapped and undermined by the licentiousness of our own citizens.—The commencement of peace, was likewise the commencement of our distress & disgrace. Devoid of power, we could neither prevent the excessive importations which lately deluged the country, nor even raise from that excess a contribution to the public renew."

And he says, "In all governments, whatever is their form, however they may be constituted, there must be a power established, from which there is no appeal; & which is therefore called absolute, supreme and uncontrollable." Which power he says is in the people; & he would have them give a large measure of it to the new Congress.³ . . .

The Convention met at the State house in Boston on Wednesday Jan. 9. 1788, but did little more that week, than agree upon their rules of proceeding, and place of meeting. They tried the meeting house in Brattle street, but found they could not hear well in it. I set off & went to brother Briggs in Stoughton the 14th. and got into Boston so as to attend the Convention the 15th. in the afternoon. President Manning arrived in town that evening, & attended on the debates of the Conventn untill the 31st. The 17th. we removd. to mr. Belknap's meeting house, where we met the rest of our session.

The 19th. elders Alden, & Rathbun, & myself dined with gov. Bowdoin. Lordsday Jan. 20. I heard elder Manning in the fornoon, & elder Alden in the aftn. at elder Gairs', & I prt. [i.e., preached] in the evening at elder Stillman's meeting house, to a large audience. The 21st. I dined with prt. [i.e., president] Manning, the honl. Mr Goreham & King, at Thos. Daws, jur. The 23d. I dined with many gentlemen at mr. Thos. Russells.

Lordsday Jan. 27, I heard prdt. Manning in the forn. at Charlestown, & I prt. there in the aftn., & at elder Gairs in the evening. The 28th. I dined at mr. Peter Thachers.

Lordsday Feb. 3. I prt. for mr. Stillman in the fornn. heard mr. Gair in the aftn. & communed there, & I prt. at mr. Nuttings⁴ in the evening. Feb. 4. near night I made a speech in the Convention, upon the great advantage of having religious tests, and hereditary lordship, excluded from our government.⁵ Earnest attempts were made on the 5th. for adjournment of the Convention, but it did not obtain.

Feb. 6. 1788, about sun down the grand question was put, upon which there were 187 yeas, & 168 nays; so that the Constitution was established by a majority of 19.

The 7th. we finished our actings, & dissolved about 1 o'clock.

The 8th. recd. about a third of our pay. I receivd. £3. and paid off my reckonings viz. £2.6.6, for boarding at capt. Samuel Daggetts⁶ 23 days. 2/2 for washing linen, 9/4 to mr. Sherburn for keeping my horse 7. nights, & 2/4. to a Barber for Shaving &c. 7 times; in all £3.0.4. I came that night to mr. Seth Mann's;⁷ and the 9th. came home: found that my daughter Sibel hath wasted in her flesh considerably in my absence.

1. MS, Isaac Backus Papers, Brown University Library. Printed: Backus, *Diary*, III, 1215–19, 1220–21. Backus entitled this document “Minutes of my acting about the New Constitution 1788.” The omitted text concerns the Baptist struggle for religious liberty at the time of the meeting of the state constitutional convention in 1779–80. (For this struggle, see Backus, *Diary*, II, 1033–34, 1041–43.)

2. See RCS:Mass., 983.

3. For the text of James Wilson’s 24 November speech to the Pennsylvania Convention, first printed as a pamphlet in Philadelphia on 28 November, see RCS:Pa., 340–50, especially pp. 347, 348, 349. For the speech’s circulation and impact in Massachusetts, see RCS:Mass., 419–21. For its circulation and impact throughout America, see CC:289.

4. See RCS:Mass., 1595, note 7.

5. In his history of New England’s Baptists, Backus discussed the Convention debate on the provision of the Constitution concerning religious tests—a provision Backus defended in his 4 February speech. Backus quoted excerpts of his speech and an excerpt of the 31 January speech of Congregational minister Philips Payson of Chelsea, who also defended the provision. Backus lamented, however, that his 4 February speech “was not suffered to be printed in the same paper in Boston, in which the speech of the Congregational minister was printed. Though the wisdom which is from above, is without *partiality* and without *hypocrisy*.” (See *A History of New England* . . . [2nd ed., 2 vols., Newton, Mass., 1871], II, 336.)

The *Massachusetts Centinel* printed the debates of 31 January (including Payson’s speech) on 20 February, and the debates of 4 February (excluding Backus’s speech) on 1 and 5 March. Backus’s speech, however, became available to the public on 18 March, when the book edition of the Convention *Debates* went on sale in Boston.

6. For Daggett’s boardinghouse, see RCS:Mass., 1521, note 9.

7. Either Seth Mann, Sr., or Seth Mann, Jr., both of Braintree and both probably Baptists. The elder Mann served as one of the town’s constables in 1769, while his son was one of the town’s fire wardens almost continuously since 1773.

Jeremy Belknap: Account of the Massachusetts Convention¹

. . . Then for 2 or 3 Days ye Town was over head & Ears in joy—Bells—Drums—Guns—Processions &c—

It was matter of speculation ~~for some Time where~~ how Mr Adams came to propose *such* amendments—many suspicions were formed & some tho’t he *meant* to overthrow ye Constitution.—Certainly it was ye worst blow which had been given to it²—In a Week or two afterward came along a *protest* of ye Pennsylv minority—in wh *these very things* are objected to ye Constitution wh he proposed to guard against by his motion³—

It is sd. ye Copies of these Protests were purposely *detained* on ye Road—but it is supposed A had a Copy in a Letter before ye Convention was dissolved—

An attempt was made by the antifeds in Pennsylv to throw an Odium on ye Post officers for detaing these & other Papers.—but in fact the Office has nothing to do with them—The carrying of News-Papers is

a matter entirely between the Printers & the Riders & is allowed to ye latter as a Perquisite.⁴

NB. The Trades men's meeting at ye Green-Dragon previous to ye sitting of ye Convention—did a great deal of good⁵—ye Story of it is—

On ____ day of Decr the 12 delegates chosen for Bo[ston] dined tog[ethe]r at Govr Bowdoin's by his Invitan⁶—there SA disclosed Sentiments opposed to ye *Constitun*—wh were combated by ye other Gentn—at parting A sd he was open to conviction.—

This *took air*.—on Friday—Saturday JA⁷ & some others took care to spread it amg ye Tradesmen (for it must be noted yt a part of wt SA sd was yt *ye Tradesmen were agt it*) On Monday Evg ____ a tradesmen's meetg was held at wh some apropos resolves were passed wh were published on Tuesday—& wh helped to *settle* some wavering minds amg ye Delegates JH. JW. CJ. & SA. (as is supposed)⁸—A in ye Course of debate in Conventn. sd but little—what he sd was *rather in favor* of the Constitution—when it came to ye last pinch his introduced Amendments had well-nigh *overset it*.

When he perceived ye uneasiness in ye minds of both parties—he withdrew his Motion—one of the antifeds revied it—Adams then *Opposed it*—Sd he shd vote agt it & actually did so—but it is tho't his Manoe[u]vre lost sevl Votes for ye Constn.—it is sd CJ was with him 3 Evengs previous—persuadg him *not to make ye Motion* but could not prevail—

1. MS, Belknap Diary, MHi. The first four paragraphs are in Belknap's diary as the last portion of his entry for 6 February. (For the text that precedes these paragraphs, see RCS:Mass., 1490.) The rest of the text printed here, which is undated, is from another part of the almanac in which Belknap kept his diary. (For a discussion of this diary, see RCS:Mass., 1138–39.)

On the page opposite the text of the first two paragraphs printed below appears a printed copy of the 17 September letter of the President of the Constitutional Convention (George Washington) to the President of Congress, forwarding and commenting upon the Constitution just adopted by the Constitutional Convention. In that letter, Belknap underlined the words “consolidation of our Union,” and, in the right hand margin, wrote “*consolidation* an unhappily chosen word, wh has been productive of much misapprehension & Controversy.”

2. For Samuel Adams's motion on 6 February, see RCS:Mass., 1452–53.

3. “The Dissent of the Minority of the Pennsylvania Convention,” first printed in the *Pennsylvania Packet* on 18 December (CC:353), circulated in Boston and was reprinted as a pamphlet in Boston while the Massachusetts Convention sat. (See RCS:Mass., 544, 819–20; and CC:Vol. 3, pp. 11, 34n.)

4. For the charges against the post office respecting the carrying of newspapers, see RCS:Mass., 818–21.

5. For “The Meeting of the Tradesmen of Boston on the Constitution,” 7 January, see RCS:Mass., 629–35.

6. The meeting of Boston's Convention delegates at the home of James Bowdoin took place on 3 January.

7. According to Boston Convention delegate Christopher Gore, this rumor was spread by another Boston Convention delegate John Winthrop (to Rufus King, 6 January, RCS:Mass., 627). Belknap possibly meant to write "J.W." rather than "J.A."

8. Boston Convention delegates John Hancock, John Winthrop, Charles Jarvis, and Samuel Adams, respectively.

George R. Minot Journal (excerpt)¹

... When the Convention met, the division of the members was very striking. Those of the learned professions, and the men of property were almost unanimously in favour of the constitution. But the great body of middling land-holders were opposed to it. The contest was therefore extremely unequal. All the learning and eloquence was on one side, while the plain dictates of common sense suffered from the want of powers of expression, on the other. This difficulty led the yeomanry to procure assistance from any quarter where it could be obtained, and they were obliged to recur to demagogues whose characters very unjustly cast a shade upon their whole party. With such disproportioned abilities the discussion could not be satisfactory. The most serious principles in government were argued away to nothing, by able casuists, & the mouths of the opponents being shut, they were ashamed to say that they were not convinced. Annual elections, rotation in office, qualifications of officers, standing armies, & declarations of rights, were all shewn to be too trivial to be insisted upon. And it was demonstrated that to withhold any powers of taxation, or of any other kind from government, but they should abuse them, was an unreasonable principle of jealousy which would prevent any government at all. However, illiterate as the members in opposition were, they convinced the learned advocates for the constitution of the necessity of amendments, and these accordingly applied themselves to the President, who was then sick, to introduce certain conciliatory propositions, as it would have been too great an acknowledgment to have introduced them from their own party. Accordingly the President offered them; and, although, he observed that they were formed in the intervals of his pain, yet they were most certainly, in the hand writing of a leading constitutionalist, (Mr. Parsons) a few words excepted, which were in the hand writing of Dr. Jarvis, & one article by Mr. King—

When the President first came into Convention, it was observed to me by a leading member, that there was no people under heaven, more calculated for monarchy, and this observation was founded upon the great respect which was paid to the President as he was led to his place,

which seemed to approach to servility, and looked like the blind adoration paid to Kings merely as such. I told the observer, that I thought the appearance only proceeded from civility & good manners, and that it was no evidence, that they ever would sacrifice a single principle to his authority, and it turned out, that the constitutionalists were surprized at the want of effect in the conciliatory propositions, which they supposed through Go'vr Hancocks influence, would have made many prosylites. But, instead of that, it entirely alienated the anti constitutionalists from the Governour, and, when they found he was not their man, they entered into a combination to elect Mr. Gerry in his stead.

1. MS, Minot Papers, MHi. Minot dated the section of his manuscript journal from which this excerpt is taken, "1788./Janry./& Febry." He entitled this section "BAD measures in a GOOD cause." (For the entire section, see Mfm:Mass. Other excerpts from it appear in RCS:Mass., 993, 1041.)

VI.
THE AFTERMATH OF RATIFICATION
6 February–23 July 1788

**VI–A. Reports of Ratification of the Constitution by the
Massachusetts Convention, 6–20 February**

Many letters and diaries report and comment on the ratification of the Constitution by the Massachusetts Convention. These letters and diaries analyze the vote on ratification, describing in particular the different groups opposing and supporting the Constitution and the importance of the Convention's recommendatory amendments. Some letter writers praised those members of the minority who agreed to support the Constitution even though they had voted against ratification. Such a conciliatory gesture gave some hope that peace would reign in Massachusetts. Other correspondents speculated that Massachusetts ratification would assist New Hampshire Federalists in their convention, which was scheduled to meet in mid-February. A few letter writers also described the celebrations of ratification in various places. Many of the letters were written to persons in New York City, the seat of Congress, from which place the news of ratification was further disseminated. On 16 February Governor John Hancock sent the Massachusetts Form of Ratification to the state executives, pointing out the amendments that accompanied Massachusetts' ratification.

John Avery, Jr., to George Thatcher
Boston, 6 February¹

My good friend

I have the Pleasure to inform you that the proposed Constitution has been adopted this Afternoon by the Convention—three hundred and fifty five members present one hundred & Eighty seven in favour; leaves Nineteen Majority.—I should have [been] much more pleased if there had been more unanimity but I hope it will terminate to the Peace, happiness & Safety not only of this Commonwealth but the United States by a general Adoption of it—Amendments have been proposed and agreed to & had I Time would transmit the same—

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

Joseph Barrell to Samuel Blachley Webb
Boston, 6 February (excerpt)¹

Dr Sam

Joy to you & all good men, this day about 5 o'clock the Convention finished their Sessions & have adopted the Constitution 187 yeas 168 Nays Majority 19. & considering we have at least 80 Shays men & some more as bad as you or I ever wish any men to be, set it down, it is equal to a Unanimous Vote in any other State—This is General Joy—In particular I have to inform you yesterday Sally gave me a very fine Boy whose Name will be George if my parson pleases. . . .

1. RC, Barrell Papers, CtY. Printed: Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Blachley Webb* (3 vols., New York, 1893–1894), III, 92.

Tristram Dalton to Stephen Hooper
Boston, 6 February¹

MY DEAR BROTHER:

God be praised!

With the utmost satisfaction I now announce to you and to my fellow citizens, which pray communicate, the joyful,—the important news that this afternoon, at 5 o'clock, the convention consented to ratify the proposed Constitution:—the members for were 187; against, 168.

Ardent, indeed, have been the labors of the Federalists,—anxious their hours by night, as well as by day. The decision of the great question amply rewards them!

We, the delegates of Newburyport and Newbury, anticipate the pleasure of taking you all by the hand on Friday evening or Saturday morning, proposing to take a coach or sley here, on Friday.

Some little ceremonies are yet necessary, for which purpose the Convention meet to-morrow. There is no doubt of our seeing you on Saturday. Please to acquaint your dear sister² of this.

Time does not permit me to add, save my love, compliments, etc., as due, and that I am, with great regards, Your aff. Brother,

P. S. The Judge³ is ten years younger.

1. Printed: Eben F. Stone, "A Sketch of Tristram Dalton," *Essex Institute Historical Collections*, XXV (1888), 20–21. Dalton, a Newbury Convention delegate, dated this letter "Boston, Wednesday Evening, Feb. 6, 1788."

2. Dalton refers to his wife Ruth, Hooper's sister.

3. A reference to Newburyport Convention delegate Benjamin Greenleaf, who voted to ratify the Constitution. He was chief justice of the Essex County Court of Common Pleas and a county probate judge.

Christopher Gore to George Thatcher
Boston, 6 February¹

This afternoon 5 O'clock, the question whether this Convention will assent to & ratify ye proposed constitution, was called for—the whole number of voters was 355—Yeas 187—Nays 168—leaving a majority—of 19—amendments which you see in the papers accompanied this assent²—but as you perceive noways interfering with the ratification—The minority—Viz Wedgery—Cooley, & Taylor publicly declared they woud go home & support the constitution to the utmost of their abilities & influence—your friend

1. RC, Foster Autograph Collection, MHi. Gore was one of Boston's Convention delegates. For the text of this letter as it appeared in the *New York Journal*, 14 February, see Mfm:Mass.

2. Proposed on 31 January, the amendments were first printed in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 2 February.

Massachusetts: The Sixth Pillar of
the Great Federal Superstructure, 6 February

On 26 December 1787 Benjamin Russell of the *Massachusetts Centinel* used the metaphor of raised pillars in "a great FEDERAL SUPERSTRUCTURE" to describe the ratification of the Constitution by three states. (See RCS:Mass., 524–26.) On 16 January 1788—a week after the Massachusetts Convention assembled—Russell revived and extended this metaphor by printing an illustration in his *Centinel*. Headed "THE FEDERAL PILLARS" and preceded by two lines of verse, this illustration had five erect pillars, depicting the five ratifying states, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut, respectively. The illustration also included a sixth pillar labeled "MASS.," which was in the process of being raised. This time, however, Russell described the Constitution, not as "a great FEDERAL SUPERSTRUCTURE," but as "that GRAND REPUBLICAN SUPERSTRUCTURE," a term borrowed from the *Massachusetts Gazette* of 15 January (RCS:Mass., 726).

Below the illustration, Russell reprinted variants of two paragraphs from the same issue of the *Massachusetts Gazette*. (For the *Gazette's* two paragraphs, see RCS:Mass., 726–27.) Russell reversed the order of the paragraphs, putting the news of Georgia ratification before that of Connecticut ratification, but he failed to correct the *Massachusetts Gazette's* references to Connecticut and Georgia as the fourth and fifth pillars, respectively. The illustration, however, rightly labels Georgia as the fourth pillar and Connecticut as the fifth. (The *Massachusetts Gazette* may have reversed the order of ratification because the news about Connecticut possibly arrived in Boston before that about Georgia.)

On 23 January the *Essex Journal* printed an illustration depicting "FEDERAL PILLARS," although it arranged the pillars to be read from right to left rather than left to right as in the case of the *Massachusetts Centinel* (Mfm:Mass.). On

30 January the *Massachusetts Centinel*, under the heading "*FEDERAL SUPERSTRUCTURE*," republished its earlier illustration (Mfm:Mass.), followed by this paragraph: "From observation, and good information, we venture to assure the world, that the MASSACHUSETSIAN PILLAR of the GREAT FEDERAL EDIFICE rises daily—Thanks to the candour of those gentlemen who at first were opposed to its erection—and thanks to the unremitted exertions of those who have assisted in raising it." This paragraph was reprinted in the *Hampshire Chronicle*, 6 February.

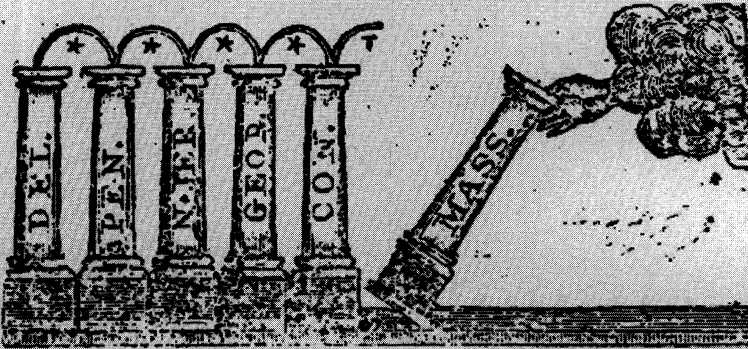
The Massachusetts Convention ratified the Constitution at 5:00 P.M., on 6 February, by which time the semiweekly *Massachusetts Centinel's* issue of 6 February had been printed and distributed. Therefore, on 7 February the *Independent Chronicle* became the first newspaper to print an illustration showing the sixth pillar raised. The illustration, headed "*On the glorious sixth of February, 1788*," was preceded by a four-line poem and followed by a paragraph announcing Massachusetts' ratification, all of which appear below. These three items were followed, in this order, by a two-column listing of the yeas and nays on ratification, a paragraph praising the acquiescence of the minority of the Massachusetts Convention (RCS:Mass., 1648), the speeches of five acquiescent Convention delegates (RCS:Mass., 1487–88), and another paragraph extolling the minority's behavior (RCS:Mass., 1648).

Illustrations showing erected pillars appeared in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 February; *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February; and *Boston Gazette*, 11 February. The two *Gazettes* printed the illustration under the heading "*FEDERAL PILLARS*," the *Centinel* under the heading "*The GRAND FEDERAL EDIFICE*."

The popular pillars metaphor was adopted by the state's venerable Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company at its annual election of officers on 2 June 1788. Before the election, the company "partook of a sumptuous and elegant entertainment" at Faneuil Hall, to which it invited, among others, state officeholders and legislators, the president of Harvard College, and Boston's clergymen and selectmen. "At the head of the Hall, were seven PILLARS of wreaths, decorated with flowers, emblematic of the seven States which have adopted the federal Constitution—on the key-stones of the arches of which were painted in large characters, the names of the States: and behind them were fixed figures, almost as large as life, of their Excellencies the President of the Federal, and Massachusetts Conventions" (i.e., George Washington and John Hancock). Following the dinner, the fourth of thirteen toasts that were drunk was to the "Speedy completion of the Federal Edifice" (*Massachusetts Centinel*, 4 June).

The Raising of the Sixth Pillar
Massachusetts Centinel, 16 January¹

States—like the gen'rous vine supported live,
 The strength they gain is from th' embrace they give
THE FEDERAL PILLARS.



UNITED THEY STAND—DIVIDED FALL.

A vessel arriv'd at Cape-Ann, after a short pas-
 sage from Georgia, confirms the pleasing intelli-
 gence announced in our last, that that State has u-
 nanimously ratified the Federal Constitution. Thus
 is a **FIFTH PILLAR** added to the glorious fabrick.
 May Massachusetts rear the **SIXTH**.

As we predicted in our last, so it happened—
 Monday morning, was ushered in with the ring-
 ing of bells in this metropolis, on account of the
 pleasing intelligence received by Saturday night's
 mail, that the State of Connecticut had added a
FOURTH PILLAR to that **GRAND REPUB-
 LICAN SUPERSTRUCTURE, the FEDERAL
 CONSTITUTION.**

*The Sixth Pillar Raised**Independent Chronicle, 7 February²*

With the highest satisfaction we announce to the public, that the Convention of this Commonwealth, yesterday afternoon, at five o'clock, ASSENTED TO, and RATIFIED the CONSTITUTION, proposed by the late Federal Convention. On this pleasing event, we beg leave to congratulate the public, and to express our sincere wishes, that the general joy, which it has difused through all ranks of citizens, may be an auspicious omen of the *superiour* advantages which will undoubtedly result from the establishment of such a Federal Government, as this Constitution provides.

1. The first paragraph, a variation of one that appeared in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 15 January (RCS:Mass., 727), was reprinted from the *Massachusetts Centinel* by the *Cumberland Gazette* and *Newport Herald*, 24 January; *Providence Gazette*, 26 January; and *New Hampshire Recorder*, 29 January. For more on the reprintings of the paragraph, see RCS:Mass., 727, note 1. The second paragraph, with a variation, was reprinted from the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 15 January (RCS:Mass., 726). No newspaper reprinted the *Centinel's* version of the *Gazette's* paragraph. For more on the reprintings of the paragraph, see RCS:Mass., 727, note 1.

2. The opening four-line poem alone was reprinted in the *Providence Gazette*, 9 February; *Hampshire Chronicle* and *New Hampshire Gazette*, 13 February; *Providence United States*

Chronicle and Norwich Packet, 14 February; and *Connecticut Gazette*, 15 February. The *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February, incorporated this verse into an ode praising Massachusetts ratification (Mfin:Mass.), which was reprinted in the *Newport Herald*, 21 February, and *New Hampshire Recorder*, 4 March.

Within Massachusetts, the paragraph following the illustration was reprinted in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 February; *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February; *Boston Gazette*, 11 February; *Salem Mercury*, 12 February (excerpt); *Hampshire Chronicle and Hampshire Gazette*, 13 February; and *Cumberland Gazette*, 14 February. Outside Massachusetts, it was reprinted in whole or in part thirty-eight times by 22 March: Vt. (1), N.H. (3), R.I. (3), Conn. (6), N.Y. (7), N.J. (1), Pa. (8), Md. (3), Va. (2), S.C. (2), Ga. (2).

When the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 February, reprinted this paragraph, it replaced the words "we beg leave to" with the words "WE DO HEARTILY." The *Massachusetts Gazette's* phrase also appears in the *Boston Gazette*, 11 February, and *Hampshire Gazette*, 13 February. The *Newport Herald* rewrote the last sentence of this paragraph on 14 February to read, "On this pleasing event we beg leave to congratulate the Public, and to express our sincere wishes that it may be a happy presage of this State speedily ratifying this Federal Government, and enjoying the superior advantages which will undoubtedly result from so necessary an establishment." The *Herald's* rendering of the paragraph was reprinted twice in both South Carolina and Georgia.

John Quincy Adams Diary Newburyport, 7 February (excerpt)¹

This day at about noon, the news arrived in this Town, that the federal Constitution, was yesterday, adopted and ratified by a majority of nineteen members in our State convention.—In this Town the Satisfaction is almost universal: for my own part, I have not been pleased with this System, and my acquaintance, have long since branded me with the name of an *antifederalist*. But I am now converted, though not convinced. my feelings upon the occasion have not been passionate nor violent, and as upon the decision of this question I find myself on the weaker side, I think it my duty to submit without murmuring against what is not to be helped. In our Government, opposition to the acts of a majority of the people is rebellion to all intents and purposes; and I should view a man who would now endeavour to excite commotions against this plan, as no better than an insurgent who took arms last winter against the Courts of Justice. . . .

1. MS, Adams Family Papers, MHi. Printed: Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 357–58.

Governor John Hancock to the State Executives Boston, 16 February¹

I have the honor of transmitting to your Excellency a Copy of the proceedings of the Convention of the people of this Commonwealth

lately assembled in this town in conformity to a resolution of the General Court of the said Commonwealth with their assent to, & ratification of the Constitution for the United States of America reported to Congress by the Convention of Delegates from the said United States, together with certain amendments & alterations recommended to be introduced into the said Constitution which we wish may meet the Concurrence of your State—

1. The text of this circular letter to the state executives has been transcribed from the letter sent to New Hampshire (GLC 4362, The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York). Six other copies of Hancock's letter have been located: Maryland (Ernest Clark Collection, Maryland Historical Society); New Jersey (William Livingston Papers, MHi); North Carolina (Signers of the Articles of Confederation, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York); Rhode Island (Papers Relating to the Adoption of the Constitution, Rhode Island State Archives); South Carolina (Henry Ford Museum Bicentennial Collection, Edison Institute, Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan; and an unidentified state (Chamberlain Collection, MSS. Acc. 574, MB).

Pennsylvania Gazette, 20 February¹

On Saturday last, upon the arrival of the news of the Ratification of the Federal Constitution by the powerful state of Massachusetts, the Bells of Christ-Church were rung, and Congratulations of joy have appeared in every part of the City for several days past.

1. Reprinted in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 5 March; *Independent Chronicle*, 6 March; *Essex Journal*, *Hampshire Chronicle*, and *Hampshire Gazette*, 12 March; and *Worcester Magazine*, 13 March. Outside Massachusetts, it was reprinted ten times by 31 March: Vt. (1), N.H. (3), R.I. (2), Md. (2), Va. (1), N.C. (1). For a satirical criticism of the Antifederalists' objection to the bell ringing in Philadelphia in honor of Massachusetts' ratification, see *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 1 March (Mfm:Mass.).

VI-B. Celebrations, 6 February–3 March

The ratification of the Constitution by the first five states evoked only limited celebrations. No reports have been preserved of any celebrations after Delaware's and Georgia's ratifications. In the other three states—Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Connecticut—some convention delegates marched to a central public place to announce ratification. Bells pealed, muskets fired, cannon boomed, toasts were drunk, and huzzas were shouted; in Philadelphia, an impromptu parade of boys, sailors, etc., frolicked through the streets.

Massachusetts ratification spawned celebrations of a different kind and magnitude throughout the state and in several larger towns in other states. The most significant celebrations occurred in Boston,

where, in addition to celebrations by convention delegates and the more or less impromptu celebrations, Boston originated two unique commemorations that were emulated in other states. The first consisted of the printing of a cartoon illustrating the rising pillars of the new federal edifice, which anticipated ratification by Massachusetts. (See RCS:Mass., 1603-7, for the pillars illustration.) The second occurred on 8 February when a giant parade was staged with the public invited to participate. For the first time, a ratification celebration received widespread newspaper coverage throughout America. Instead of being local phenomena, grand federal processions became significant components in the national debate over the ratification of the Constitution, as Federalists attempted to demonstrate the public's universal approbation of each state's ratification.

**Berwick, York County
11 February**

Independent Chronicle, 21 February¹

We hear from *Berwick* in the county of York, that on the evening of the 11th inst. a number of its most respectable inhabitants, hearing the pleasing intelligence, that the Federal Constitution was adopted by the convention of Massachusetts, met at a respectable house in the town, to testify their satisfaction on the memorable event. To render the joy universal, and communicate to the breasts of their fellow citizens, a share of that pleasure which they felt—a general invitation was given to the Mechanics and Yeomanry of the neighbourhood, to meet at an adjacent house, where a frugal repast was provided by subscription, for their entertainment.

The gentlemen, sensible of the disagreeable epithets, which that once respectable town had acquired, of being antifederalists,² seemed to vie with each other in acts of generosity, gratitude and benevolence, to see how deep in oblivion they could bury that dæmon, of their abhorrence. We are happy from this circumstance, to announce to the public, that notwithstanding the conduct of their Delegates, the most reputable part of that town, are high in favor of the Constitution: the most we are permitted to say, is, that some timid or designing men, by alarming the fears, and kindling the jealousies, of the uninform'd, had the address, to prevent the property, sense and respectability of that town, from being represented. But we ought to tread lightly on this ground—Gentlemen charged with the sacred rights of their constituents, must be lost indeed, when they can trifle with the force of conviction: We wish then to believe, their Delegates can justify their conduct, even to their own feelings.

The joy of the evening was heightened, by the pleasing reflection, that it was no less than the anniversary of that auspicious day that gave to America, the most distinguished character in the world.³—If words were capable of conveying the thoughts of grateful minds, some vain attempt might here be expected, to delineate the perfections of that character, who no less great in council, than terrible in war, has so far excelled the force of human description. Ask not who he is,—He's a slave, that does not know him.

The strictest order was observed, during the evening; for the sake of decorum, and that each gentleman might have an opportunity in a regular manner, to express his sentiments, on this joyful occasion, the Hon. Major General Goodwin⁴ presided. Many benevolent sentiments were offered on the heart-felt satisfaction, resulting from the pleasing anticipation, of the benefits which America would reap, from the adoption of the Constitution: After which the following Toasts were drank.

1st. The President of the late Federal Convention.

2d. The patriotick State of Delaware.—As her conduct has been, may it still be exemplary to her sister States.

3d. The State of Pennsylvania,—may the new Constitution render her as unrivaled in agriculture, as she has been in commerce.

4th. The State of New-Jersey—may the adoption of the Federal Constitution, make them as happy in peace, as they have been distinguished for their patriotism, and intrepidity in war.

5th. The State of Connecticut—may the fertility of her soil, render her virtuous citizens happy, while human beings are permitted to inhabit the globe.

6th. The State of Georgia—may her designing opposers of the Federal Constitution, meet the same fate, the savage opposers of all government have met, from the gallantry of her citizens.

7th. The State of Massachusetts—may her virtuous citizens, that raised the sixth pillar,⁵ by cementing themselves, become an emblem of union to America.

8th. May concord and unanimity, be the characteristic of the States, that shall adopt the Federal Constitution.

9th. To compleat the Federal Union—may the other seven strings, be added to the harp; supported by thirteen pillars, may their foundation be as lasting, as their harmony is pleasing.

10th. May the virtuous citizens of New-Hampshire be as forward in adopting the Constitution, as her military sons have been, in preparing themselves to defend her rights.

11th. May the timid opposers of the Federal Constitution, find advantage from the source that alarmed their fears.

12th. To the memory of the gallant General Montgomery,⁶ and other brave heroes, who fell in defence of American liberty.

13th. May the Federal Constitution last 'till every part of America is filled with happy inhabitants.

1. Reprinted: *American Herald*, 25 February; Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 29 February. All or portions of paragraphs one, two, and four were reprinted in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 22 February; *Massachusetts Centinel*, 23 February; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 5 March; and *Pennsylvania Packet*, 6 March. A one-paragraph version appeared in the *Cumberland Gazette*, 28 February. A brief notice of the celebration was printed in the *Boston Gazette*, 25 February; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 5 March; *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 6 March; and *Baltimore Maryland Gazette*, 14 March.

2. For criticism of Berwick's Antifederalism, see the *New Hampshire Spy*, 8 January (RCS:Mass., 654-55). All three of Berwick's delegates to the state Convention voted against ratifying the Constitution.

3. A reference to George Washington's birthday, which was on 11 February in the Old Style calendar.

4. Ichabod Goodwin, major general of the York County militia.

5. For the use of the "pillars" metaphor, see RCS:Mass., 524-26, 1603-4.

6. Brigadier General Richard Montgomery died at the Battle of Quebec in 1775.

Biddeford, York County 18 February

For a celebration expected to take place on 18 February, see Jeremiah Hill to George Thatcher, 14 February (RCS:Mass., 1697).

Boston, Suffolk County 6-7 February

Massachusetts Gazette, 8 February¹

Immediately on the news of this joyful decision [ratification of the Constitution on 6 February, at 5:00 P.M.] being announced, the bells in every publick building in this metropolis began to ring, and continued to sound the glad tydings for two hours. At sun set the Convention adjourned: after which, a multitude of people, from all quarters, moved into State-street, where they manifested the joy they felt from this event, by incessant tokens of approbation, and loud huzzas.—The bells of the North church continued to chime harmonious peals of gratulations the whole night, and part of the next day. Illuminations were made, and other insignia of joy exhibited.²

1. Reprinted: *Boston Gazette*, 11 February; *Hampshire Gazette*, 13 February.

2. As part of its introductory paragraph describing the Boston procession, the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February, reported that "The discharge of cannon, and other demonstrations of joy, took place on Wednesday and Thursday."

Massachusetts Gazette, 8 February (excerpt)¹

. . . It seems that the joy which the adoption of the proposed constitution has diffused, is not only general, but sincere and grateful.—The rising sun of yesterday's morn, by its brightness and refulgent beams, seemed to break forth, from the dusky horizon, with uncommon grandeur, partaking, as it were, of the joy which an event so propitious immersed the souls of the people. The bells of all the churches, &c. in town, began ringing at early dawn, and continued, most of them without intermission, thro' the day, and part of last evening.

The hardy sons of Neptune, seemed not to be insensible of the importance of this great event; for having procured a boat, which they fixed on a sled, they continued to draw it through the town till near the close of the day, frequently huzzaing, and loudly exulting in the anticipation of reviving and flourishing commerce. In the boat was displayed the flag of the United States, and musick, which kept continually playing.

In a cart, drawn by five horses, the British flag was displayed, and insulted by numbers placed in the cart, armed with muskets, who repeatedly discharged the contents of them through the tattered remnant, in contempt of that faithless nation, whose exertions have been unremitting since the peace, to cramp our commerce and obstruct all our nautical proceedings.²

Repeated marks of joy were exhibited during the course of the day by the lovers and well-wishers of our country, but we believe none will exceed the exhibition which is to take place this day, as will appear by the following.³ . . .

1. All four paragraphs were reprinted in the *New Hampshire Gazette*, 13 February, and Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 15 February. The first three paragraphs were reprinted in the *Boston Gazette*, 11 February; *Hartford American Mercury*, 18 February; and *Newport Herald*, 21 February. The first two paragraphs were reprinted in the *Pennsylvania Packet*, 23 February.

2. Jonathan Sayward of York noted in his diary for 9 February that he heard "that this States Convention have Ratified the New Constitution 187 for it 168 against and Great Dissatisfaction among the People among which the Bostonians have acted very imprudently in Carrying the King of Englands Couolors in a Cart pulld with five Horses, armed with muskets and firing through the same with Great Indecent Speches about England and &c" (Sayward Diaries, MWA).

3. Immediately following, the *Gazette* printed a notice to the tradesmen of Boston from their standing committee appointed at the 7 January tradesmen's meeting (RCS:Mass., 633). The notice announced that on that morning (8 February) the tradesmen should assemble at Faneuil Hall for a procession celebrating the ratification of the Constitution. For the notice, see RCS:Mass., 1616–17.

**Boston, Suffolk County
Convention Celebration, 7 February**

When the state Convention finished its business on 7 February it adjourned to the State House and entered the Senate chamber. A number of delegates and others went out on the balcony where President John Hancock addressed the people with a short speech, and the high sheriff of Suffolk County declared the Constitution ratified by Massachusetts. Loud huzzas followed.

The Convention then dissolved. After a "repast" was served, thirteen toasts were drunk. (Some accounts indicate that the Convention dissolved after the dinner and toasts.)

Massachusetts Gazette, 8 February (excerpt)¹

. . . An elegant repast being provided for the occasion in the senate-chamber, the Convention, and a great number of other gentlemen, partook thereof, and exhibited such marks of satisfaction, as fully evinced, that this joyful event would tend to give vigour and energy to our future continental administrations. After dinner the following toasts were drank, viz.

1. His excellency the president and convention of Massachusetts.
2. The president and members of the late continental convention.
3. The states that have adopted the federal constitution.
4. A speedy accession to the union by those states who are yet to deliberate upon the proposed constitution.
5. May the same candour, and liberality, which has so conspicuously distinguished the minority of Massachusetts, prevail thro' every state in the union.
6. May the United States of America be as distinguished for their increase in agriculture, arts and manufactures, as they are for their attachment to justice and the liberties of mankind.
7. The great and magnanimous ally of the United States of America—his most Christian majesty.²
8. The United Netherlands.
9. May the States of America be the asylum of every distressed son of liberty, throughout the world.
10. May the flag of American commerce be displayed in every quarter of the globe.
11. May the landholders of America soon experience the happy effects intended by the proposed constitution.
12. May the nations of the world, who would be our rivals in trade, soon find their disap[p]ointment in the energy of our councils.
13. May peace, liberty, and safety, be the perpetual birthright of an American. . . .

1. Reprinted in whole or in part in the *Boston Gazette*, 11 February; *Independent Chronicle*, 14 February; *Worcester Magazine*, 21 February; and in six newspapers outside of Massachusetts by 29 February: N.H. (3), R.I. (1), N.Y. (1), Pa. (1).

2. Louis XVI of France.

Massachusetts Centinel, 9 February (excerpt)¹

. . . On the ratification being thus declared, a very large concourse of spectators testified their satisfaction, by repeated huzzas—and *the whole* Convention, having been previously invited, partook, with a number of the respectable citizens, at a decent repast, prepared in the Senate Chamber—where, in mutual congratulations, and testimonials of satisfaction, all party ideas were done away; and such a spirit of joy, union and urbanity diffused, as, if continued, must be attended with the most happy consequences, through the Commonwealth. The toasts given were truly conciliatory, and were, we believe, drank with sincerity, by every one present—all appeared willing to bury the hatchet of animosity, and to smoke the calumet of union and love.

After this repast, the Convention dissolved.² Thus far the proceedings of the Convention.—Now for those OF THE PEOPLE. . . .

1. Reprinted: *Salem Mercury*, 12 February; *Essex Journal* and *Hampshire Chronicle*, 13 February; *Cumberland Gazette*, *Independent Chronicle*, and *Worcester Magazine*, 14 February. Outside of Massachusetts it was reprinted in the February issue of the *New York American Magazine* and in twenty-five newspapers by 14 March: R.I. (3), Conn. (3), N.Y. (5), N.J. (1), Pa. (7), Md. (3), Va. (2), S.C. (1).

2. Other sources indicate that the Convention dissolved before the repast.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox Boston, 10 February (excerpt)¹

. . . while they were in Convention a Number of the Inhabitants of the Town sent them an invitation requesting the honor of their Company in the *Senate Chamber* at one OC. to partake a Glass of Wine & Punch in Joy of the day—accordingly every preparation was made such as the *best of Mad[eira]*—Punch—Cheese and Crackers—at one oClock the Convention adjourned to the *Senate Chamber*, to announce the Ratification from the *Balcony*—when this [was] over—his Excellency dissolved the Convention—the Moment this was over—Edward Payne Esqr.² took the Chair as President on the part of the Inhabitants—and in ten minuts there was such perfect *Candor, Harmony & Love* pervaded the members of the Convention, that had the vote been calld for, there would not have been one dissenting voice—for the Toasts &c. I referre you to the Fridays paper. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. For the remainder of this letter, see RCS:Mass., 1584-85, 1625-26.

2. Payne, a merchant, served as an insurance broker in Boston from 1775 until his death on 5 March 1788. As one of the most prominent financial figures in Boston, he was nominated on one ticket but not elected to the state Convention. Christopher Gore was his son-in-law.

Boston, Suffolk County The Federal Procession, 8 February

A new kind of celebration in the ratification debate occurred in Boston on 8 February when about 4,500 people marched in an elaborate procession, designed to create a sense of unity and patriotism. Later processions celebrating the ratification of the Constitution and the Fourth of July emulated the Boston procession, with some surpassing it. Similar processions occurred in Baltimore, Charleston, New Haven, Portsmouth, Philadelphia, and New York City. Smaller processions took place in towns throughout America. The *Massachusetts Centinel*, 23 July, explained that, although Boston's procession was eclipsed by "the splendour of several of the *processions* in other parts of the United States," it should be remembered that the idea originated in Boston, that it was held during the winter, and that it started "less than 22 hours after the idea of the measure was first conceived" (RCS:Mass., 1630). Boston staged another such procession in October 1789 to honor the visit of President George Washington.

Boston's celebration broke from past experience in America. Previous public celebrations were limited to public officials, military detachments, bands, and perhaps some prominent citizens. The public watched the spectacles. In Boston, however, the public took part and was intended to be the spectacle. Furthermore, farmers from neighboring towns were invited to participate. The arrangement by occupations also broke with previous practice.

The idea for a public procession was conceived by a standing committee of Boston tradesmen that met on 7 February. (The committee, consisting of John Lucas, Joseph Clark, Paul Revere, Jacob Rhodes, William Boardman, Joshua Witherlee, and David Spear, had been appointed by a large meeting of Boston tradesmen on 7 January to keep the tradesmen informed about matters dealing with the Constitution. See RCS:Mass., 629-35.) The standing committee placed a public notice in the morning *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 February, requesting that people assemble at Faneuil Hall at 9:00 A.M. that day. The committee recommended an order for the procession. Farmers would lead the way to be followed by the various trades. Each trade was to march as a group and was to designate a single individual to head each group. The committee encouraged participants to bring decorations and the tools of their trade. The shipbuilders, it was announced, would have a "properly manned" ship drawn by horses. The notice invited drummers, fifers, and other musicians to participate. (For the notice, see the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 February, immediately below.)

Before adjourning, the committee agreed to send cards to Boston's twelve state Convention delegates informing them that the procession would pass

their houses and salute them. On 11 February, the twelve delegates responded jointly to the tradesmen's committee. (For the delegates' response, see the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February, RCS:Mass., 1626-27.)

Federalists used the celebration, descriptions of which circulated widely in newspapers, to depict the unity of the state after a hard-fought Convention narrowly adopted the Constitution. (See Benjamin Rush's description of the importance and uniqueness of American processions [CC:805].) Antifederalists belittled the procession. The Philadelphia *Freeman's Journal*, 16 April, alluded to "the childish parade and flummery of the town of Boston" (CC:Vol. 5, p. 406). Even some Federalists were amused by the spectacle. Henry Knox told Robert R. Livingston on 13 February that "The Boston people have lost their senses with joy" (Mfm:Mass.). An Antifederalist's fictionalized letter from former Governor James Bowdoin in the Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 27 February, said, "You have seen with much surprise, I dare say, the great parade we made at the ratification; it cost us a considerable sum, but I am in hopes it will be of great service, these things have great effect on common minds" (CC:Vol. 4, p. 239). Several days before the New York federal procession on 23 July, Samuel A. Otis, a Massachusetts delegate to Congress, expressed his distaste for these celebrations. "I dont know but we are in danger of running into excess in regard to processions—Perhaps my gravity & aversion to parade may have induced this opinion—It is an implied triumph over minority which always irritates" (to George Thatcher, 17 July, Goodwin, "Thatcher Papers," 349).

Other commentaries on the procession, in the form of verse, appeared in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 19 February, reported that the Massachusetts Convention ratified the Constitution by a majority of nineteen votes, "In consequence of which the Boston folks had a GRAND Procession." The procession was ridiculed as was the bell-ringing that occurred in Philadelphia upon receipt of the news of Massachusetts' ratification. On 21 February "A Yankee" in the *Pennsylvania Mercury* responded to the *Gazetteer's* satire by requesting the publication of verse praising the Massachusetts Convention and the Boston procession. In the same issue, the *Mercury* printed a song set to Yankee Doodle entitled "The FEDERAL SHIP—A SONG," that began "What think you of the Yankees now,/Malicious sons of slaughter?" The song also criticized Philadelphia Antifederalists, mentioned the "fed'ral ship," and urged people to "drink to Boston city." For all of these items and an unpublished satirical literary criticism of the *Independent Gazetteer* verse, said to have been written by Francis Hopkinson on 26 March, see Mfm:Mass.

Notice to the Tradesmen

Massachusetts Gazette, 8 February¹

NOTICE

To the TRADESMEN.

THE COMMITTEE of MECHANICKS appointed at their meeting the 7th ult. present their compliments to the several TRADESMEN,

MECHANICKS and ARTIZANS of every description in the town of Boston, and request their attendance at Faneuil-Hall, this morning, at NINE o'clock, in order to form and proceed in GRAND PROCESSION therefrom, to testify their approbation of the ratification of the Federal Constitution, by the Convention of this commonwealth the 6th instant.

They recommend that the procession be formed as follows—First, a plough, drawn by a horse, with husbandmen carrying proper utensils—Then the tradesmen, &c. of the town, each with some tool, decorated; to proceed by trades; each trade with one person at its head. With the ship-builders, &c. will be a boat, drawn by horses, properly manned. They request that the procession may be as full as possible; that the several drummers, fifers, and other musicians in the town, will join the procession, with their instruments.

The rout[e] of the procession will be mentioned at the Hall.

1. Reprinted: *New Hampshire Gazette*, 13 February; and Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 15 February.

The Federal Procession, 8 February

The Boston procession was one of the most widely reported events in the ratification process. The day after the procession, the *Massachusetts Centinel* of 9 February printed an incomplete and slightly inaccurate account of the events. The *Boston Gazette's* version of 11 February was more complete and accurate. Two days later under the title "*The UNITED CELEBRATION,*" the *Centinel* printed a corrected version prefaced, "In our last we gave but an imperfect account of the testimonial of the gratitude of the people of this town, on the great event of the Ratification of the Federal Constitution, by the Convention of this Commonwealth, exhibited in their forming and proceeding in GRAND PROCESSION to the Houses of the several Delegates, who represented this town in Convention; and giving them signal expressions of their approbation of their unremitting exertions in that body, to convince the unconvinced—to confirm the doubtful—to remove all objections—and to conciliate all parties:—And as it may be of importance that the order of the procession should be correct, we have since our last publication made inquiries which we had not time to make before; and from the information we have received, we believe we are now enabled to give a just account of it, as follows."

The *Massachusetts Centinel's* version of 9 February circulated most often. Within Massachusetts, this version was reprinted in the *American Herald*, 11 February; *Massachusetts Gazette*, 12 February; *Essex Journal* and *Hampshire Chronicle*, 13 February; *Cumberland Gazette*, 14 February; and *Hampshire Gazette*, 20 February. Outside of Massachusetts, the *Centinel's* account was reprinted in the February issues of both the *Philadelphia American Museum* and the *New York American Magazine* and in thirty-five newspapers by 29 March: N.H. (3), R.I. (3), Conn. (4), N.Y. (5), N.J. (1), Pa. (9), Md. (3), Va. (4), S.C. (2), Ga. (1). A summary appeared in the *Vermont Gazette*, 25 February.

The *Boston Gazette's* version of 11 February was reprinted in the *Salem Mercury*, 12 February; *Independent Chronicle* and *Worcester Magazine*, 14 February; twice in Hartford, Conn.; and once in Newport, R.I., by 21 February. Several newspapers reprinted different combinations of the concluding paragraphs from both originating newspapers.

The text of the procession printed here has been transcribed from the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February. Corrections are indicated in the footnotes. Additions supplied by the *Boston Gazette*, 11 February, appear within angle brackets. Additions supplied by both the *Boston Gazette*, 11 February, and the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February, appear within double angle brackets. Additions supplied only by the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February, appear within braces.

Massachusetts Centinel, 9 February

The citizens of Boston have ever shewn themselves advocates for freedom—therefore, when a motion had obtained, one of the greatest objects of which is “to secure the blessings of liberty to themselves and their posterity”—they could not resist the strong impulse they must have had, publickly to testify their gratitude, for the pleasing event.—Nor have they.—On the decision being declared, the bells in the several publick buldings, communicated the happy intelligence to every part of the town, by a peal, which continued for several hours—and which has been continued with short intervals ever since.—The discharge of cannon, and other demonstrations of joy, took place on Wednesday and Thursday, but it was left to yesterday to produce an exhibition, to which America has never before witnessed an equal; and which has exceeded any thing of the kind, Europe can boast of.

The Committee of Tradesmen met on Thursday, and by publick advertisements, requested the attendance of the mechanicks and artizans of every description, in town, at Faneuil-Hall, at 9 o'clock, yesterday, in order to form, and proceed in Grand Procession therefrom, to testify their approbation of the ratification of the federal Constitution, by the Convention of this Commonwealth, the 9th inst.¹ and deputed their Chairman, to request THEIR BRETHREN, the husbandmen of the adjacent towns, to join them; who though the notice was very short, accordingly appeared in town at 9 o'clock.; when the several trades being met, at 11 o'clock, in real GRAND PROCESSION, the whole moved from the Hall, and the following was the

ORDER of the PROCESSION.

Sixteen Foresters, with axes, and brush schythes,
Musick,

A PLOUGH,

drawn by two horses, and two yokes of oxen,
with a person holding it, and others
clearing away the obstructions,

(The Sons of Freedom *venerate* the Plough.)

Three Sowers, with baskets, strewing grain—
and smoaking their pipes,

A Brush-Harrow, drawn by a horse,

A large Roler, drawn by a horse and pair of oxen,

Four Reapers, with sickles, &c.

Four Mowers, with scythes, followed by eighteen

Hay-makers, with rakes, &c.

Eight Husbandmen, with hoes, spades and other
Farming utensils,

{A Winnower, with a Fan.}

A Cart, drawn by a yoke of oxen, with Flax dressers,
at work, and in working dresses,

A yoke of fat Cattle, with killers, properly equipped,

A Cart loaded with Beef, followed by eight master
Butchers, in clean frocks {with clevers, &c.}

(*The above were our worthy brethren of Roxbury.*)

BLACKSMITHS,

Preceded by Mr. BAKER,

To the number of 73, carrying implements of their
craft—decorated with ribbons, &c.

SHIPWRIGHTS,

Preceded by Deacon SHARP,

To the number of 43, with tools decorated, &c.

ROPE MAKERS,

Preceded by Mr. WILLIAM MCNEILL,²

To the number of 75—their waists encircled with
hemp—with a cable-sled, drawn by workmen,

decorated with colours, and

attended with martial musick.

MAST MAKERS,

Preceded by Mr. S. HARRIS,

To the number of 30, with tools decorated, &c.

SAIL-MAKERS,

Preceded by Deacon BARRETT,

To the number of 30, with their tools.

SHIP JOINERS,

- Preceded by Mr. T. URAN,
 To the number of 34, with their tools decorated.
BLOCK-MAKERS,
- Preceded by Mr. J. BALSH,
 To the number of 30, with tools, &c.
MATHEMATICAL INSTRUMENT MAKERS
 To the number of 6, with instruments, &c.
COOPERS,
- Preceded by Mr. AVERS,
 To the number of 23,³ with tools, decorated, &c.
BOAT-BUILDERS,
- Preceded by Mr. T. HICHBORN,
 To the number of 20, with tools, &c.
 <<*COACH and CHAISE MAKERS,*
 Preceded by Major HAWES,>>
PAINTERS,
- To the number of 20, with pallets, &c. decorated.
 <<*HEAD-BUILDERS,*
 To the number of 4, in one rank,
 with their Moulds decorated.>>
CARVERS,
- Preceded by Mr. SKILLINGS,
 with tools, &c. decorated, to the number of 12.
RIGERS,
- To the number of 18, with tools, &c.
GLAZIERS and PLUMBERS.
- Preceded by Capt. NORTON BRAILSFORD,
 To the number of 16, with diamonds, &c.
BAKERS,
- Headed by Mr. J. WHITE,⁴
 To the number of 40, with their tools, &c.
TANNERS and CURRIERS.
- Preceded by Mr. S. BASS,
 To the number of 28, with tools, &c.
SHOE-MAKERS,
- Preceded by Mr. S. BANGS,
 To the number of 50, with lasts, &c. decorated.
TAYLORS,
- To the number of 56, with their tools, measure, &c.
HATTERS,
- Preceded by Major SEWARD,
 To the number of 26, with their Bows, Furs, &c.

TALLOW CHANDLERS,

To the number of 8, with a miniature Press, Moulds, &c.

Mr. VOSE, on Horseback, <<preceding>>

The Ship *FEDERAL CONSTITUTION*,

On runners, drawn by 13 horses,

JOHN FOSTER WILLIAMS, Esq. Commander,

Lieut. *Weeks*, Lieut. *Adams*, Mr. *La Moine*, Master, Mr. *E. Sigourney*, Purser,
[Ship woodcut]

Manned by thirteen seamen and marines.

With full colours flying—followed by Captains
of vessels, 85 seamen, dressed in ribbons, and about
150 of the principal merchants in town.

SHIP-BUILDERS,

To the number of 20, with a work-yard, drawn
by 13 horses, in which were 7 or 8 vessels, on the
stocks, with the men at work.

CARPENTERS,

Preceded by Mr. <W.> CRAFTS,

To the number of 136, with tools of every sort, decorated.

MASONS,

Preceded by Major BELL,

To the number of 70, with trowels, &c. as at work.

CABINET and COACH-MAKERS, WHEEL-WRIGHTS, &c.

To the number of 30, with the insignia of their crafts.

PRINTERS,

Preceded by Mr. B. EDES,

To the number of 15, with a stand, drawn on a
sled, and compositors at work,
<and three ranks displaying their composing Sticks.

BOOK-BINDERS.

With their Tools, Books, &c.

CHAIR-MAKERS,

Preceded by Mr. ALLOCK. To the number of 6.)

SADDLERS,

To the number of 12, with tools, decorated, &c.

<<*TOBACCONISTS,*

To the number of 13. Preceded by Mr. McELROY,
with tools, emblematic of their profession.>>

GOLDSMITHS <<and JEWELLERS>>),

To the number of 15, with hammers, &c.

<<*HORN BUTTON and COMB-MAKERS,*

in one rank.

A MILLER,))
LEATHER-DRESSERS,

Preceded by Major W. DAWES, on horseback,
(dressed in skins)

To the number of 20, with skins, and working tools.

CARD-MAKERS,

To the number of 12, with wire, &c.

The COMMITTEE of TRADESMEN, ((viz.

*John Lucas, Esq. Mr. Joseph Clark, Col. Paul Revere,
Capt. Rhodes, Deacon William Bordman, Joshua Witherle, Esq.
and Capt. David Spear, with a bank of musick*))
in a sleigh, drawn by four horses.

The REPUBLICAN VOLUNTEERS ((in uniform)), commanded
by Capt. GRAY, closed the procession.

{The numbers stated are those of the Master-Workmen—and were taken from an actual enumeration of the procession at two o'clock.—At other times in the day, the procession was much more full.}

In this order the whole proceeded by the houses of the several gentlemen who represented this town in Convention, and testified their approbation of their conduct by three huzzas from the whole line, and salutes from the Ship, and the Volunteer Company. (The Hon. Members of the Convention, living at the four extremities of the town, gave the Ladies an opportunity of viewing the procession from their several windows, who shone conspicuous on the occasion, and was animating beyond description.) About 4 o'clock the procession arrived at the Hall, where refreshment was liberally provided, at which as many as could find admittance, partook; but though the Hall will hold 1500 men, not above one third of the procession could get in.—However, we were happy that our country friends were accommodated to their wishes.

We have not time to give a *just* account of this beautiful parade—We can only say, that the perfect order and urbanity, the dignity and solemnity that marked the procession through the whole day, was such, as had a most interesting effect on the numerous spectators which a scene so august and novel collected together.

(Good order and regularity were conspicuous in the procession, which, together with the novelty of the scene, afforded the highest satisfaction to the innumerable multitude of spectators.)

At two o'clock, when the procession passed by the State-House, Capt. Johnson's company of artillery honoured them with a salute of 13 guns.

1. A few of the reprints changed this date to the "6th inst.," the date of ratification, or deleted the date entirely.

2. The *Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February, reads, "Preceded by Mr. J. RICHARDSON."

3. In the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February, the number is 53.

4. In the *Boston Gazette*, 11 February, and *Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February, the name is Mr. J. JENKINS.

William Heath Diary **Roxbury, 8 February¹**

Wind north & northeast, fair and pleasant more moderate than for some days past—the evening cloudy.²—This day the Farmers from this Town Joyned the Inhabitants of the Town of Boston in an exhibition expressive of their approbation, of the adoption of the federal System. The Farmers with a plough and other implements of husbandry led the procession, a Ship called the new Constitution fixed on a Sledge drawn by 13 horses, with a number of men on board represented a flourishing commerce.—followed by a great number of merchants.—almost every order of mechanicks, with their proper tools were in the procession, a boat representing the old Confederation, very leaky and irreparable was drawn on a Sledge,—the whole striking and discriptive.—

1. MS, Heath Diaries, MHi.

2. According to the Reverend John Eliot, pastor of Boston's New North Church, 8 February was "a very pleasant day, tho' cold." The temperature at 9:00 A.M. was fifteen degrees, with the wind out of the northwest. (Eliot's weather entries are written in a copy of *Bickerstaff's Boston Almanack for . . . 1788 . . .* [Newburyport, 1787], MHi.) For Eliot's Diary, see Mfm:Mass. According to state Attorney General Robert Treat Paine, it was "fair" but "cold" with a temperature of eighteen degrees (Paine Diary, MHi).

The Burning of "Old Confederation" **Boston, 8 February**

Boston Gazette, 11 February¹

In the evening, a Long-Boat, call'd the OLD CONFEDERATION, in the stern of which was elevated a Lanthorn two feet square, was drag'd through the principal streets in town, and then into the Common, where, being deem'd unfit for further service, was ordered to be burnt, which was accordingly done, accompanied by the repeated huzzas of the people.

Massachusetts Centinel, 13 February²

On Friday evening last the *Long-Boat*, called the *Old Confederation*, which had been exhibited in the procession that day, was drawn to the Common, where the officers, owners, and crew, called a jury of carpenters to inspect her—who after examining every part, found her

bottom so defective, and her timber and planks so rotten, that they were unanimous in their verdict, to *condemn her*, as unfit for any further service.—She was accordingly ordered to be burnt, which was immediately done, in presence of an applauding concourse of citizens.

1. Reprinted: *Salem Mercury*, 12 February; *Newport Herald*, 21 February; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 23 February. A similar version appeared in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 12 February, which reported that the boat was burned “amidst the loud and joyful acclamations of the people.”

2. Reprinted: *Independent Chronicle*, 14 February; *American Herald*, 18 February; and *Hampshire Chronicle* and *Hampshire Gazette*, 20 February.

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington
Boston, 9 February (excerpt)¹

. . . By the paper your Excellency will observe some account of the parade of the Eighth the printer had by no means time enō to do justice to the subject to give you some idea how far he has been deficient I will mention an observation I heard made by a Lady the last evening who saw the whole that the description in the paper would no more compare with the original than the light of the faintest star would with that of the Sun² fortunately for us the whole ended without the least disorder and the town during the whole evening was, so far as I could observe perfectly quiet—

~~The Gentlemen provided at Fanuel Hall some biscuit & cheese four qr. Casks of wine three barrels & two hog[shead]s of punch the moment they found that the people had drank sufficiently means were taken to overset the two hogs. punch this being done the company despised and the day ended most agreeably~~

P.S Upon a review of the last paragraph I think it of little importance have therefore X it out—

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. For the first part of this letter, see RCS:Mass., 1688.

2. The Providence *United States Chronicle*, 21 February, reported that “By the Papers received from Boston by the Post it appears, that the Account of the Procession on Friday Se’nnight, which was published in our last, was by no Means exaggerated—indeed it fell far short of a real Description of that grand Exhibition.”

William Widgery to George Thatcher
Boston, 9 February (excerpt)¹

. . . on Fry Day, there was a federal Ship Rigid and fixd. on a Slead. hald by 13. Horses, and all Ordors, of Men Turnd. out and formed a procession in the folloing ordor Viz first the Farmers with the plow and Harrow Sowing grain and Harrowing it in as thay went Som in a Cart Brakeing and Swingleing Flax, thay ware followed by the Tradesmen of

all sorts, Each sort in their own Division, every Sort had with them the Badge of their office, and the Bakers their Bread peal. after these passed Came the Federel Ship ful Rigid Commanded by Capt John Foster Williams; after which Came the Merchents of the Town. then Came another Slead, Halled by 13. Horses on which was a Ship yard, and a Number of Smaal Ships &c on that. in this order thay marchd. to the House of Each of their Delegates in the Town of Boston, and returned to Fannels Hall where the Merchents gave them 3 or 4 Hogs-heads of Punch, and as much wine cake & cheese as thay Could make way with. When thay Came against the State House thay fired 13 guns. . . .

1. RC, C. P. Greenough Papers, MHi. For the rest of the letter, see RCS:Mass., 1690.

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard
Boston, 10 February (excerpts)¹

You got the news of the Constitution being ratified 3 days before it happened!²—But in three days from this Time you will have it authenticated, by my Letter of Wednesday Evening³—We have had Bell-ringing for 3 days & on Friday a kind of Lord-Mayor's Shew the acco[unt] of wh you will see in ye papers & ye description is not heightened nor embellished—Tomorrow we are to begin again, it being Genl Washington's birthday⁴—how long this federal-frolicking will hold I know not. . . .

PS. That the Tradesmen may have something beside frolicking there was yesterday begun a Subscription for a Company to engage in buildg 3 Ships of 250 tuns each—11 shares at £100 were down before noon—This will give employ to many poor fellows who have been in great Want.⁵

1. RC, Belknap Papers, MHi. For the rest of the letter, see RCS:Mass., 1583–84.

2. See Hazard to Belknap, 3 February (RCS:Mass., 848), in which Hazard says that he was told on that date that Massachusetts had ratified the Constitution.

3. A reference to Belknap to Hazard, 6 February (Mfm:Mass.).

4. There was a difference of eleven days between the Old Style and New Style calendars.

5. For newspaper commentaries on this news, see "An Observing Countryman," *Massachusetts Centinel*, 15 March; "A Tradesman," *Massachusetts Centinel*, 19 March; *Massachusetts Centinel*, 26 March; and "Friends to Liberty and Good Government," *Massachusetts Gazette*, 4 April (all in Mfm:Mass.).

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 10 February (excerpt)¹

. . . on Friday Morning at Sun rise all the Bells in Town began to Ring & continued the whole day—but Harry, at Eleven O'C the

grandest procession took place from *Faneuil Hall* that you ever saw, or ever was seen in this Country,—since its first settlement—it is not in the power of Tongue, or Pen, to discribe the subblimity & Grandeur of the Column—such Joy—Huzzas—& Shouts, never assend'd Heaven before—the croud of people from the Country was immense, it was 4 OC before the procession returnd to the Hall, where Punch, Wine—Crackers, & Cheese was provided for 3,000 people—at the expence of the Gentlemen of the Town—every thing was conducted with the greatest order, at 10. OC Eveng the Town was as quiet as on Sundays—I refere you to Yesterdays paper for the line of March, and I am sure you will be in raptures on looking over it—but you will never be able to form a *Just Idea* of the *Magnitude & Splendor* exhibited on that day—boast—Harry boast Harry—that you are a Town born Child—& that you are a true *Bostonian*—all the Candor—Love—Harmony, Friendship, & Benevolence of the whole world appear'd on that day to be Centre'd in this little Spot—

I believe you are tire'd hearing my nonsense—and I think I hear *Lucy* say to you,—your friend Harry is *Crazy*—its true I was on that day, for the *Water* I drank froze in my Stomach. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. For the remainder of the letter, see RCS:Mass., 1584–85, 1614.

Boston Convention Delegates to the Committee of Boston Tradesmen Massachusetts Centinel, 13 February¹

On Thursday last, after the Committee of Mechanicks had agreed upon the formation of a Procession, to express their approbation of the conduct of the Gentlemen who represented this town, in the late Convention, in using their utmost endeavours to effect a ratification of the proposed Constitution—a polite Card, purporting their intentions, was sent to each of the Gentlemen respectively, who on Tuesday last returned the following answer thereto, viz.

To the COMMITTEE of TRADESMEN of the Town of BOSTON.

GENTLEMEN, We should do injustice to our feelings not to acknowledge our deep sense of the approbation with which we have been publicly honoured by our fellow-citizens; as well as for the friendly manner in which *you* have communicated their intentions.

We endeavoured that our conduct in the late Convention, should be governed by the magnitude of our subject:—And after the most mature deliberation, we severally decided according to the best light of our understandings, and the dictates of our consciences.

We are happy to find that our decisions have so fully corresponded with the sentiments and wishes of our constituents.

And here we cannot help expressing our admiration of the magnanimity of those gentlemen who could not agree with the majority. We promise ourselves, that the declarations which they so generously made to use their influence in support of the proposed government, will have a very extensive and happy effect.

For our own parts we assure you, that we shall in our several spheres of life, upon all occasions, use our best efforts to promote a righteous administration of government, on which the liberty and welfare of our country, the advancement of arts and sciences, agriculture, manufactures and commerce so greatly depend.

We have the honour to be, gentlemen, your obedient, humble servants,

JOHN HANCOCK,
JAMES BOWDOIN,
SAMUEL ADAMS,
WILLIAM PHILLIPS,
CALEB DAVIS,
JOHN COFFIN JONES,

CHARLES JARVIS,
JOHN WINTHROP,
THOMAS DAWES, jun.
SAMUEL STILLMAN,
THOMAS RUSSELL,
CHRISTOPHER GORE.

Boston, 11th Feb. 1788.

1. Reprinted in the *Independent Chronicle*, 14 February; *Massachusetts Gazette*, 15 February; *American Herald* and *Boston Gazette*, 18 February; *Salem Mercury*, 19 February; *Hampshire Chronicle* and *Hampshire Gazette*, 20 February; *Worcester Magazine*, 21 February; and *Cumberland Gazette*, 28 February. Outside Massachusetts, it was reprinted thirteen times by 13 March: N.H. (3), R.I. (2), Conn. (2), N.Y. (1), Pa. (4), S.C. (1). The *Essex Journal* was the only Massachusetts newspaper not to print the response.

Massachusetts Gazette, 12 February

Celebration of the memorable 6th of February, by the Agricultural, Mechanical and Commercial Interests of this and some of the neighbouring towns, in the metropolis—

On which day the Convention of Massachusetts, convened at the meeting-house in Federal street, (late Long-lane)¹ ASSENTED TO, and, on the 7th, RATIFIED, the proposed constitution for the United States.

On Friday last [8 February], in consequence of notice given by the committee of TRADESMEN & MECHANICKS, a large assemblage of the different interests in this and some of the neighbouring towns, collected at Faneuil-Hall, where they arranged themselves, and began a procession which exhibited a scene more striking and grand than any

that ever yet met the eye of a citizen of the new or the old world: to describe the joy and satisfaction which was apparent in every countenance would be impossible; suffice it to say, the zeal which all shewed to proclaim the pleasure they felt on this occasion, indicates a general knowledge of the advantages to be derived from the establishment of a good and energetick government.

At eleven o'clock, in real GRAND PROCESSION, the whole moved from the Hall, and the following was the ORDER of the PROCESSION.

[Here follows the account of the procession reprinted from the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February (above).]

1. For the renaming of Long Lane to Federal Street, see "Federal Street," *Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February (immediately below).

Federal Street

Massachusetts Centinel, 13 February¹

(The following is the form of the ordinance by which THE PEOPLE, on Friday last, altered the name of the avenue called Long-Lane, to FEDERAL-STREET:² And which we have obtained from the records, to gratify the curious.—It is *verbatim* as read by the Chairman of the Committee that day, in the Procession.)

To all persons unto whom these PRESENTS shall come, GREETING.

BE IT KNOWN—That upon this eighth day of the month of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred eighty-eight, and in the twelfth year of the Independence of the United States of America, WE THE PEOPLE, in GRAND PROCESSION moving, have ordained, resolved and declared, and by these presents, DO ordain, resolve and declare, THAT for, and in consideration, that the FEDERAL CONSTITUTION was by the CONVENTION of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, ASSENTED to, RATIFIED, fully CONFIRMED and ADOPTED in the Meeting-House, situated and being in the avenue leading from Milk-Street to Purchase-Street, and commonly called LONG-LANE, the said avenue; BE, and it hereby IS, denominated, appellated and christened

FEDERAL-STREET:

And we the PEOPLE aforesaid, do enjoin that all our loving fathers, friends and fellow citizens, observe, duly adhere, and attend to, this our ordinance, resolution or declaration, as they wish to promote justice, preserve our friendship, insure domestick tranquility, and provide for the diffusion of federal sentiments.

GIVEN under our auspices, this eighth day of February, Anno Domini, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight—of American sovereignty the twelfth, and the FIRST YEAR of OUR real, political, federal existence.

THE PEOPLE.

GOD SPEED THE CONSTITUTION.

1. Reprinted: *Worcester Magazine*, 21 February; *New York Journal* and *New York Morning Post*, 29 February; *Charleston Columbian Herald*, 20 March; *Vermont Journal*, 31 March.

2. The name of the street was in fact changed in 1788 from Long Lane, which it had been since 1708, to Federal Street. As early as the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February, account of the Convention proceedings on 7 February, the street was referred to as Federal Street (RCS:Mass., 1495, at note 7).

Patriotic Toasts after the Procession

Independent Chronicle, 14 February¹

The following patriotic toasts were drank at Faneuil-Hall, on Friday last, after the arrival of the grand procession at that place.

1. The late Federal Convention.
2. His Excellency the President and Convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
3. A speedy adoption of the proposed Constitution by every State in the Union.
4. May a spirit of conciliation, and a regard to the happiness of society, as strongly characterize the deliberations of our sister States, as have so highly distinguished the Convention of Massachusetts.
- 5th. May the excellencies of the new federal Constitution be displayed to the world by the wisdom of its administration.
- 6th. May the citizens of America be as distinguished for their cultivation of the arts of peace, as they have been renowned for their bravery and fortitude through the scenes of war.
7. Agriculture and manufactures.
8. Commerce and the mechanick arts.
9. May the American husbandman ever retain that spirit of freedom and independence, which is the surest guardian of the liberties of the people.
10. May the commerce of America be as extensive as her fame.
11. May industry and economy forever insure ease and independence to the mechanicks and manufacturers of America.
12. May the spirit of faction and party, that bane of all republican governments, be forever expelled from the breasts of Americans.

13. May a just sense of their mutual interest and dependence on each other, forever unite the husbandman, the merchant and mechanick.

1. Reprinted: *Hampshire Chronicle*, 20 February; *Worcester Magazine*, 21 February.

Maria

Worcester Magazine, 14 February¹

Mr. EDITOR, Doubtless ere this reaches you, you will have heard of the *Royal Homage* this day paid to our delegates in the late Convention—Every profession, from the merchant to the chimney sweeper, in procession paraded our streets, with the badges of their occupations; excepting only the Clergy and Lawyers, whose sagacity proved equal to their duplicity, and made fools of the community; a few farmers of the vicinity joined the motley throng. I tell my husband was I a gentleman I would bear testimony against such proceedings, on such occasions, as I think it tends to the subversion of true republican principles, inasmuch as it controuls the bias of a citizen's mind, which ought to be free and uncontrollable by party measures.

Your constant female reader, MARIA

Boston, February 8th, 1788.

1. Reprinted: *Newport Mercury*, 25 February; *New York Journal*, 26 February; *Cumberland Gazette*, 6 March.

Massachusetts Centinel, 23 July¹

Although the splendour of several of the *processions* in other parts of the United States has outshone that of this town—yet Boston does not stand in the lowest grade of Processional rank. It must be considered, that when this town adopted the measure, a Procession in America was a “*new thing*”—that it was here the production of *originality*—performed in the winter season—and finally, that it was on the move in less than 22 hours after the idea of the measure was first conceived.

1. Reprinted: *Hampshire Chronicle*, 30 July; *New York Morning Post*, 31 July; *New York Daily Advertiser*, 1 August; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 2 August; *State Gazette of South Carolina*, 25 August.

Boston, Suffolk County Militia Parade, 12 February

Governor John Hancock, commander in chief of the state's militia, requested through Major General Benjamin Lincoln, commander of the Suffolk County militia, that the “*Uniform Companies*” of Boston and Roxbury “turn

out . . . to celebrate the ratification, of the new federal Constitution." Under the general command of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Bradford, the units, "in high Military dress," assembled at 10:00 A.M. on Tuesday, 12 February. At 11:00 the companies of light infantry, fusiliers, artillery, and light cavalry organized and at noon they marched in review before the governor (Adjutant General Israel Keith to Bradford, 8 February [Mfm:Mass.]; and Henry Jackson to Henry Knox, 13 February [RCS:Mass., 1694]). After passing South School Lane and Main Street, the line was formed on State Street where several firings occurred. After firing several rounds, the Boston Artillery was ordered to cease because the concussion from its powerful cannon caused damage. The smaller cannon of the Roxbury Artillery also caused damage. An observer, signing himself "Benevolence," praised the military parade but expressed concern about the destruction of windows, crockery, etc., from the field pieces. He suggested that in the future cannon firings take place "either on the Common, at the head of Long-Wharf, or in some other place, as will prevent damage being done to individuals, and at the same time without the least diminution of the laudable wish of exhibiting the troops to the best advantage" (*Massachusetts Centinel*, 16 February [Mfm:Mass.]). Governor Hancock "issued orders prohibiting the firing of cannon on State-Street, in future" (*Massachusetts Centinel*, 20 February).

Massachusetts Centinel, 13 February¹

Yesterday, agreeably to the orders of Major-General [Benjamin] LINCOLN, the several detached military corps in this town, and its vicinity, formed into one battalion, (the first time since their several organizations) for the purpose of celebrating the ratification of the federal Constitution by the Convention of this State. At eleven o'clock, the line was formed in the following order from right to left—Capt. [John Steel] TYLER's Horse, from Roxbury, on the right—then the Independent Light-Infantry, under Captain-Lieutenant [Daniel] OLIVER—then Capt. [John Jones] SPOONER's Artillery from Roxbury—then the Independent Cadets, under Major [William] SCOLLAY—then the Boston Fusiliers, under Captain-Lieutenant [Joseph] LAUGHTON—then the Republican Volunteers, under Captain GRAY—then the Boston Artillery, under Captain-Lieut. [Samuel] BLAGGE;—and the Boston Light-Infantry, under Capt. [Peter] GREEN, on the left—The whole commanded by Lieutenant Colonel [Samuel] BRADFORD. At 12 o'clock the whole marched, in review, before his Excellency the Commander in Chief, and by South-school-lane through the Main-Street into State-Street, where the line was formed, and several firings, by platoons, companies and battalion were made with much exactness. The troops were all in uniforms, and made a fine appearance; and received the plaudits of their fellow-citizens for their perfectly soldierlike conduct through the day.

The firing of the artillery was principally by the Roxbury Train—the Boston Artillery, being heavy, endangered the property of the inhabitants in the vicinity where it was posted; and was therefore ordered to cease firing, after discharging a few rounds.

1. Reprinted (in whole or in part) in the *Independent Chronicle*, 14 February; *Massachusetts Gazette*, 15 February; *American Herald* and *Boston Gazette*, 18 February; *Hampshire Chronicle* and *Essex Journal*, 20 February; and *Worcester Magazine*, 21 February. Outside Massachusetts, it was reprinted six times by 5 March: N.H. (2), Conn. (1), NY (1), Pa. (2).

Charlestown, Middlesex County
8 February

Boston Gazette, 11 February¹

The Artillery of Charlestown, under the command of Major [William] CALDER, turn'd out [on 8 February], and fired a salute of 13, and perform'd several manœuvres, in honor of the day.

1. Reprinted: *Hartford American Mercury*, 18 February; *Newport Herald*, 21 February; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 23 February. A slightly different account appeared in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 12 February, and Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 22 February.

Gloucester, Essex County
8 February

Salem Mercury, 12 February¹

On Friday evening last, a generous entertainment was made, at Capt. Somes's tavern in Gloucester, by the principal inhabitants of that town, for the gentlemen who represented them in the late State Convention—as a testimony of their approbation of the part they took in the important business on which they acted—and to give a social opportunity to reciprocate their congratulations on the decision which has taken place.

1. Reprinted: *Massachusetts Centinel*, 16 February; *Hampshire Chronicle*, 20 February; *Worcester Magazine*, 21 February.

New Bedford, Bristol County
c. 8 February

Massachusetts Centinel, 27 February¹

The inhabitants of the town of New-Bedford, in Bristol County, welcomed the return of the Hon. Judge *Spooner*, one of their Delegates to the late Convention (the other, the Rev. Mr. *West*, having tarried in town

a few days) by a discharge of 13 cannon²—After which they proceeded to a publick house, where they spent the day in a reciprocation of such testimonials, as did honour to the town, and evinced their hearty approbation of the decided and patriotick part their Delegates took in the Convention, in favour of a system of government, calculated “to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestick tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and to secure the blessings of liberty to” themselves, their country and posterity.

1. Reprinted: *Independent Chronicle*, 28 February.

2. Walter Spooner and the Reverend Samuel West voted to ratify the Constitution in the state Convention.

Newbury and Newburyport, Essex County 8 and 14 February

John Quincy Adams Diary **Newburyport, 8 February¹**

This afternoon the delegates from Newbury, and from this town,² returned home from Convention. A number of very respectable citizens, and a number, who were not very respectable, went out on horse-back to meet the members and escort them into Town; as they came along, the bells at the different churches were set to ringing, and this noisy expression of joy, was continued with some intermissions till 8 o'clock in the evening. The mob huzza'd and one would have thought that every man from the adoption of the Constitution had acquired, a sure expectancy of an independent fortune.—I pass'd the evening at home in reading and writing.³

1. MS, Adams Family Papers, MHi.

2. Newbury's delegates were Tristram Dalton, Ebenezer March, and Enoch Sawyer. Newburyport's delegates were Benjamin Greenleaf, Rufus King, Theophilus Parsons, and Jonathan Titcomb. King went to New York City when the Convention adjourned. All of these delegates voted to ratify the Constitution.

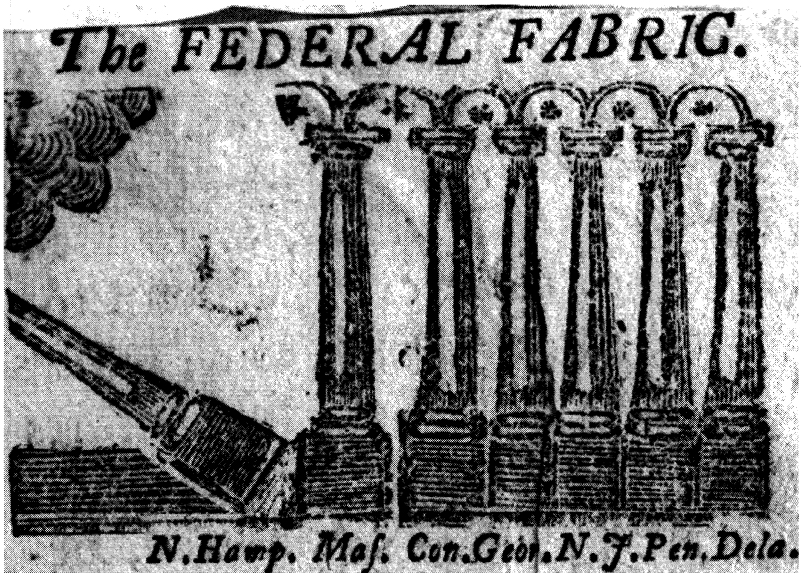
3. Adams's abbreviated almanac diary entry for this day reads, “Bells ringing. at home all the evening” (MS, Adams Family Papers, MHi).

Essex Journal, 13 February

On Thursday last we had the pleasing account of the Ratification of the new Constitution by the Convention of this Commonwealth. A general joy diffused itself through all ranks of people in this town on this glorious news.—We heartily congratulate our readers on this auspicious

event, rendered peculiarly happy in the prospect it affords that our sister State of New-Hampshire, whose interests and whose dispositions are so similar to our own, will have an additional inducement to add a Seventh PILLAR¹ to the great Federal Edifice already so far advanced.

On Friday afternoon the principal gentlemen of the Trade and Officers of the Militia of the town, being informed that the delegates from this town and Newbury were on their way home, and being disposed to shew some mark of their satisfaction at the adoption of the Constitution, and of their warm approbation of the conduct of those honourable and worthy gentlemen in Convention, met them at Newbury Green, and escorted them into town, where they were received amidst the acclamations of a Numerous Collection of their applauding Fellow-Citizens.



The Convention of New-Hampshire is to meet at Exeter this day.

1. For the use of the "pillars" metaphor, see RCS:Mass., 524-26, and for the origins of the pillars cartoon, see RCS:Mass., 1603-4.

John Quincy Adams Diary
Newburyport, 14 February¹

I attended at the office only in the forenoon; the after part of the day being employ'd in rigging for the ball.² I had sent a billet to Miss H.

Greenleaf requesting the honor of waiting upon her. She was not engaged and I was taken at my word; which will teach me to be sincere. It was late before I could get a carriage, and when I went for my Lady, I found, all the rest of the family were gone: which was against me again.—The ball rooms were too small. not one quarter of the Ladies could dance at a Time. I danced enough myself, and made out to affront three or four Ladies, which is much in my favour. Townsend took cold in making the preparations for this ball, and was so unwell, that at about 11 o'clock, he went home and consigned his Lady, Miss L. Knight, to me. She being very agreeable, was upon the whole I believe, more the object of my attentions than another Lady: this cannot now be helped and whatever is, is right.—Between 3 and 4 in the morning, the remainder of the company retired; Putnam lodged with me. the party was perfectly agreeable.

1. MS, Adams Family Papers, MHi.

2. Adams's abbreviated almanac diary entry for this day reads: "Federal ball" (*ibid.*).

Charleston City Gazette, 21 May¹

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Newbury Port.

"The state convention has ratified and confirmed the new constitution. Boston has testified her approbation of their proceedings in a pompous N. P.² in a pleasing manner.

"Upon information that our delegates were on their way, the gentlemen of the town, on horse back and in slays, went out to welcome their return; they met about four miles from town, and formed the following procession.

"The horse, in an arrangement which did honor to our military, preceded the delegates; who were drawn in a close hackney. The other slays followed in good order.

"The peals of bells, and the discharges of cannon, announced their arrival in town. But what had the most extraordinary effect upon the spirits, was a shout which 'made the trembling æther ring,' at the moment when the delegates made their egress from the carriage at Davenport's.

* * * * *

"The approbation expressed in the countenances of the fair, who thronged every window of the streets through which we passed—the eagerness of each that was immediately concerned, to testify his joy, and a contemplation of the cause of these exertions, raised in me, sensations which cannot be described.—may you soon realise the same enjoyment from similar circumstances.

* * * * *

“The most distinguished characters in this commonwealth, have been strenuous for the federal constitution. The governor has gained the favor of the party for Bowdoin, and unless the insurgents in the interior counties, exert themselves for some antifederalist, will obtain as full an election as he had ever found before he had left the chair. Gerry is talked of by the insurgents, but they are not well agreed. The death of the lieutenant governor [Thomas Cushing], for the first time leaves that office open for different candidates, and it is not expected that there will be a choice of the people; but general Lincoln seems to be most talked of in the lower counties.”³

1. The two sets of asterisks appear in the original newspaper printing.
2. Perhaps an abbreviation for *nisi prius*, a writ directing a sheriff to summon a jury on a certain date.
3. If no one received a majority, the state constitution provided that the state House of Representatives submit the names of two of the top four vote recipients to the state Senate, which by ballot should elect the governor or lieutenant governor (Thorpe, III, 1900, 1903-4). The House nominated Benjamin Lincoln and James Warren; the Senate elected Lincoln.

Springfield, Hampshire County
9 February

Hampshire Chronicle, 13 February¹

On Saturday last, after being authentically informed of the Ratification of the Constitution by the Convention of this State, a number of Gentlemen of this town met to express their joy upon the occasion: After firing thirteen cannon, they spent the remainder of the day in such mirth and conviviality, as so great an event would dictate and justify.

1. Reprinted: *Boston Gazette*, 18 February; *Massachusetts Gazette*, 19 February; *New York Packet*, 26 February; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 1 March.

Watertown, Middlesex County
7 February

Massachusetts Gazette, 12 February¹

Thursday last, major Kent's company of Artillery, at Watertown, made their publick appearance, in consequence of the adoption of the federal constitution by the Convention of this state. In the morning the Artillery fired 13 rounds, and the rejoicings continued, with much hilarity, through the day.

1. Reprinted: *Essex Journal*, 20 February; Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 22 February.

Massachusetts Centinel, 13 February¹

“Watertown, 7th Feb. 1788.

“THIS auspicious day was ushered in with the discharge of cannon. In the afternoon, a number of gentlemen of this town assembled, and drank thirteen federal and patriotick TOASTS, each of which was accompanied with a salute of the cannon of Major *Kent's* company of artillery, who attended on this joyous occasion. The satisfaction testified by all present, on this important event, the happy conclusion of which we have anxiously expected, was hearty and sincere. We congratulate with all the friends to the honour, peace and happiness of America—We even fondly anticipate the smiles of posterity on this consummation of our independence.”

A report having been circulated in the town of Boston and its vicinity, that an opposition was made to the company under my command by a part of the inhabitants of this town, on the day of celebration of the ratification of the new Constitution, in this Commonwealth: And in order that the good people of this State, may not be misinformed, as well as in justice of the town of Watertown, I publicly declare, that nothing of the kind took place on that day; but that all present on the glorious occasion, seemed to vie with each other in diffusing a spirit becoming good and peaceable citizens.

EBENEZER KENT, Capt. Artillery.

Watertown, February 12, 1788.

1. The first paragraph was reprinted in the *Independent Chronicle*, 14 February, and *Hampshire Chronicle*, 20 February.

**Westminster, Worcester County
3 March**

Independent Chronicle, 1 May¹

(The following was received several weeks since, but omitted for want of room.)

Mess'rs ADAMS & NOURSE, *By inserting the following piece in your useful paper, you will oblige at least one of your customers, and shew the sentiments of a very respectable number of the inhabitants of the town of Westminster, in the county of Worcester, with respect to the Federal Constitution.*

On the evening of the 3d of March, the business of the day being ended for the choice of officers for the year ensuing; a large number of the first characters and inhabitants of the town, assembled at the house of one of the inhabitants, to express the heart-felt joy arising in their breasts, on the glorious news of the adoption of the Federal Constitution, by the Convention of Massachusetts. And although we cannot

glory in our worthy member's being found at the right hand among the yeas:² Yet we wish not to be wanting on our part to contribute one drop to the ocean of pleasure which must arise in the breast of every enlightened mind in this State, as well as the United States at large, on the happy prospects before us.

When we reflect upon the scenes of war, the expence of blood and treasure, the loss of noble heroes and worthy patriots, and finally our deliverance from those calamities by our Independence, and the faint prospects of forming into a permanent Federal Government, and the hopes of seeing domestic peace, harmony and concord again restored to us, from that wild disorder into which of late we had fallen, herein we rejoice, yea and will rejoice; and like a band of brothers³ united in sentiments, and like the weary labourer at the close of the day, retiring from the toils of the field in the cool shades of the evening, setting down to solace ourselves, in contemplating the smiles of heaven, supported with the pleasing hopes of soon feeling the blessings of a permanent Federal Government.

Surely we should be wanting on our part, and justly be numbered among the nays, if we did not manifest our hearty approbation and cordial wish, that not only six but the whole thirteen States may follow; and form the thirteen pillars of the Federal Edifice, supported with unity and concord, which no domestic faction or foreign power on earth, may ever be able to destroy.

With sentiments like these, we joyfully spent the evening, with great regularity and good order, and closed with drinking the following toasts, viz.

- 1st. The late President and Convention of Massachusetts.
 - 2d. The six pillars of the Federal Edifice.
 - 3d. The Governour and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
 - 4th. The late President of the Federal Convention.
 - 5th. Immortal honours to the illustrious seven in the county of Worcester, supporters of the sixth pillar, of the Federal Edifice[.]⁴
 - 6th. The noble patriots that espoused the cause of the Federal Constitution in the late Convention.
 - 7th. The downfall of faction, through the American Empire.
 - 8th. The new Columbian State.
 - 9th. Harmony and concord, through the States in the Union.
- March 20, 1788.

1. Reprinted: *Pennsylvania Packet*, 23 May.

2. On 30 November 1787, the freemen of Westminster elected Stephen Holden to the state Convention and then voted not to give him instructions (RCS:Mass., 1065). On 6 February Holden voted against ratification of the Constitution.

3. William Shakespeare, *King Henry V*, Act IV, scene 3, line 60. See RCS:Mass., 221n.

4. Only seven of the fifty Worcester County delegates casting votes in the state Convention voted to ratify the Constitution.

New Haven, Connecticut

11 February

New Haven Gazette, 14 February¹

On Monday last at 5 o'clock, P.M. arrived in this city authentic intelligence of the ratification of the Constitution by the convention of Massachusetts.—On this pleasing and important event the bells were rung and a salute of 13 rounds was fired, followed by three huzzas from a large concourse of people who had assembled on the occasion and testified their hearty approbation of the conduct of their good old friend and neighbour, who is so nearly allied to Connecticut in good sense and sound republican principles.—It was a pleasing circumstance that the hon. Rufus King Esq. arrived here on his way from Boston to New-York, while the salute was firing, and was a witness to the joy excited among us by the conduct of his native state.

1. Reprinted in the *Independent Chronicle*, 21 February; *Massachusetts Centinel*, 23 February (summary); *Boston Gazette*, 25 February; *Hampshire Gazette*, 27 February; and in nine out-of-state newspapers by 24 March: N.H. (2), N.Y. (2), Pa. (4), S.C. (1).

New London, Connecticut

14 February

Connecticut Gazette, 22 February (excerpt)¹

THOMAS ALLEN's *Marine LIST*.

Thursday, 14th. . . .

This day, at the City Coffee-House, a number of respectable gentlemen dined on a fine fresh Salmon, when a number of patriotic toasts were drank, in commemoration of the Federal Constitution being ratified by the loyal Commonwealth of Massachusetts. . . .

1. Reprinted: Middletown, Conn., *Middlesex Gazette*, 25 February; *Boston Gazette*, 3 March.

New York City

13, 14, and 16 February

New York Daily Advertiser, 15 February

Mr. CHILDS, A Number of gentlemen being assembled at the house of Mr. George Rawson, on Wednesday evening last, to spend a social

hour; when receiving the pleasing intelligence of the adoption of the New Constitution by the State of Massachusetts; the company being truly Federal, and there being Thirteen present, the following TOASTS were given *impromptu*, which please give a place in your paper.

1. The President of the late General Convention.
2. The American worthies whose signatures appear upon the report of the General Convention.
3. May America be as happy under the New Constitution, as she has been successful in the late war.
4. Confusion to the unprincipled opposers of the Federal system.
5. May the enemies to the New Constitution in this State be ashamed to shew their faces on the 17th of June next.¹
6. American Lasses, and Federal measures.
7. May peace and unanimity ever continue among the Federalists.
8. The Majority of the late Convention of Massachusetts.
9. May the rays of the Thirteen Stars shine with superior lustre upon the New Constitution.
10. The Federalists of the State of New-York.
11. The Six Federal States.
12. The worthy Members² from the State of New-York who singly persevered to the rising of the General Convention.
13. The 17th September, 1787.

1. A reference to the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill on 17 June 1775.

2. Although the text refers to "Members," the toast is obviously a reference to Alexander Hamilton, the only New York delegate to the Constitutional Convention who signed the Constitution.

New York Journal, 15 February

The interesting intelligence of the ratification of the constitution by the convention of Massachusetts, having been received in this city the evening before last, a number of gentlemen, who are advocates for that general system, assembled at the Coffee-House, and festivated. On this occasion, a number of guns were fired, and two flags were exhibited from the roof of the coffee-house, one with the letters, "New Constitution, September 17th, 1787," and the other with a pine-tree, and the words, "Boston, February 6, 1788," painted. We are happy to assure the public, that no accident took place, in the course of this business.

New York Packet, 15 February¹

In consequence of the intelligence from Boston, of the ratification of the Federal Constitution by the State Convention of Massachusetts,

the Federalists of New-York, yesterday testified their joy on the pleasing event. At sun rise a standard of the United States was hoisted on the Coffee-house, in which was inserted the following words—“*The Constitution, September 17th, 1787.*” And at noon, another flag was displayed (at the same place, in which was exhibited the figure of a pine tree, and these words—“*February 9, 88. Boston.*”² The standard of the Union was likewise displayed) at the Fort, and the American vessels in the harbor hoisted their colours on the occasion.—At twelve o’clock, *six times thirteen guns* were discharged, in honor of the *six States* that have already ratified the Constitution, which were answered by *thirteen guns* from the ship *Jenny*, Capt. Thomson, bound for the East-Indies.

The joy and satisfaction exhibited by a *great majority* of the inhabitants of New-York, on this auspicious event, will certainly convince our brethren in the sister States, that this State cherishes in her bosom, many virtuous citizens, who most ardently wish for a government calculated “*to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity.*”

1. Reprinted in the *Boston Gazette*, 25 February; *Massachusetts Gazette and Salem Mercury*, 26 February; *Essex Journal*, 27 February; *Independent Chronicle and Worcester Magazine*, 28 February; and *Hampshire Chronicle and Hampshire Gazette*, 5 March. Outside Massachusetts, it was reprinted seventeen times by 24 March: Vt. (2), N.H. (2), R.I. (2), Conn. (6), N.Y. (2), Pa. (3). Five of the reprints omitted the second paragraph.

2. Thirteen newspaper reprintings repeated the “9 February” date, nine altered it to “6 February,” and three of the Massachusetts reprintings omitted the text in angle brackets.

Samuel Blachley Webb to Joseph Barrell New York, 17 February¹

I congratulate you and all good Men most heartily on the happy occasion, of Massachusetts haveing adopted the Constitution, it will give a most powerfull impression on all the States which have yet to take it into consideration, and I am particularly pleased in haveing it in my power to assure you this City is very unanimous in their sentiments in favor of the new Government, your intelligence came to Town by the Wednesday evening’s Post, for which we were prepared, and the next morning erected a Flag (made for the occasion) which cost 100 Dollars,—fired 13 rounds for each of the States which had adopted it, & for Massachusetts added three Cheers,—all the Vessels in port hoisted their Colors, & many flags were displayed on the houses of private Cityzens,—no Antifederalist’s shew their heads, many indeed have changed their sentiments,—and yesterday upwards of Eighty of us

dined at the Coffee house on Salt Fish & Beef Stakes in honor of your State—drank 13 Toasts suitable to the occasion, & to each fired Six guns—in honor to the 6 states which have already held their Conventions,—I am much afflicted with the Head Ache this day (owing to drinking & rioting in a good cause) otherways I would give your further particulars, but I suppose you will have it in Print,—by Mr Pease the next week or some previous conveyance I will send you—your money in my hands, when I will again write you,—I am hardly able to see my paper—my Love to all

1. RC, Webb Papers, CtY.

**Samuel Blachley Webb to Catherine Hogeboom
New York, 17 February¹**

The letter which accompanies this will convince you I have not been remiss in writing; I did not send it to the office, intending Major Popham should have committed it to the care of Mr. Rensaler; he left town without my knowledge, and on Wednesday Evening we received the pleasing intelligence that Massachusetts had ratified the new Constitution. Your humble servant was one of a Committee to conduct the celebration of that important event; this will, I trust apologize for letting a second Post pass, without my letter. On Thursday the usual marks of Joyfull approbation were given by firing of Cannon, displaying a Standard, form'd for the occasion &c, &c, and yesterday the principle Gentlemen of the Town & members of Congress dined together at the Coffee-house,—the consequence is, that I am afflicted with a bad cold and Head-Ache. Were you here I am persuaded you would call me a Rake—this on great occasions, where the mind is seriously engaged will sometimes be the case, but I have't a doubt, my fair friend will make every allowance,—probably both your and my future happiness is depending upon the issue of this business,—however it is not my intention to enter into a political correspondence with my *Petticoat Philosopher*.

1. Printed: Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Blachley Webb* (3 vols., New York, 1893–1894), III, 94–95. Webb and Hogeboom were engaged to be married.

New York Daily Advertiser, 18 February¹

On Saturday last, a number of respectable Citizens, celebrated at the Merchants' Coffee-house, the RATIFICATION of the NEW CONSTITUTION, by the State of Massachusetts. Several of the Honorable Members of Congress and the Mayor of the City, did them the honor of

partaking of their repast; which in (the true republican style) consisted of only two articles—Beef and Salt Fish. The general joy which was diffused over every countenance on this occasion, was a decisive proof, that the conduct of Massachusetts would ensure the Ratification of this excellent Constitution, not only in this, but every other State of the Union.

After dinner the following TOASTS were drank, under the fire of Six Guns to each Toast, in honor of those States which had adopted the Constitution.

1st. The Constitution—may it prove the solid fabric of American Liberty, Prosperity and Glory.

2d. The Federal Convention—may their Virtue, Wisdom and Firmness, be deeply engraven on the hearts of their countrymen.

3d. The State of Delaware.

4th. The State of Pennsylvania.

5th. The State of New-Jersey.

6th. The State of Connecticut.

7th. The State of Georgia.

8th. The State of Massachusetts.

9th. May the Patriotic Declarations of the Minorities of Connecticut and Massachusetts, serve as an example throughout the Union.

10th. The Friends of the Constitution throughout the States.

11th. The State of New-York—may it soon become an additional Pillar to the new Roof.

12th. Union to the States, and confusion to the enemies of it.

13th. General Washington—may his Wisdom and Virtue preside in the Councils of his Country.

The utmost order and good humour prevailed throughout the whole of the entertainment; and about nine o'clock in the evening, the company broke up, under the impression, that those who had been opposed to the New Constitution in this State, would be convinced (after the candid and able discussion of it by their eastern neighbours) that their jealousies were ill-founded; and that their own reputation, as well as the welfare of the State, would be best promoted, by imitating the Patriotic Conduct of the Minority of Massachusetts.

1. Reprinted in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 1 March (last paragraph only); *Essex Journal*, 5 March; and *Worcester Magazine*, 6 March. Outside Massachusetts, it was reprinted, in whole or in part, eleven times by 20 March: N.H. (1), Conn. (1), N.Y. (4), Pa. (3), Md. (1), S.C. (1).

Massachusetts Centinel, 27 February¹

Extract of a letter from New-York, dated Feb. 17th.

“On Wednesday, immediately on my getting the Saturday’s paper, containing the Grand Procession, and the particulars of the rejoicing

in Boston, I went to the Coffee-House, where I read its pleasing contents to a very large and respectable number of citizens, who received the glad tidings, with three hearty cheers—The order of procession, and disposition of the day, is universally extolled here. (Your minority have gained themselves immortal honour, by their honourable and candid behaviour.) On Thursday the event was celebrated by a discharge of six times thirteen rounds of cannon, in honour of the six pillars that are reared. A flag was on Wednesday night displayed on the top of the Coffee-House, with the words *Constitution, September, 1787*, and a small flag in honour of Massachusetts, with the *Pine-Tree, Feb. 6th, 1787, Boston*. (An invitation was given by the Constitutional Club to the members of Congress, and a number of citizens, who to the amount of 70, dined at the Coffee-House yesterday, on *Cod-Fish* and *Beef-Steaks*, in honour of Massachusetts. The toasts were accompanied by a discharge of six rounds each, and Massachusetts drank in a bumper²—as also the glorious conduct of its minority.) The decision of your State must fix the business—The few antifederalists in our city are coming about under the cloak of the terms annexed to the ratification, which shows much wisdom in those who devised the conciliatory measure. I make not the least doubt but by the latter end of June, I shall be able to announce to you the erection of our pillar in support of the new roof.”

1. Reprinted: *Cumberland Gazette*, 13 March. The text in angle brackets was brought together and printed in the *Salem Mercury*, 4 March, and reprinted in the *Hampshire Chronicle*, 12 March.

2. According to Noah Webster's dictionary (1806), a "bumper" is a glass filled to the brim with a strong drink.

Portsmouth, New Hampshire

New Hampshire Spy, 12 February¹

The general joy diffused through all ranks of people in this metropolis, upon receiving intelligence of the adoption of the Federal Constitution by the Massachusetts Convention, was really pleasing—a general rejoicing would have immediately taken place (such was the fire of our youth) had not some of our patriots recommended a suspension of any public testimonials of joy until the Grand Question should be decided by the Convention of this State, which agreeably to appointment is to meet at Exeter, to-morrow, for that important purpose. May Heaven guide their deliberations and direct to a favorable issue.

1. Reprinted: *New York Daily Advertiser*, 26 February; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 4 March; *Pennsylvania Journal* and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 5 March; *Charleston City Gazette*, 12 March. Because the only extant issue of the *Spy* for 12 February is mutilated and the portion

where this item appeared was cut out, it has been transcribed from the New York *Daily Advertiser* which reprinted it under a Portsmouth, 12 February, dateline.

Richmond, Virginia
27 February

Philadelphia Federal Gazette, 8 March¹

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Richmond, dated Feb. 28, to his friend in this city.

“We had great rejoicings here yesterday, by the federal men, on account of the ratification of the new constitution, by the state of Massachusetts. The citizens assembled at the Union tavern, about twelve o’clock, and hoisted up a flag on the top of the house, and kept it up till about 11 o’clock at night, when each repaired to his habitation pretty mellow with Madeira: a number of cannon were fired on this occasion—next Monday our election comes on for the Convention—I expect the governor and Mr. Marshall will be elected,² as there seems to be little or no opposition.[”]

1. Reprinted: *New York Daily Advertiser*, 12 March; *Newport Mercury*, 24 March; *Massachusetts Spy*, 3 April; *Boston Gazette*, 7 April; *Vermont Journal*, 21 April

2. On 3 March Henrico County elected Governor Edmund Randolph and John Marshall as its two delegates to the Virginia Convention (RCS:Va., 592-93).

VI-C. The Acquiescence of the Massachusetts Minority
6 February-24 May

The Massachusetts Convention ratified the Constitution by a vote of 187 to 168 at 5:00 P.M. on 6 February. After the vote was declared, several members of the minority—Abraham White, William Widgey, Josiah Whitney, Daniel Cooley, and John Taylor—addressed the Convention. Several others wanted to speak, but, because of the lateness of the hour, the Convention adjourned. The next day, minority delegates Samuel Nasson, Benjamin Randall, and Benjamin Sawin also spoke. In general, these delegates said that they had been treated fairly; that they would support the Constitution; and that they would encourage their constituents to support the Constitution. They sought peace and harmony for the state. (For letters written by two of these acquiescent delegates about their actions, see Nasson to George Thatcher, 8 February, and Widgey to Thatcher, 9 February, RCS:Mass., 1649, 1690.)

Federalists heaped praise both privately and publicly on the conciliatory Antifederalists. For example, Massachusetts Convention delegate Rufus King wrote that the minority had “the magnanimity to declare that they will devote theirs Lives & property to support the Government” (to James Madison, 6 February, immediately below. See also King’s letters of the same day to Tench Coxe [Mfm:Mass.] and George Washington [RCS:Mass., 1647-48].). Delegate

Benjamin Lincoln stated that the minority "discovered a candour which does them honor and promises quiet in the State" (to George Washington, 9 February, RCS:Mass., 1688. See also Henry Jackson to Henry Knox, 10 February, RCS:Mass., 1585.). Praise also came from delegate William Heath who noted in his diary on 7 February that "The Conduct of the minority of the Convention on this occasion is truly remarkable and altho the majority on the ultimate question was not great yet the Candid and conciliateing disposition of the minority is Such as to afford the most pleasing hopes, of harmony and good agreement among the People" (RCS:Mass., 1525). Four days later Boston's twelve delegates—in a letter to the committee of Boston tradesmen—said "we cannot help expressing our admiration of the magnanimity of those gentlemen who could not agree with the majority. We promise ourselves, that the declarations which they so generously made to use their influence in support of the proposed government, will have a very extensive and happy effect" (*Massachusetts Centinel*, 13 February, RCS:Mass., 1627). And on 27 February Governor John Hancock, in his address opening the session of the Massachusetts General Court, referred to the "candor, & a spirit of Conciliation, in the Minority, which did them great honor, & afforded an happy presage of unanimity amongst the people at large" (RCS:Mass., 1668).

Winthrop Sargent, although pleased by the minority's acquiescence, questioned the motives of Antifederalists John Taylor and William Widgery, who acted, he supposed, "by way of extenuating their Guilt" (to Henry Knox, 6 February, RCS:Mass., 1583). James Madison had mixed feelings about Massachusetts ratification. "The amendments," he wrote, "are a blemish, but are in the least offensive form. The minority also is very disagreeably large, but the temper of it is some atonement" (to George Washington, 15 February, RCS:Mass., 1701).

Massachusetts newspapers, as well as those in other states, were quick to praise the minority of the Massachusetts Convention and to report on the conciliatory behavior of minority delegates on their return to their constituencies. The Massachusetts and Connecticut minorities were compared favorably to the Pennsylvania minority, which continued to oppose the Constitution vigorously. Newspaper writers hoped that the minorities in other states would also acquiesce.

The most significant praise in a newspaper for the Massachusetts minority appeared in the *Massachusetts Centinel* on 22 March. On that day, the *Centinel* printed an extract of George Washington's 28 February response to Caleb Gibbs's letter of 9 February, reporting on Massachusetts ratification. (For Gibbs's letter, see RCS:Mass., 1686–87.) Washington extolled the minority's "candid and conciliatory behaviour" and declared that Massachusetts' ratification would "greatly" influence other states. By 10 May this extract of Washington's letter was reprinted forty-nine times throughout America, seven times in Massachusetts alone. (See also Washington to Benjamin Lincoln, 29 February, RCS:Mass., 1653.)

Apparently most members of the Massachusetts minority kept their word. For example, on 18 June "An Antifederalist" noted in the *Massachusetts Centinel* that "I think it is allowed by all parties that the antifederalists when they found themselves in the minority conducted [themselves] with a great deal of moderation and candour, as they almost unanimously agreed to return home and

endeavour to satisfy and unite the people, in order to give fair play to the new Constitution; and for that purpose even suppressed the publication of their objections to it, drawn up by way of protest” (RCS:Mass., 1761–63. This is the only reference to a proposed dissent similar to that published by the minority of the Pennsylvania Convention [CC:353]). A few days later Jeremy Belknap wrote that “Our anti’s have acted on such liberal & truly republican principles that they really merit respect” (to Benjamin Rush, 22 June, Mfm:Mass.).

Rufus King to James Madison Boston, 6 February¹

I have the satisfaction to inform you that on the final Question of assenting to & ratifying the constitution our convention divided, and 187. were in the affirmative & 168 in the negative: the majority although small is extremely respectable, and the minority are in good Temper; they have the magnanimity to declare that they will devote their Lives & property to support the Government,² and I have no doubt but the ratification will be very cordially and universally approved through our State—N. Hampshire will undoubtedly decide in favor of the Constitution—their convention met Today³—

God bless you—

1. RC, Madison Papers, DLC. Madison apparently also spoke with King, a Newburyport Convention delegate, sometime after King arrived in New York City on 13 February. Madison wrote George Washington on 15 February that King “assured” him “the leaders of it [the minority of the Massachusetts Convention] as well as the members of it in general are in good humour; and will countenance no irregular opposition there or elsewhere” (Rutland, *Madison*, X, 510–11). On 6 February King also wrote to Tench Coxe and John Langdon (notes 2 and 3) and to George Washington (immediately below).

2. On 6 February King informed Tench Coxe that “the minority are moderate, and say they will with alacrity support the Government” (Mfm:Mass.). King also thanked Coxe for sending him more than sixty pages of the Pennsylvania Convention debates which were soon to be printed in Philadelphia. (See Coxe to Madison, 16 January, and note 1, RCS:Mass., 729.)

3. On 6 February King wrote John Langdon, a New Hampshire Convention delegate, that Massachusetts’ ratification was “unconditional & absolute” (Mfm:Mass.). Langdon had attended the Convention debates for a few days and had told Caleb Gibbs that, if Massachusetts ratified, the New Hampshire Convention (scheduled to meet on 13 February) “would not be one week in session” before ratifying (Gibbs to George Washington, 9 February, RCS:Mass., 1687).

Rufus King to George Washington Boston, 6 February¹

Our convention this day ratified the constitution 187 affirmatives 168 negatives the majority although small are very respectable, and the minority in addition to great Temper & moderation, publicly declare that the Discussion has been fair & candid, and that the majority having

decided in favor of the constitution, they will devote their Lives & Fortunes to support the Government—

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. On 29 February Washington replied, "Happy, am I, to see the favorable decision of your Convention upon the proposed Government; not only on acct. of its adding an important State to the number of those which have already accepted it, but because it must be productive of good effects in other States, whose determination may have been problematical.—The candid, and open behaviour of the minority, is noble and commendable.—It will have its weight" (Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 133).

Independent Chronicle, 7 February¹

The open, manly and honorable conduct of the gentlemen who composed the minority, in the great question yesterday taken in the Hon. Convention, was very different from the turbulent opposers of the Constitution in Pennsylvania, who, not content with their declamatory and odious protest against its adoption, are now endeavouring to involve their country in all the horrors of a civil war, by exciting tumult and insurrection.

Let this be told to the honour of Massachusetts; to the reputation of her citizens, as men willing to acquiesce in that great Republican principle, of submitting to the decision of a majority.²

1. These two paragraphs are parts of the *Chronicle's* report of the Convention debates for the afternoon session of 6 February. The first paragraph immediately precedes the speeches made by several delegates promising to support the Constitution even though they voted against ratification. The second paragraph concludes the *Chronicle's* report. In Massachusetts, both paragraphs were reprinted in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 February; *American Herald*, 11 February; *Essex Journal*, *Hampshire Chronicle*, and *Hampshire Gazette*, 13 February; and *Worcester Magazine*, 14 February. The first paragraph only was reprinted in the *Boston Gazette*, 11 February, while the second paragraph only was reprinted in the *Salem Mercury*, 12 February. By 15 February both paragraphs were reprinted in seven out-of-state newspapers: N.H. (1), R.I. (1), Conn. (5); while the first paragraph alone appeared in three: N.H. (2), Conn. (1).

On 9 February the *Massachusetts Centinel* printed the first paragraph and the following variant of the second paragraph: "To the everlasting honour of Massachusetts will the above be told—as it will convince the world, that her sons know rightly how to prize the great principle of republicanism—that of submitting to the decision of a majority." The *Centinel's* version was reprinted in the *Cumberland Gazette*, 14 February, in the February issue of the New York *American Magazine*, and in nineteen out-of-state newspapers by 14 March: R.I. (1), N.Y. (5), N.J. (1), Pa. (7), Md. (3), Va. (2).

2. Some of the *Chronicle's* statements are similar to those made in the *New Haven Gazette*, 24 January, about the minority of the Connecticut Convention. The *Gazette* declared that "To the honor of the minority in our state convention it ought to be publicly known, that they, (unlike the obstinate and unprincipled minority of Pennsylvania) declared generally, they determined to abide by the just republican principle of submitting to the majority" (CC:Vol. 3, 570–71).

Samuel Nasson to George Thatcher
Boston, 8 February (excerpt)¹

My Dear Friend

. . . I wrote you word first Instant that the Constituion I then thought would not be adopted² but Some time past his Excely the Governor Intrusued Some ammendments and that turnd in its favour however you will find my Name in the Smallest Number and at Present I Glory in beaing in the Mornirty how Long I Shall Continue in that Mind I Cannot tell My Friend mr. Barrel Voted in favour and I am Convinced he will find his Account in So doing³ it went by yeas and Nays for it 187 against it 168 So that their is you See 19. in favour I farly told them I fought Licke a Good Soldier and have been Congared [i.e., conquered] Like a man but Sir if it is adoptd by the whole and becomes the foundation of Law I am Sure I Shall Support it when maney that have been So full will Scrink behind the Curtain for I am Dertermed that (Let who will be King) to Remain a Good Sargent—I am this moment Setting out for home . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB. Nasson was the Massachusetts Convention delegate from Sanford, Maine.

2. Nasson's 1 February letter has not been found, but see his 22 January letter to Thatcher for his belief that the Constitution would not be ratified (RCS:Mass., 1545).

3. Nathaniel Barrell of York, Maine, was elected as an Antifederalist.

Royal Flint to Noah Webster
Boston, 14 February (excerpt)¹

. . . The tumults which had such a threatning appearance in this State the beginning of the last Year have wholly subsided,² the Spirit however which occasioned them seems not yet to be destroyd, it discovered itself at the late Convention and the opposers to the Federal Constitution Consisted of Characters who had been more or less in the Interests of the Insurgents, these men predicted that the adoption of the Constitution would excite a general uneasiness thro' the State but Contrary to their prediction it has turned out otherwise, People Aquies in the adoption and are disposed to make the best of it, It was very extraordinary that there was no person in the opposition who was capable of forming any system of objections, when the advocate[s] for the Constitution had made their remarks upon it the opposers were obliged to be silent, tho many of them said they were not convinced, there would however have been a much Stronger Majority in favor of it, but many of the Members had instructions from their town which they durst not Counteract;

1. RC, Webster Collection, NN. Flint (1754–1797), a Connecticut native and Continental Assistant Commissary of Purchases during the Revolution, was in Boston as U.S. Commissioner to Settle Continental Accounts with the Eastern States. Through the Scioto Company and the firm of Royal Flint & Company he speculated in land in the Northwest Territory. Webster (1758–1843), a Connecticut native and lexicographer and grammarian, was the editor of the New York *American Magazine*. In October 1787, as “A Citizen of America,” Webster published in Philadelphia a fifty-five-page pamphlet in support of the Constitution entitled *An Examination into the Leading Principles of the Federal Constitution* . . . (CC:173; and Mfm:Pa. 142). He also answered “The Dissent of the Minority of the Pennsylvania Convention” (CC:353) as “America” in the New York *Daily Advertiser* on 31 December (CC:399).

2. Shays’s Rebellion.

Newport Herald, 14 February (excerpts)¹

. . . Other members in the minority also arose and declared that they had been actuated by principles of honesty in their opposition—they assured the Convention that they now considered themselves under the strongest obligations to acquiesce in the decision of the majority, and that they should return to their respective homes with a full determination of reconciling the minds of their constituents, by informing them that the majority consisted of the most *respectable and distinguished characters in the Commonwealth for knowledge and uprightness*.

So just an encomium and readiness to submit to order and good government, will be to them of lasting honour, and is to the Commonwealth an auspicious omen of permanent happiness. . . .

Many of the minority, we are informed, were so confined to an opposition by the instructions of their constituents that they could not vote their sentiments—true it is that on all occasions since the ratification they universally appeared well disposed and expressed themselves perfectly satisfied.—They are preparing to return to their constituents and their homes rather as men who have gained what they contended for, than as those who have lost it.

1. The *Newport Herald* printed the first two paragraphs immediately following its reprinting of the speeches of the five minority delegates on the afternoon of 6 February. The three paragraphs printed here were reprinted in the Charleston *Columbian Herald*, 28 February, and the *Gazette of the State of Georgia*, 13 March, both of which placed them under a Newport, 11 February, dateline. This dateline indicates that the paragraphs probably originated not in the *Herald*, but in the no longer extant 11 February issue of the *Newport Mercury*.

New York Daily Advertiser, 14 February¹

Extract of a letter from a Gentleman in Boston to his Friend in this City, dated Feb. 6th, 1788.

“Dear Sir, I have the pleasure to inform you, that this afternoon the question, Whether this Convention will assent to and ratify the proposed Constitution, and propose the amendments? (as mentioned in the papers which you have had) was taken. The number of voters was 355. Yeas 187, Nays 168, giving a majority of 19.

“You will perceive, by the motion made the last week, and published in the Gazettes, that no condition is annexed to the ratification: after the vote was declared, the leaders of the minority publicly asserted, that they would quietly submit, and endeavor, by all their abilities and influence, to induce a like sentiment among their constituents, and the people of the Commonwealth, with whom they might meet; and this appears to be the disposition of the minority in general: For this favorable and happy determination, the friends of good government are under the highest obligation to Governor Hancock.”

Extract of another letter from Boston, 5 o'clock, 6th Feb. 1788.

“This House has completed the raising of another Pillar in the Federal Fabric. A more fair and impartial discussion and representation was never beheld than in this Convention. The whole number of votes were 355, of which 187 were yeas, and 168 were nays. A majority of 19 in favor of the Constitution.

“The minority behaved well—confessed the candor they had received through the debate—and declared that they should go home and do all in their power to make peace and happiness through the State.”

1. Both extracts of letters were reprinted in the *New York Packet* on 15 February. The first extract alone was reprinted in the *New York Morning Post*, 15 February; *Albany Gazette*, 21 February; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 23 February; and *Charleston City Gazette*, 5 March. On 6 February Convention delegate Christopher Gore informed George Thatcher about Massachusetts' ratification (RCS:Mass., 1603) and an extract of his letter appeared in the *New York Journal*, 14 February (Mfm:Mass.).

On 18 February the *Daily Advertiser*, in an item describing a celebration in honor of Massachusetts' ratification at New York City's Merchants' Coffee House, hoped that New York Antifederalists would imitate “the Patriotic Conduct of the Minority of Massachusetts” (RCS:Mass., 1642–43. See also *Massachusetts Centinel*, 27 February, RCS:Mass., 1643–44.).

Pennsylvania Gazette, 20 February¹

*Extract of a letter from a gentleman of distinction
in Boston, dated February 6, 1788.*

“I have the pleasure to inform you, that our convention this day ratified the constitution by a majority of 187 against 168. The minority are moderate, and say, *they will with alacrity support the government.*”

The conventions of Delaware, New-Jersey and Georgia, says a correspondent, adopted the new constitution unanimously.—There all was harmony. The minorities of the Connecticut and Massachusetts conventions acquiesced in the just authority of the majority, and all was harmony between the two sides of the question. Let us then in Pennsylvania support the honor of our state, by giving to each other the right hand of mutual regard, and making the kindest use of the time to come, which is yet dishonored by no dissentions.²

1. The second paragraph was reprinted seven times by 3 May: N.Y. (1), N.J. (2), Pa. (4).

2. On 26 March the *Pennsylvania Gazette* complimented the Connecticut minority for its "truly republican conduct" and both sides for the "perfect harmony" that now existed between them. "Equally honorable," said the *Gazette*, "is the conduct of the minority of Massachusetts. We hope the same harmony will take place in Pennsylvania" (CC:Vol. 4, p. 539. The *Salem Mercury*, 15 April, was one of several newspapers that reprinted this account.). See also a letter from Philadelphian William Shippen, Jr., to Thomas Lee Shippen, 24 February (Mfm:Mass.).

Pennsylvania Mercury, 21 February¹

A correspondent wishes the public of Pennsylvania to compare the *generous manly conduct* of the *minority of Massachusetts*, with the *pitiful low indecency* of the *hated minority* of Pennsylvania. Even though at first inimical to the Constitution, when *convinced*, or *even* OUT-VOTED, THEY could eat the *bread of peace*, and drink the *glass of friendship* with their friends IN TOTO—and they could even declare with *transport*, they were beaten—they were out-voted—but at their return to *those who honoured them with their choice*, they would recommend *peace and harmony, union and submission*. But when the *incendiaries* of our own state even refused the *hand of friendship*, the *signature of consent*, and the *social feast, which bind* man and man together, they not only added neglect to their malicious refusal, but strove to spread dissention, and to raise rebellion *amongst* their constituents.

To you we cling as to a band of brothers²—
 We thank you for your generous consent,
 Respect you as the saviours of your country,
 And *pray* the *head of all confederation*,
The author of the sun, the moon, the stars,
 And all which feel his forcible command,
 In one firm, fast-bound, mass of general union,
 —TO BLESS YOU.

1. Reprinted in Massachusetts in the *Boston Gazette*, 3 March; *Massachusetts Gazette and Salem Mercury*, 4 March; *Independent Chronicle and Worcester Magazine*, 6 March; *Hampshire Chronicle and Hampshire Gazette*, 12 March; and *Cumberland Gazette*, 13 March (partial). Outside of Massachusetts, it was reprinted in whole or in part in six newspapers by 17 March: R.I. (1), Conn. (1), N.Y. (1), N.J. (1), Va. (1), S.C. (1).

2. William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act IV, scene 3, line 60. See RCS:Mass., 221n.

John Howard to George Thatcher
Smithtown, N.Y., 27 February (excerpt)¹

. . . I cannot suppress the satisfaction I feel on the conduct of the Massachusetts-convention. I am charmed with the behavior of the minority, and am even constrained to love gentlemen of anticonstitutional principals. Their conduct was manly and generous, and will ever redound to the honor of that state. The candor of one side and the ingenuous concessions of the other, I am persuaded will have some weight upon the public mind, and facilitate the determination of other states in favour of the constitution. . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB. Printed: CC:567 (longer excerpt). Howard (1753–1816), a native of Bridgewater, Mass., was a Smithtown, N.Y., physician.

George Washington to Benjamin Lincoln
Mount Vernon, 29 February (excerpt)¹

I have to acknowledge the receipt of your three letters of the 3d. 6th. & 9th. int.²—The information conveyed by the last was extremely pleasing to me, tho' I cannot say it was altogether unexpected, as the tenor of your former letters had in some measure, prepared me for the event,—but the conduct of the minority was more pleasing and satisfactory than could have been looked for from the debates.—The full & fair discussion which you gave the subject in your Convention was attended with the happiest consequences; it afforded compleat information to all those whose minds were open to conviction and at the same time gave an opportunity to confute, and point out the fallacy of those specious arguments which were offered in opposition to the proposed Government.—Nor is this all, the conciliating behaviour of the minority will strike a damp on the hopes which opponents in other States might otherwise have formed from the smallness of the majority: and must be greatly influential in obtaining a favourable determination in those States which have not yet decided upon it. . . .

1. RC, George Washington to Benjamin Lincoln Letters, MH. Printed: Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 134–35. Washington wrote similar letters to Caleb Gibbs and Rufus King. An extract of the letter to Gibbs appeared in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 22 March (RCS:Mass.,

1656. For an excerpt from the King letter, see RCS:Mass., 1648n.). The letterbook copies of all three letters are dated 28 February (Washington Papers, DLC). The recipient copies of the letters to Lincoln and King are dated 29 February. The recipient copy of the letter to Gibbs has not been located, but the *Massachusetts Centinel* dated it 29 February. For Lincoln's 19 March response to Washington, see RCS:Mass., 1676.

2. See RCS:Mass., 1572–73, 1581–82, 1624, 1688.

Providence United States Chronicle, 6 March¹

A Gentleman of a respectable Character, from the County of Worcester informs, That the Gentlemen from that County who were in the Minority on the great Question of the Federal Constitution in the late Convention of Massachusetts, have, since their Return Home, almost to a Man, conducted with the greatest Propriety—and, agreeably to their Declarations in the Convention, are now endeavouring to convince their Constituents that it is absolutely necessary the Constitution should take Place—advising them peaceably to wait the Meeting of the first Legislature under it, for the Adoption of the proposed Amendments.

1. Reprinted: *American Herald*, 10 March; *Massachusetts Gazette*, 11 March; *Cumberland Gazette*, 20 March; *New Hampshire Recorder*, 25 March. The Worcester County delegates to the Massachusetts Convention voted 43 to 7 against ratification of the Constitution.

Massachusetts Centinel, 12 March¹

It is but justice to contradict a report circulated in this town, soon after the dissolution of the Convention, that the Hon. Dr. Taylor, had endeavoured, contrary to his promise in Convention, to prejudice the people against the American Constitution²—as we are assured, that the Doctor has not in the least deviated from that declaration, but has as far as his influence extended, impressed the necessity of calmly acquiescing in the decision of the majority.

1. Reprinted: *Providence United States Chronicle*, 10 April. In the afternoon of 6 February, after the vote on ratifying the Constitution, Dr. John Taylor of Douglass was one of several delegates who informed the Convention that they would support the Constitution, even though they had voted against ratification.

2. For another criticism of Taylor's behavior after the state Convention adjourned, see Samuel P. Savage to George Thatcher, 7 March (RCS:Mass., 1673).

Pennsylvania Gazette, 12 March¹

We are informed from the best authority, that twenty of the Massachusetts minority were actually in arms in the year 1787, under DANIEL SHAYS, and that near eighty more of that minority were decided friends to his cause. It matters not to us whether that alarming disturbance was

ill or *well* founded, but it must be very clear to every considerate man, that an attachment to an opposition against the government of Massachusetts is a very improper ground of opposition to the proposed Fœderal Constitution.—It is also very certain, that the remaining attachments to Great-Britain, in the northern parts of Massachusetts, and the influence of secret emissaries from the province of Canada, have had a very considerable effect. We wish however to do justice to the manly conduct of the members of the minority themselves, while we lament the effects of these baneful causes among their constituents.—Even they, we believe, are more deluded than dishonest. The adoption of the government will put an end to these pernicious practices of the enemies of our peace, liberty and safety.

1. Reprinted: *New York Morning Post* and *New York Daily Advertiser*, 14 March; *New York Independent Journal*, 15 March; *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 26 March; *State Gazette of South Carolina*, 31 March.

Winchester Virginia Gazette, 19 March

The genuine republican principles, largely evinced by the minority of the Massachusetts Convention, must forever redound to the honour of that State. Although they uniformly and zealously opposed the ratification of the federal government, as proposed, yet, since it had been approved of by a majority, they have, almost to a man, determined not only to support it themselves, but exert their influence with their constituents, that they afford an aiding hand;—enjoying the pleasing hope of succeeding in some amendments at a future Federal Congress; but, if not to be there obtained, they will freely acquiesce in taking it in *toto*.

Massachusetts Centinel, 22 March

In late February George Washington responded to several letters that had been written from Boston reporting on the ratification of the Constitution by the Massachusetts Convention and the acquiescence of the Convention's minority. On 22 March the *Massachusetts Centinel* printed an extract of Washington's response to Caleb Gibbs's letter of 9 February (RCS:Mass., 1686–87). In Massachusetts, this was reprinted, without the *Centinel's* prefatory statement to the extract, in the *Boston Gazette* and *American Herald*, 24 March; *Salem Mercury*, 25 March; *Essex Journal*, 26 March; *Cumberland Gazette* and *Worcester Magazine*, 27 March; and *Hampshire Gazette*, 9 April. By 10 May it was reprinted another forty-two times by out-of-state newspapers: Vt. (2), N.H. (3), R.I. (3), Conn. (9), N.Y. (6), N.J. (2), Pa. (10), Md. (1), Va. (3), S.C. (1), Ga. (2). Only six of these forty-two out-of-state newspapers reprinted the *Massachusetts Centinel's* prefatory statement. The *New York Journal*, 31 March, followed its reprinting of the letter extract with this statement: "Whoever reads the above are requested to recollect the *false* annunciation of the ratification of the constitution by

North-Carolina, two days previous to the *grand question*, TO BE OR NOT TO BE, in Massachusetts convention." (For false reports of North Carolina's ratification, see RCS:Mass., 860, and CC:Vol. 4, pp. 507-9.)

We feel a peculiar pleasure in laying before the publick, the following authentick extract of a letter from that great—and good as he is great—man, the American Fabius.—To receive the tribute of applause from him, must make the breasts of the gentlemen in the minority of our Convention, feelingly alive to the most agreeable sensations: And as citizens of Massachusetts, we feel a superiour degree of consequence, in knowing his opinion of the importance of the proceedings of this Commonwealth, in the affairs of the Continent.

Extract of a letter from his Excellency Gen. WASHINGTON, to a gentleman in this town, dated Mount Vernon, Feb. 29, 1788.

"The candid and conciliatory behaviour of your minority, places them in a more favourable point of view than the debates of the Convention gave room to expect, and sufficiently shews the good efforts which were produced by a full and fair discussion of the subject.

"The adoption of the Constitution in Massachusetts, will, I presume, be greatly influential in obtaining a favourable determination upon it in these States where the question is yet to be agitated.

"No person can, at this moment, pretend to say what *will* be its fate here—But from what I can collect, I have no doubt of its being accepted."

Edenton (N.C.) Intelligencer, 9 April

Extract of a letter from a gentleman of Massachusetts. Feb. 20

Dear Sir, "You have doubtless heard that our Convention have ratified the New-Constitution—I will confess to you without a blush, that I was in the Minority, and opposed this new fabric, from a jealousy of its ultimate consequences: this jealousy my friend, is the soul of Republican Governments—Perhaps I may have pushed my doubts too far: indeed I am consoled, and feel less anxiety from the assurances of our President, Governor Hancock, that the necessary amendments would doubtless be the first subject taken up by the New Congress.—In this case our political system will perhaps approach nearer perfection than any other in the world: besides the minds of its present opposers will be calm'd; trade and agriculture will flourish, and every shoulder will be pushing on the wheels of Industry, and all joining hand in hand, in peace and harmony, for the common interests of the United States, without confining our views locally to the State we happen to inhabit. Many doubts arose with the Minority, that, the Southern States were

more fully Represented in the Grand Convention, than the Northern States; and that of course they had obtained more advantages, but such illiberal jealousies ought I am sensible to be for ever done away. Yours &c. [”]

Massachusetts Centinel, 24 May

*Extract of a letter from a distinguished character in
Charleston, (S. C.) dated May 1, 1788.*

“I rejoice at the establishment, as far as it depends on your State, of the federal Constitution. If your minority act up to their professions at the eve of your Convention, they will establish a reputation for candour, which will spread a lustre over your whole State, and justly entitle them on future occasions to an ample share of confidence. It will then appear, that what was considered as an evil was really a blessing in disguise.”

**VI-D. Address of the Massachusetts Convention to the
People of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,
7 February-9 May**

Before the Massachusetts Convention adjourned on 7 February, it appointed a committee of five to prepare “an address to the people, stating the principles of the said constitution, the various objections which were made against it, and the answers they received; and explaining the absolute necessity of adopting some energetic system of federal government for the preservation of the union.” The address was to be printed and sent to every town in the state. Since the Convention was adjourning, it recommended that the Massachusetts legislature provide for the publication and distribution of the address.

On 18 February the *American Herald* (Mfm:Mass.) summarized the contents of the resolution and included the names of the committee members—Convention delegates George Cabot (chair), Theophilus Parsons, Ebenezer Peirce, and Caleb Strong, and Convention secretary George R. Minot. The *Herald’s* report was reprinted in the *Salem Mercury*, 19 February; *Worcester Magazine*, 21 February; and in six out-of-state newspapers by 8 March: R.I. (1), N.Y. (3), Pa. (2). The full text of the resolution appeared in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 23 February; *Independent Chronicle*, 28 February; *Hampshire Gazette*, 5 March; and *Cumberland Gazette*, 6 March. The book edition of the Convention debates, which went on sale on 18 March, does not mention this resolution.

Parsons and Minot were apparently assigned the responsibility for drafting the address. Cabot sent his ideas to both men. On 29 March, near the final day of the last session for the legislature elected in 1787, the Senate resolved that the printers to the legislature, Adams and Nourse, publish the address. The Senate forwarded this resolution to the House of Representatives for its concurrence. The House defeated a motion for referring consideration of the Senate's resolution to the next session, and then it voted not to concur in the resolution to publish the address. The House gave no reason for its vote, but it is clear, to quote clerk of the House Minot, "that a large majority [of the House] were opposed to the federal constitution" (RCS:Mass., 1678).

On 18 April a correspondent of the Antifederalist *American Herald* praised the actions of "a vast majority" of the House of Representatives as a refutation of "the *Tory* proceedings" of the Massachusetts Convention in ratifying the Constitution, a document, he said, "Tories have so artfully fabricated." Another correspondent responded in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 19 April, that more significant than the House's actions was the recent election of Federalists to the governorship, lieutenant governorship, and state Senate. The Antifederalist *New York Journal* and Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer* both informed their readers of the House's actions.

On 9 May George Cabot wrote Massachusetts congressman Nathan Dane, who had requested a copy of the Convention's address, that Theophilus Parsons had not yet written the address and that the House's action made its writing unlikely. Cabot, however, sent Dane a draft of the thoughts he had prepared for inclusion in the address. There is no evidence that the address was ever written.

George Cabot to Theophilus Parsons Beverly, 28 February¹

I feel exceedingly disappointed in having you pass this way without stopping. I had so much relied on seeing you, that I could not believe you had left home, until yesterday I was informed that you had been very lately *seen* in Boston.² I was about to inquire more particularly whether it was *you* or your *ghost*; but, recollecting that to determine this required more than common acuteness of sight and judgment, I waived a question which, by confounding my informant, might have placed him in a more humiliating point of view than a man is willing to be seen in. However, I am very glad to learn that you are still, *in any shape*, on this side the Styx; for I had begun very strongly to suspect that the old boatman had tumbled you into his scow, and paddled over the stream.³ As these apprehensions are of a nature that do not readily

subside, I beg, before the old kidnapper takes advantage of you, that you would be doing whatever you have not already done toward rearing the *Conventional Edifice*. The impatience discovered by the few people I converse with, stimulated me to set about collecting such materials as were to be procured in this quarter. These I intended should pass your *sole* inspection, and only such of them as you should judge would be useful should be offered to the architects; but, having got into the depth of incertitude as to your *ubiquity*, I forwarded all that I had collected in their rough state to Mr. Minot, with a request that such of them as are not suitable for any part of the building may be used for firewood, which I am sure is much wanted [in] this cold weather. This last reflection is a very consolatory one to me, as I had felt much concern lest my lumber should not only fail of answering any good purpose, but might be prejudicial by encumbering the work-yard; whereas, if it arrives at the honor of warming the hands of my patriotic friends, and enables them more freely to execute the commands of their head, I shall be perfectly satisfied. With this sentiment operating in its full force on my mind, I proceed to make a little addition to what I had sent on before.

The objection to the fourth section of the first article is stated full as strongly in the paper I sent Mr. Minot as I remember to have heard or seen it made anywhere; and the argument that the people of one State have an interest in the elections of *every* State, may, if placed in the most striking light, be a satisfactory answer. But there is (in my mind) ground for an objection to that article, which, by going a little further back than the opponents have, may be taken and defended against anything I have ever thought of that could be brought against it. I mean that the objectors, instead of *conceding*, as they all do, by implication at least, that the powers of that article could not be fixed absolutely in the Constitution, and so reduce the question simply to what body it shall be lodged in,—if, instead of this, they should insist that it might and ought to have been fixed immovably in the Constitution, it will be difficult to answer them. For I cannot see why a rule might not have been made of a kind that should answer that description, and yet accommodate itself to the changes in population, &c. in all the different districts. The best answer to this which occurs to me is, “that, as the article now stands, the different States may each enjoy their own favorite mode,” &c.; but this answer, if pursued, will very surely weaken the strongest argument we have ever used in favor of Congress having the right ultimately instead of the States. Pray think of the strongest objection possible to this article, and if you can answer it satisfactorily, it must be of infinite advantage.

I come now to the point for which I have thought it necessary to write to you at this time, and that is, to mention to you the two objections which, I am told, the people of the country find it the most difficult to get over. The first is that of the fourth section, mentioned above, and which I fear will never be entirely removed. The next is one which it seems to me may be pretty fully answered,—that of such a consolidation of the States as will dissolve their governments. Under the head of objections to the Senate, will it not be well to show how far the *injustice* of an equal representation in that body is balanced by the additional security it brings, that no measures will ever pass tending in the smallest degree to consolidation?—which must be always guarded against by small States: small States will out-number great ones. This argument, well managed, in addition to the dependence of the Federal Government for the elections of all its branches, and the expressed and implied reference to the State governments in various parts of it, will show that the provisions for their existence are interwoven in the Constitution in such manner as not to be separated without rending it in pieces. I wish you would introduce among the preliminary observations of your address this idea,—that the General Government, being an institution that is to affect States as well as people, will be obliged to admit into one of its branches that equality which sovereigns independent of each other usually insist on. And there is *some fitness* in the principle which requires that, as the laws affect States as well as people, the consent of States as such, as well as individuals, should be first obtained, through their representatives or ambassadors; and as sovereign States cannot be expected to submit to an entire renunciation of claims which have been in a degree sanctified by the long usage of nations, it is a strong motive why the great States should concede something in this particular. *Verbum sapienti.*⁴

1. Printed: Theophilus Parsons, *Memoir of Theophilus Parsons* . . . (Boston, 1859), 463–65.

2. After the state Convention adjourned on 7 February, Parsons went back to Newburyport on 8 February. He returned to Boston on 19 February for the meeting of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, remaining there until 14 March (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 358, 364, 375).

3. In Greek mythology, the river Styx was the boundary of Hades, and Charon ferried the souls of the dead across it.

4. Latin: "a word to the wise."

**George Cabot to George R. Minot
Beverly, 4 March¹**

I have received your obliging Letter of the 1st instant, & altho' I feel much flatter'd by the polite manner in which you speak of my productions, yet I cannot be persuaded that they have so much merit as your

Complaisance ascribes to them, nor can I hope that the great defects with which they abound, will escape your discernment upon a revision of them: I trust however you will rectify all the errors in those parts which you use—it gives me no small satisfaction to think that I have done eno' to set the right heads to work—for I am well convinced that something shoud be done—soon—& well—& if Mr. Parsons & you engage in it cordially I have no doubt it will have both those advantages.—permit me to suggest the propriety of expressing in strong terms the singular advantage of this System in being calculated for alteration when necessary in as peacable & quiet a manner as a Law is made—& with no more formalities than are just sufficient to prevent unnecessary Changes—. it is the heighth of Political Wisdom to *provide* for those things it cannot *prevent* the Changes of Character Condition & Circumstances which the People may undergo from various Causes will perhaps render many Changes in their Government absolutely necessary shoud these be effected in the manner provided in the Constitution that single advantage will shew it to be nearer perfection (in my mind) than any System ever produced—but I do not mean to resume a Subject upon which I have tired myself & you already—pray offer my best regards to Mr. P & tell him I will never forgive him if he shrinks from the Labor until [it] is finished—

1. RC, Misc. Coll., Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif. Addressed to Minot in Boston, this letter was carried by "Mr. Fenno."

**Massachusetts Senate Resolution for Printing
Convention Address to the People, 29 March¹**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In Senate March 29th. 1788—

Whereas a Convention chosen by the People of this Commonwealth, by their Resolve of the 7th. of February 1788—appointed a Committee to prepare "an address to the people, stating the principles of the said Constitution, the various objections which were made against it, & the answers they received, & explaining the absolute necessity of adopting some Energetic system of federal government for the preservation of the Union—and that the same be published" and whereas the said Convention by their said Resolve, recommended to the General Court their making provision for the publication of the same—Be it

Resolved That Messrs. Adams & Nourse Printers to the General Court—print the said Address—and lay their accounts before the General Court for allowance & payment

sent down for concurrence

S Adams Presidt

1. DS, Miscellaneous Legislative Papers, Senate Files, No. 912, M-Ar. Below Samuel Adams's signature, the clerk of the House of Representatives wrote, "In the House of Representatives/March 29. 1788/Read and Non-concurred," which was signed "J Warren Speker."

House Proceedings, Saturday, 29 March (excerpt)¹

... The Hon. S. Thompson Esqr. brought down a Resolve of Senate of this day directing the Printers to the General Court to print the address of the Committee of the late Convention, to the people, agreeably to their resolution of the 7. of February last

Sent down for concurrence

A motion was made and seconded that the consideration of the said Resolve be referred to the next Session of the General Court, and the question being put passed in the negative²

The question of concurrence was then put and passed in the negative also³ . . .

1. MS, House Journal, 517, M-Ar.

2. A notation in the left-hand margin reads, "47/130." Presumably the motion for referral was defeated by a vote of 130 to 47.

3. A notation in the left-hand margin reads, "2/118." Presumably the motion for concurrence with the Senate resolution was defeated by a vote of 118 to 2, with far fewer Federalists voting, knowing from the previous vote that they could not obtain concurrence.

American Herald, 18 April¹

FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

On Saturday the 29th of March last (which was just at the close of the session) a Resolve came down from the Senate, to the House of Representatives, for publishing, at the Expence of the Government, and under the patronage of the Legislature, an ADDRESS to the People from the late Convention in this Commonwealth.—As this Address was supposed to be an attempt to reconcile the People of this Commonwealth to the *Tory* proceedings of their late Delegates, the vote of the Senate was non-concurred by a vast majority, and with the most patriotic contempt and indignation, fully expressive of the sense of the People, with regard to the System which the Tories have so artfully fabricated and procured to be accepted in this and a few other States.

1. Reprinted: *New York Journal*, 29 April; *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 5 May. For a response to this item, see *Massachusetts Centinel*, 19 April (immediately below).

Massachusetts Centinel, 19 April

A correspondent would just hint to a certain *disappointed antifederal* scribbling paragraphist, in the Herald of yesterday,¹ that the sense of

the people respecting the new Constitution, is much better ascertained by the late election of Governour, Lieutenant Governour, and Senators, which leaves his printed list of antifederalists so deeply in the minority—than by the suppression, in the House of Representatives, of the address of Convention to the people.

1. See *American Herald*, 18 April (immediately above).

New York Journal, 22 April¹

We hear from Massachusetts, that before the rising of the legislature, they gave the most incontestible evidence of their disapprobation of the proceedings of their state convention, by negating a proposition for granting money to publish an address to the people, prepared by a committee of the convention appointed (as we saw, the public prints) for that purpose.

1. Reprinted: Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 28 April.

George Cabot to Nathan Dane Beverly, 9 May (excerpts)¹

I received your obliging Letter of the 22d March,² & have very frequently since that period felt the disposition to make you the Acknowledgement; but the Misfortune of losing a favourite Son followed by Mrs. C's ill health has prevented my attention to any thing that was possible to avoid.—

you desired me to transmit the address of our Convention whenever the Committee should have finished it—that period will never arrive I think—As Mr. Parsons who was our whole dependence has not yet found Leisure to put Pen to Paper on the Subject & the Gen Court in their last session having refused to countenance the Publication I conceive there will be nothing attempted.—as I felt much interested in it at the time the Convention rose I spent two days in committing to writing such Thoughts as then occurred to me that would be necessary to give a place to in the address—I wrote them in the most desultory manner & have never revised them since—having the original Draught of the Principal part of them I enclose it here for your Inspection wishing to have it read by the eye of Friendship & not that of Criticism I wrote also a dozen pages on some parts of the Subject not touched on in the inclosed, but as I have no Copy cannot give them to you. . . . I am a Subscriber to the Publication signed Publius having put my Name to a Paper of Proposals for that purpose at Boston last Winter—if the 1st. Vol is out I wish it to be forwarded & to have my Name

carried on to the succeeding Volumes—I have never seen any of the numbers except those which you were kind eno' to send me.³ . . .

1. RC, Dane Papers, Beverly Historical Society. Dane was in New York City, serving as a Massachusetts delegate to Congress.

2. Dane's letter of 22 March has not been located, but for his concern about the fate of the Constitution, see Dane to Samuel Adams, 10 May (CC:738).

3. "Publius" was the pseudonym used by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison in writing *The Federalist* essays. The essays were printed originally in New York City newspapers, beginning on 27 October 1787. Eleven of the eighty-five essays were reprinted, in whole or in part, in Massachusetts newspapers (see CC:201 and 639; CC:Vol. 6, pp. 83–87; and RCS:Mass., 151, 585–87). On 2 January 1788 the printers of the New York *Independent Journal* began to advertise for subscriptions for a book edition of the essays, which was "In the Press and speedily will be published" (CC:406). The first volume of thirty-six essays appeared on 22 March (CC:639) and the second volume with the remaining essays on 28 May (CC:Vol. 6, pp. 83–87).

VI-E. The Reply of the Massachusetts General Court to the Speech of Governor John Hancock, 27 February–6 May

On 24 November 1787 the Massachusetts General Court adjourned until 20 February 1788. Meanwhile, the Massachusetts Convention met on 9 January, ratified the Constitution on 6 February, and adjourned the next day. On 4 February Governor John Hancock, the Convention's president, issued a proclamation extending the adjournment of the General Court until 27 February so that Convention delegates, who were also legislators, would have time to return home (Mfm:Mass.).

In his opening address to a joint legislative session at 5:00 P.M. on 27 February, Governor Hancock praised the Convention and its commendatory amendments to the Constitution. Each house appointed members to a joint committee of five to draft a reply to Hancock. The Senate selected Aaron Wood of Boxford (Essex County) and Charles Turner of Scituate (Plymouth County), while the House chose Charles Jarvis of Boston, Samuel Holten of Danvers, and John Manning of Ipswich, the only committee member who had not served in the Massachusetts Convention. Wood, the chairman of the committee, had voted against ratification, while Turner and Jarvis had voted to ratify. Holten had not voted. On 2 March Henry Jackson reported to Henry Knox that Hancock's speech "is highly approved off, all is quiet & every body satisfied with respect to the adoption of the Federal constitution" (Mfm:Mass.).

On 4 March the committee of five reported, agreeing with Hancock's statements respecting the Constitution and the state Convention. The

same day the Senate accepted the report with minor amendments (RCS:Mass., 1669-71). Nathaniel Gorham, a Charlestown member of the House who voted for ratification in the state Convention, said that the Senate's acceptance was made "without any difficulty." He described the report as "very prudent—& decent" (to Henry Knox, 9 March, RCS:Mass., 1674).

The House of Representatives read the joint committee's report on 4 March and scheduled it for consideration on the 5th. On that day, according to Gorham, "A warm debate" occurred in which Phaniel Bishop of Rehoboth, who had spoken and voted against ratification in the state Convention, moved to strike out those parts of the report relating to the Constitution and to insert in their place a clause charging the Constitutional Convention with exceeding its powers and recommending a Constitution "which might involve the Country in blood." Nor did Bishop want any praise for the Massachusetts Convention because it had "ratified a Constitution so unfriendly to the rights of Men & States" (Gorham to Henry Knox, 9 March, RCS:Mass., 1674). Bishop's position was rejected by Antifederalist William Widgery of New Gloucester, Maine, who had voted against ratification in the state Convention but who had promised to support the Constitution. Widgery asserted that the state Convention, not the state legislature, was the only body authorized to consider the Constitution and that the Convention had given the Constitution a fair hearing (Samuel P. Savage to George Thatcher, 7 March, RCS:Mass., 1673).

The debate on Bishop's amendment continued until 6 March, when the House of Representatives voted decisively that consideration of the amendment should subside. The House then appointed a committee of five—Bishop (chair), Gorham, John Taylor of Douglass, William Lyman of Northampton and Easthampton, and Daniel Cooley of Amherst—to report any amendments to the legislature's reply to Hancock's message which "when passed may not contain any opinion of the legislature upon the merits of the constitution" (Savage to Thatcher, 7 March, and Gorham to Knox, 9 March [RCS:Mass., 1673, 1674]; and House Proceedings, 6 March [Mfm:Mass.]). Bishop, Taylor, and Cooley had voted against ratification in the state Convention; while Gorham had voted in favor of it. Like William Widgery, Taylor, and Cooley had promised to support the Constitution. Lyman was not a Convention delegate.

During the appointment of this committee of five, it was said that House speaker, Antifederalist James Warren of Milton, heard the nomination of an Antifederalist but could not hear the nomination of a

Federalist, even though it “rung th[r]o the whole house” (Henry Jackson to Henry Knox, 10 March, RCS:Mass., 1675). On 7 March, “a correspondent” observed in the *Massachusetts Gazette* “that the very palpable partiality of a certain honourable gentleman, in returning the nomination of a committee, (yesterday in the house) chosen to form an address to the governour, fully evinces his readiness to sacrifice truth and honour, in every instance, to the attainment of his favourite object.” The next day the *Massachusetts Centinel* printed this notice: “LOST—on Thursday last, in the State-House,—the useful Sense of HEARING.—Any person who can restore it to the loser, will essentially benefit the publick.” On 13 March “a correspondent” in the *American Herald* replied to the correspondent in the *Massachusetts Gazette* by asking, “should not the honorable House of Representatives resent the insult offered to their Speaker by a *paragraph* in the *Massachusetts gazette* of the 7th instant, and will not such *proceedings* soon produce a Removal of the Legislature from the town of Boston?”

On 11 March the House committee of five reported its own reply to Hancock’s address that avoided any judgment on the Constitution: “We have observed the Communications which your Excellency has thought proper to make respecting the Federal System of Government and have postponed any Considerations on that important Subject.” (For the complete draft of the reply, see Mfm:Mass.) The House debated this reply and then “it was Ordered that the consideration of the said answer subside” (House Proceedings, 11 March, Mfm:Mass.). No answer was given to Hancock’s message.

George R. Minot, clerk of the House of Representatives, supported the decision not to reply to Hancock’s message, declaring that the decision was made by “prudent men of both sides.” Minot thought that “the consequences would have been dreadful indeed, if the opinion of the Legislature had been given differently from that of the Convention, both being the proper representatives of the people, who would thereby have been distracted and uncertain which to follow” (RCS:Mass., 1678. See also Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington, 19 March, RCS:Mass., 1676.). Samuel Nasson of Sanford, Maine, who had voted against ratification but had promised to support the Constitution, said that the failure to reply “was Disagreeable to me I Cannot Tell how it will Please the People” (to George Thatcher, 23 March, RCS:Mass., 1728). About a week after the legislature adjourned, Gorham wrote that “The Legislature have ended the Session without doing any mischief—the utmost prudence & moderation was necessary & it was exerted” (to Rufus King, 6 April, Mfm:Mass.).

Governor Hancock's speech was printed in the *Independent Chronicle* and *American Herald* on 28 February. The speech was also printed in the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 29 February; *Massachusetts Centinel*, 1 March; *Boston Gazette*, 3 March; *Salem Mercury*, 4 March; *Hampshire Chronicle*, *Hampshire Gazette*, and *Essex Journal*, 5 March; and *Cumberland Gazette* and *Worcester Magazine*, 6 March. The speech was reprinted in the May Philadelphia *American Museum* and in seventeen out-of-state newspapers by 17 April: N.H. (1), R.I. (2), Conn. (4), N.Y. (4), Pa. (3), Va. (2), S.C. (1). From 29 February to 9 April seven more newspapers reprinted excerpts from the speech that included at least three of the four paragraphs about the Constitution: N.H. (1), N.Y. (1), Pa. (2), Md. (1), Va. (1), N.C. (1). Between 24 March and 6 May, newspapers in New York City and Philadelphia printed articles commenting on the Massachusetts legislature's attempt to respond to Hancock's speech. (For a summary statement of these articles, see CC:Vol. 4, pp. 223-24.)

For the full documentation on the proceedings of the two houses of the General Court on their response to Hancock's speech, including the complete text of the speech, see Mfm:Mass.

Governor John Hancock's Speech to the General Court Boston, 27 February (excerpts)¹

Gentlemen of the Senate & Gentlemen of the House of Representatives. . . .

The adjournment of the General Court, for the space of one week, became necessary, in order to give the Members, who were also Members of the late Convention, an opportunity of returning home before the meeting of the Legislature. I could have wished that the proclamation of adjournment had been of an earlier date, but the Session of the Convention, by the importance of the business before that Body, was protracted beyond what was expected—I flatter myself that this will be satisfactory, as well to those of you Gentlemen, who having not heard of the adjournment, have been some days waiting in Town, as to those who may be apprehensive that the business of the present Session will demand a longer time, than can be conveniently afforded at this Season of the year. . . .

. . . In the beginning of your last Session, I laid before you the Constitution & Frame of Government for the United States of America, agreed upon by the late General Convention, & transmitted to me by Congress. As the System was to be submitted to the people, & to be decided upon by their Delegates in Convention, I forbore to make any

remarks upon it.² The Convention which you appointed to deliberate upon that important subject, have concluded their Session, after having adopted & ratified the proposed plan, according to their resolution, a copy whereof, I have directed the Secretary to lay before you.

The obvious imbecility of the Confederation of the United States, has too long given pain to our friends, & pleasure to our enemies; but the forming a new System of Government, for so numerous a people, of very different views, & habits, spread upon such a vast extent of Territory, containing such a great variety of Soils, & under such extremes of climate, was a task, which nothing less than the dreadful apprehension of loosing our national existence could have compelled the people to undertake.

We can be known to the World, only under the appellation of the United States, if we are robbed of the idea of our Union, we immediately become seperate nations, independent of each other, & no less liable to the depredations of foreign powers, than to Wars, & bloody contentions amongst ourselves. To pretend to exist as a nation without possessing those powers of Coerce, which are necessarily incident to the national Character, would prove a fatal solecism in politicks. The objects of the proposed Constitution, are defence against external enemies, & the promotion of tranquility, & happiness amongst the States—Whether it is well calculated for those important purposes, has been the subject of extensive & learned discussion in the Convention which you appointed—I believe there was never a Body of Men assembled, with greater purity of intention, or with higher zeal for the public interest. And although when the momentous Question was decided, there was a greater division than some expected, yet there appeared a candor, & a spirit of Conciliation, in the Minority, which did them great honor, & afforded an happy presage of unanimity amongst the people at large.³ Tho' so many of the Members of the late Convention could not feel themselves convinced that they ought to vote for the ratification of this System, yet their opposition was conducted with a candid & manly firmness & with such marks of integrity & real regard to the publick interest, did them the highest honor, & leaves no reason to suppose that the peace, & good order of the Government is not their object.—

The amendments proposed by the Convention are intended to obtain a Constitutional security of the principles to which they refer themselves, & must meet the wishes of all the States, I feel myself assured that they will very early become a part of the Constitution, & when they shall be added to the purposed plan, I shall consider it as the most

perfect System of Government, as to the objects it embraces, that has been known amongst mankind.—

Gentlemen,

As that Being, in whose hands is the government of all the Nations of the Earth, & who putteth down one, & raiseth up another according to His Sovereign Pleasure, has given to the people of these States a rich & an extensive Country; has in a marvellous manner given them a name & a standing among the Nations of the World, has blessed them with external peace & internal tranquility; I hope & pray that the gratitude of their hearts may be expressed by a proper use of those inestimable blessings, by the greatest exertions of patriotism, by forming & supporting institutions for cultivating the human understanding & for the greatest progress of the Arts & Sciences, by establishing Laws for the support of piety, Religion & Morality, as well as for punishing vice & wickedness, & by exhibiting on the great Theatre of the World, those social, public & private virtues, which give more Dignity to a people possessing their own Sovereignty, than Crowns & Diadems afford to Sovereign Princes.

Every matter of a public nature which may occur worthy of your notice shall be communicated by Message, & in every concern tending to promote the publick welfare I shall be happy to concur with you, & be ready at all times to give every possible dispatch to the business that may come before you.

Council Chamber

John Hancock

February 27th. 1788

1. DS, Miscellaneous Legislative Papers, House Files, No. 2898, M-Ar. This document is endorsed as read by the Senate and the House of Representatives on 28 February. The endorsements also indicate that senators Aaron Wood and Charles Turner and representatives Charles Jarvis, Samuel Holten, and John Manning were appointed a joint committee "to consider & report" on the address. The action of each house was signed by Samuel Adams, president of the Senate, and James Warren, speaker of the House. Other manuscript versions of the address are in the Journal of the House of Representatives, pp. 375–80, M-Ar, and Miscellaneous Legislative Papers, House Files, No. 2899, M-Ar. An official version was printed in *Resolves of the General Court . . .* [27 February–1 April 1788] (Boston, 1788), 99–101 (Evans 21246). The texts in these versions differ in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, paragraphing, and italics.

2. For Hancock's speech of 18 October 1787, see RCS:Mass., 126–27.

3. For the conciliatory remarks of the minority, see RCS:Mass., 1478–88, 1645–47.

Draft of Reply to Governor John Hancock's Speech 4 March (excerpt)¹

. . . As the Constitution or frame of Government for these United States which was laid before us by your Excellency in the beginning of

the last session was then to be submitted to the people for their unbiased decision there was the utmost propriety in your Excellencys conduct in not giving your sentiments upon it at that period.² We feel with you, the strongest conviction of the truth & justice of your remark "that the imbecility of the Confederation has too long given pleasure to our enemies & pain to our friends.—" Powerful and happy as this Country may become by its union; its efforts will be proportionably feeble without a federal Government competent to the necessities of a people extensively diffused over an immense territory and remarkable for the diversity of their habits manners & interests. This Idea joined to the dreadful apprehension of our even loosing our national existance must undoubtedly have originated in the late Federal continental Convention, the result of whose deliberations has since been adopted in this State for our Federal Government—

As we are known only in our national Character we must be fully apprized that ~~where we to loose the Ideas of our~~ were the Ideas of an indissoluble union among the states to be abandoned we must become ~~separate nations~~ distracted & unhappy exposed to foreign insults, and to the more fatal evils of domestic & bloody contentions—We agree with your Excellency that the power of coercion is indispensibly requisite to the very Idea name of Government—And as the declared ~~object~~ end of the new constitution is defence against external enemies, & the maintenance & promotion of liberty and happiness among the States—We fervently pray, that in the progress of its operation it may fully ~~embrace attain~~ secure & perpetuate these noble & essential purposes for which it was instituted—The Zeal Knowledge & purity of intentions discovered by the members of the late Convention of this State in discharge of the great & momentous trust which has been assign[ed] them leave no doubt of their integrity which we believe with your Excellency has scarcely been exceeded—and we are fully agreed that the candour & pleasing spirit of conciliation displayed by so large a minority renders confer on the Gentlemen who composed it the highest honor & affords an happy presage of our future Unanimity & Peace—

When we reflect on the nature of the amendments proposed by the convention and observe their design is to procure a Constitutional Security for those objects to which they refer, and also consider the liberal and extensive principles on which they are established we have reason to hope & *believe*³ that they will meet the approbation of the other States; and ~~we flatter ourselves that they will~~ early become a part of the proposed federal Constitution—And should this be the case we ~~shou'd consider then view it with respect to the objects it embraces & the~~

principles on which it is constructed as one of the most perfect Systems of *Federal* Government which we have known in the History of mankind—).⁴ . . .

1. Dft, Miscellaneous Legislative Papers, House Files, No. 2690, M-Ar. This document is docketed: "Answer to/the Govr's Speech/March 11th. 1788./consideration hereof/ordered to subside." The draft reply contains many emendations made by either the joint committee or the House, or both. An endorsement (signed by Senate President Samuel Adams) indicates that the Senate read and accepted the reply with two amendments (see footnotes 3 and 4) and that senators William Phillips and Charles Turner were appointed to be part of another joint committee to present the reply to Governor Hancock. Like Charles Turner, William Phillips of Boston had been a member of the state Convention and had voted to ratify the Constitution. There is no record that the House of Representatives appointed any of its members to this joint committee.

2. A marginal note indicates that this sentence was intended to be replaced by another sentence which reads, "We observe what your Excellency has been pleased to communicate respecting the doings of the late Convention in ratifying the proposed federal Governmt & sincerely wish that *if* that government should become the governt of the United States it may promote & establish the happiness of the People." There is no record that this change, which is on a separate piece of paper in the handwriting of the clerk of the Senate, was accepted by either house.

3. The Senate recommended the deletion of the words "*& believe*."

4. The Senate recommended the deletion of the text within angle brackets and the insertion in its place of the following: "trust it will be calculated to promote the future welfare & happiness of the United States."

Phanuel Bishop's Amendment to the Draft of the Legislature's Reply to Governor John Hancock's Speech, 5 March¹

The House proceeded in the consideration of the answer to the Governours speech, and after debate it was moved and seconded that so much of the answer as respected the new constitution should be stricken out and the following inserted in its room viz. Your Excellency is pleased to inform us that the Convention which was appointed to deliberate upon the Constitution and frame of government for the United States of America agreed upon by the late general Convention have concluded their sessions after having adopted and ratified the proposed plan. We have long been sensible of the imbecility of the Confederation of the United States, and of the consequences of that imbecillity, and therefore appointed Delegates to the late general Convention for the sole and express purpose of revising the articles of Confederation, and reporting to Congress & the several Legislatures such alterations and provisions therein as shall when agreed to in Congress and confirmed by the States, render the federal constitution adequate to the exigencies of government, and the preservation of the union. If they had observed and acted agreeably to their commission

no difficulty perhaps would have arisen from the numbers of a people, spread over a vast extent of territory containing such a great variety of soils and under such extremes of climate, and with such different views and habits while they were so well united in that one object. We are fully sensible that our national existance might in that way have been preserved with unanimity, tranquility and peace. And we do not wish to be known to the world under any other appellation than that of the United States.

In confederation and union with our sister States, we have happily baffled the intrigues and defeated the force of Great Britain, have supported the rights of mankind and secured the freedom and independence of America. While we wish to preserve the union entire and are fully sensible of the ill consequences of an interruption of it, We are sorry to differ from your Excellency in the mode of effecting the first and avoiding the last. Every good government should have for it's object defence against external enemies and the preservation² of internal tranquillity and happiness. While we suspend our opinion of the purity of intention and of the great zeal for the safety³ and welfare with which the late convention assembled, we are in justice to our constituents constrained to say, that the result of their deliberations does not seem well calculated for those valuable purposes. We shall under this head, only add, that the rights and liberties of a great country should stand on firmer grounds than that of mere probability. If the amendments proposed with the ratification of the late Convention, had been made a condition of ratification, they would have gone some way, though not fully, to a conciliation of our minds to the system. But your Excellency will permit us to say, that, as they now stand, they neither comport with the dignity or safety of this Commonwealth.

1. MS, House Journal, 407-8, M-Ar. The manuscript of Bishop's amendment is in Miscellaneous Legislative Papers, House Files, No. 2689, M-Ar. The amendment was published in the *New York Journal* on 24 March, the text of which is printed as CC:566-C. The texts of the versions appearing in the House Journal, in Bishop's draft, and in the *New York Journal* differ in punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and paragraphing. For two significant differences, see footnotes 2 and 3 (below). For the *New York Journal's* introduction to its printing of Bishop's amendment, see RCS:Mass., 1677.

2. "Promotion" in the *New York Journal* version.

3. "Interest" in the *New York Journal* version.

**Samuel P. Savage to George Thatcher
Weston, 7 March (excerpt)¹**

. . . Every thinking man laments the want of Energy in your Body [i.e., Congress], and the mighty Clamor & Opposition to the new Government arises chiefly from the Enimies of all good Governmts, who wish

it ever may remain so, let the pretentions be what they may, this is the sole, bottom and only reason for the Opposition with them—some there be, who really act conscientiously, and if any fault there be in them, it lays not in their hearts.—the political Creed of the former is that as the Earth was given to the Children of Men, & that every Man ought to go Share and Share alike, let the Industry, Services or Merit of some be what it may: this Creed I believe is not confined only to the Northern States, it seems at present to be too much the temper of the idle, the lazy and the Debtors throughout all the States, and I fear unless some there be more energy in Govt than there is at present, it will ere long be the sine qua non of every one whose election is made sure among us.—blessed times these! when a Shaise or some other daring, desperate and enterprising Genius, may, with less trouble, take the reins of Governnt than a Cromwell.

I said above there were two Sorts of Men, who opposed the adoption of the new Governmt—does not the Conduct of N Hampshire prove there are others—think you not, that selfish motives influenced some, from the hope of Commerce being forced to their ports by the wholesome Duties that will (if the Constitution be adopted) undoubtedly be laid by Congress on those States who do adopt it. It is this narrow contracted Spirit, that has led us on thus far to distruction, and which if pursued, will seal our political Misery.—

This leaves us all well. Mrs. Savage begs her remembrance—I cordially wish you all happiness and am affectionately Yours—
[P.S.] Since I finished the foregoing I am informed that the fa[mous] or [in]famous Dr. Tayler, with many others of the same kidney, who were members of the late Convention, & are members also of the Genl Court, have in the Week past been trying to raise a Storm in the Court, about the new proposed Constitution, in which your Neighbour Wedgery of new Glocesters, did himself singular honour; by declaring that the Constitution had had a fair ~~hearing~~ and Discussion by a Body, authorised to recieve or reject it, and that the Opponents had been fairly beaten—and also that he thot the G. Court had nothing to do with it—After 3 or 4 Days scolding, a Question was put and carried by the federalists 60 to 30—here ended rests the Matter until some evil Spirit shall again canjur it up.—

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB. Printed: CC:600.

Nathaniel Gorham to Henry Knox
Charlestown, 9 March (excerpt)¹

Your esteemed favour inclosing Mr Kings Letter I Recd, I have also recd his inclosures relative to the affair of Rhode Island—& will get

them published in the next paper²—I will thank you to inform him—he expresses his wish that the Genl Court may hatch no mischief in their present Session—an attempt however has been made to do a great deal—it has as yet prevented—The Governor in his Speech you perc[e]ive sayd some handsome things of the Convention & the Constitution—it was necessary to mention those subjects in the reply—the Comte. reported a very prudent—& decent answer—which passed the Senate without any difculty when it came down to the House it occasiond. a warm debate which continued two days pretty early in which a motion was made by Mr. Bishop of Rehoboth to strike out all that related to the Constitution as reported by the Committe—& to insert a clause as prepared by himself or somebody for him in which the General Convention was charged with exceeding their powers & recommending measures which might involve the Country in blood—by this amendment also the Court were to say that they chose to suspend their opinion of the honor & integrity of the State Convention in consequence of their having ratified a Constitution so unfriendly to the rights of Men & States—however after long debate this motion was put out of the way by the previous question 90 & od to 50 & od—there was not 50 possibly in favour of it but they wished to save appearances by committing it the address was then Committed but the Come. have not yet reported—I know much depends upon keeping things quiet during this Session—& I am in good hopes we shall do it. . . .

1. RC, J.S.H. Fogg Autograph Collection, MeHi. Although no addressee is indicated, the letter was probably written to Henry Knox.

2. "The affair of Rhode Island" arose in the Massachusetts Convention on 16 January, when Theodore Sedgwick charged that in 1787 Rhode Island prohibited its delegates from attending Congress. Both Nathaniel Gorham and Rufus King spoke to the issue, which was revived after the Convention adjourned. On 14 February, the *Independent Chronicle* printed a statement from Rhode Island's secretary of state certifying that Rhode Island did not recall its delegates to Congress. Three days later Gorham wrote Knox (Mfm:Mass.), enclosing a letter to King in which he asked King for information concerning Sedgwick's allegation. In support of the allegation, King drafted a newspaper article, signed "Proculus," and sent it to Gorham, along with supporting evidence. However, on 25 March Gorham informed Knox that he was not going to have "Proculus" printed (RCS:Mass., 1728).

For a fuller discussion of the validity of Sedgwick's allegation, see RCS:Mass., 1212–13, note 5. For the text of "Proculus" and other documents concerned with Sedgwick's allegation, see Mfm:Mass., under 16 January.

John Avery, Jr., to George Thatcher
Boston, 10 March¹

. . . I am exceeding glad, that the proceedings of the Convention meets with your approbation, and am in hopes, it will terminate well;

the minority have discovered, as you justly observe, a magnanimous Temper, & they have acted, as far as I have heard from the several Towns, with the same good Spirit, and the People appear to acquiesce in the decision of the important Question; but there are some in our general Court that seem to wish still to shew their disapprobation, and when the Governour addressed them upon the Subject of the adoption of the federal Constitution, they took the opportunity of considering the matter again seriously and wanted the Court to answer the Governour, that they differed from him in Opinion; but it was overruled, and the Matter has subsided—but there are some crochical Geniuses in our State that never will be easy, and its very difficult sometimes to find out the Motives that actuate them—I communicated part of your Letter to our friends Wigery & Nason, that related to them, and they were much pleased with your observations—and by the way Mr Wigery said he had wrote you, and seemed to be rather uneasy that you had not answered it—Mr Nason said he had also wrote you lately that he had seen no Reason to recant his Opinion, he and I only differ in the Mode—he wanted the Constitution to be adopted conditionally which in my opinion would have damned the Constitution and I told him Yesterday that I made no doubt, as the Influence of this State was great in the Union, that we should be perfectly satisfied by and by. . . .

1. Printed: Goodwin, "Thatcher Papers," 345. Goodwin printed no more than the excerpt printed here.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox Boston, 10 March (excerpt)¹

. . . there has been a great dispute in the General Court with respect to answg his Excellencies Speech, one has been reported, & approved by the Senate, but violently opposed in the House, by the *Anti* influence, they have debated this business for two days, & have not as yet come to any determination—in the appointment of a *second* committee for the purpose it is said the *Speaker*² of the House cou'd readily hear the nomination of an *Anti* altho the Name of a *Fed.* rung th[r]o the whole house without his being able to hear it—you will observe in the Fridays & Saturdays papers, some strikes upon him on that head.³ . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. James Warren.

3. See RCS:Mass, 1666, for quotations from the *Massachusetts Gazette* on 7 March and the *Massachusetts Centinel* on 8 March.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 15 March (excerpt)¹

dear Harry

The post arrived and no Letter for me. I hope it was business and not sickness that caused it—

The General Court are yet seting, & in many instance they discover their old insurgent temper and principles,² & cannot help shewing their teeth on almost evry occasion that respects government,—but I hope in god their day is short,—for the moment the Federal Constitution begins to operate, their influence must & will disappear like a vapour. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. Shays's Rebellion.

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington
Boston, 19 March (excerpt)¹

I was this morning honoured with the receipt of your Excellencys favor of the 29th. Ulto.—

Nothing very material has taken place since the convention was dissolved, saving the meeting of our General Court.—An attempt was made by some in the house of representatives, in a proposed answer to the Governours speech, to reprobate the doings of the convention held at Philadelphia and of the one in this State. In order to avoid a greater evil an answer will be omitted.—

Your Excellency will recollect that our last house of assembly was chosen under the influence of the insurgents² most of whom are against the proposed constitution at the least—Had it been submitted to our house of representatives it would have been negatived—We had different men in our convention they were chosen at a time when the spirit of insurgency had in a degree subsided.—

We have much to apprehend yet from the remains of the same temper and are anxious what may be its effects on the choice of our next General Court.—

I have the pleasure to forward for your Excellencys inspection the debates in our late convention³ they would have been forwarded sooner could they have been obtained from the printer. . . .

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. Printed: Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 165–66.

2. Shays's Rebellion.

3. For the publication of the debates in the Massachusetts Convention, see RCS:Mass., 1132–36.

New York Journal, 24 March¹

Extract of a letter from Massachusetts, dated March 19, 1788.

"You have undoubtedly seen our governor's speech, and his encomiums therein on the proposed constitution; to which an answer, or rather *echo*, was prepared, and reported, to the legislature. The *whigs*, in the house of representatives were highly exasperated at the measure, and prepared an amendment.² This terrified the federalists, *as they stile themselves* (that is, the gentry who opposed the British government because it was *arbitrary*, and who now are in favor of one *infinitely* more so) and produced a proposition from them, "that the matter should subside," as well the report as the amendment—thus you see that the representatives of the people of this state are not converts of *federalism*, a term which has the same meaning now which *toryism* had before the war."³

1. Reprinted: *American Herald*, 31 March; *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 28 April; *Philadelphia Freeman's Journal*, 30 April; *Baltimore Maryland Gazette*, 13 May; *Winchester Virginia Centinel*, 14 May; *Annapolis Maryland Gazette*, 15 May. The *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer* prefaced its publication of this item with this statement: "We have at length procured the New-York Journal of the 24th March last (but not through the medium of Mr. Post-Master's *opposum*—) to which one of our correspondents had reference in our paper of the 16th instant, and now take the earliest opportunity of laying before our readers, all that have reached us on the subject of the reply of the General Court of Massachusetts to Governor Hancock's late spe[e]ch. The irregularity of our communications must be solely ascribed to the Post-Master General, who is still permitted to exercise the most execrable tyranny over the Printers, and to sport with the sacred liberties of the people." The *Annapolis Maryland Gazette* reprinted this prefatory statement except for the last sentence. For criticism of the post office, charging it with obstructing the distribution of Antifederalist newspapers, see RCS:Mass., 818–21, 1598.

2. A reference to Phanael Bishop's 5 March amendment (RCS:Mass., 1671–72).

3. At this point, the *Journal* printed a copy of Bishop's amendment. Each of the newspapers that reprinted this "Extract of a letter" also reprinted Bishop's amendment.

George R. Minot Journal, post-1 April¹

The General Court began their session. In the course of it, a striking circumstance took place respecting the new federal constitution. When the Court came to answer the Govr's speech their opinion necessarily appeared upon this subject, when they came to that part where His Excellcy. made mention of it. The Committee who reported the answer observed that "should the proposed amendments take place, the Court would then view it, as one of the most perfect systems of Federal government which they had known in the history of mankind." The Senate proposed to expunge this and insert "trust it will be calculated to promote the future welfare & happiness of the United States." But the

House would not bear any thing to be said in commendation of it. Many members wished to reprobate it. Mr. Bishop a popular leader introduced a warm motion which after using nearly the words of the speech concluded "*While we suspend our opinion,*" or, as it was afterwards softened, "*While we do not doubt,* of the purity of intention, and of the great zeal for the safety and welfare with which the late Convention assembled, we are, in justice to our constituents, constrained to say, that the result of their deliberations does not seem well calculated for those valuable purposes.

"We shall under this head, only add that the rights and liberties of a great country should stand on firmer grounds than that of mere probability. If the amendments proposed with the ratification of the late Convention, had been a condition of ratification, they would have gone some way, though not fully to a conciliation of our minds to this system. But, your Excellency will permit us to say, that, as they now stand, they neither comport with the dignity or safety of this Commonwealth."² This motion, however, was not carried, though great numbers seemed inclined to it. After commitment & long debates, the friends to the Governour endeavoured to save the answer by striking out every thing which related to the new constitution, but the opposers of it were too strong to allow of this. They insisted that as His Excellency had mentioned the subject, the answer ought to mention it likewise; and they called upon their adversaries confidently to try the opinion of the House respecting the Constitution. But the consequences would have been dreadful indeed, if the opinion of the Legislature had been given differently from that of the Convention, both being the proper representatives of the people, who would thereby have been distracted and uncertain which to follow. So the prudent men of both sides agreed, that no answer at all should be given to the Speech, and the further consideration of it was ordered to subside in the House. These proceedings left no doubt that a large majority were opposed to the federal constitution.

1. MS, Minot Papers, MHi. Minot, the clerk of the House of Representatives, headed this part of his Journal 27 February—the opening day of this legislative session. Since the entry was probably written after the session ended on 1 April, it has been placed under that date.

2. For Phanael Bishop's amendment of 5 March, see RCS:Mass., 1671–72.

**Samuel Holten to Nathan Dane
Danvers, 5 April (excerpt)¹**

. . . I attended the genl. court, nearly the whole of their last session, & affairs went on as well as could be expected all circumstances

considered: all we could do about the new constitution was only to do nothing at all, so that his Excellency's speech at the opening the court remains unanswered on that account, however, I hear but little said by the people respecting the constitution since it was agreed to by the convention, from this I conclude they will submit to it, if nine states should adopt it.

When I first attended to the new proposed constitution, several parts of it gave me concerns, thinking it was not sufficiently guarded, however, I am now of opinion that if it should not be agreed to our situation will be very disagreeable, and more dangerous than to trust to amendments hereafter.

I conclude there will be great attention to our elections on monday next; some say Mr. Gerry will be Govr., but it is my opinion Mr. Hancock will be elected by a great majority;² but who will be next, I think is very uncertain, most probable, not any one elected by the people.³ . . .

1. RC, John Wingate Thornton Collection, New England Historic Genealogical Society, Boston.

2. For John Hancock's easy victory in the gubernatorial election, see "The State Elections," 7 April–29 May (RCS:Mass., 1729–30).

3. For the election of the lieutenant governor, see RCS:Mass., 1636, note 2, 1730–31, 1732.

Philadelphia Freeman's Journal, 16 April¹

The General Court, (or House of Representatives) of Massachusetts Bay have lately reprobated in the most express and pointed terms the proceedings of the General Convention and the Convention of their own state. The consequences of this will be fatal to the new Constitution in all the New-England states in particular, and must be a great stab to it every where in the Union, as Massachusetts is one of the most powerful and respectable in the thirteen. We see by this in what light that state views the childish parade and flummery of the town of Boston.²

1. Reprinted: Baltimore *Maryland Gazette* and *Maryland Journal*, 22 April; Annapolis *Maryland Gazette*, 24 April; *Virginia Independent Chronicle* and *Winchester Virginia Gazette*, 30 April; *Virginia Centinel*, 7 May.

2. For the Boston procession celebrating ratification, see RCS:Mass., 1617–22.

Pennsylvania Gazette, 30 April¹

It is a little extraordinary, says a correspondent, that the answer *said* to have been made by the Massachusetts Legislature to their governor should not be published by the opponents of the constitution. It has been pretended, that their Legislature shewed a disapprobation of the Federal Government in their answer above referred to, but it was

evidently asserted without foundation, to deceive the public. A late occasion has given an opportunity of forming a certain judgment of the present sentiments of the good people of HONEST OLD MASSACHUSETTS—The election of a Governor, Lieutenant-governor and Senators. Mr. Hancock, who is in favour of the constitution, and was President of the state convention, had, by the last returns from many towns and counties, about 6300 votes for governor. He was opposed by Mr. Gerry, who declined to sign the constitution, and who had at the same period, and from the same towns and counties, about 670 votes. General Lincoln, who is also in favour of the constitution, had a very great majority from the same places, as Lieutenant-governor. The Senate appear, from the Boston papers, to be Fœderalists.² This conduct of Massachusetts is really magnanimous and patriotic. The great question having been “*freely discussed and fairly decided,*” the electors, who opposed the constitution before its adoption, still retain their affection for and confidence in the above worthy patriots. May this be the conduct of Us all.

1. Reprinted: New York *Independent Journal*, 3 May.

2. For the elections, see RCS:Mass., 1729–32.

A Bostonian

Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer, 6 May¹

To the PRINTER of the INDEPENDENT GAZETTEER.

Philadelphia, May 4, 1788.

SIR, Having been absent from town, I did not 'till this day see the Independent Gazetteer of the 28th of April.² In that paper you have republished the article “to which one of your correspondents had reference” when he declared that “a gentleman from New-York saw in the newspapers of that place, the answer of the General Court (or House of Representatives) of the commonwealth of Massachusetts to Governor Hancock’s speech, in which they absolutely, and in the most pointed terms, disapprove and reprobate the proceedings of the convention (general as well as state).”

You will readily agree with me, that you have been misinformed on this subject, and that no such answer was given; since the article in question is only an extract of a letter informing us of what some members of the Massachusetts Assembly *wished* the House to do, and what the House *did not do*, the matter (as the informant himself tells us) having subsided.

It is not necessary to make any comment on this letter-writer’s opinion, either as to “*antifederalism*” or “*toryism,*” for it is but the opinion

of one man, which can receive no additional authority by being put upon paper; and probably there never was a political controversy that did not produce contradictory letters, each pretending to express the general sentiments of the whole country; this arises from a misapprehension of only one word, for by putting PARTY in lieu of PEOPLE all contradiction ceases.

Permit me, in turn, to give the public an extract of a letter, the original of which may be seen by any gentleman who desires it, and you know my address; it will be perceived that the New-York extract contains nothing new to me, and had the assertion been less positive, and confined to a proposition, I would have produced this account immediately.

“Boston, March 9, 1788.

“The next day the address was debated, and the amendment advocated by a very few only, many of these, finding it impossible to censure the Convention through the Legislature, voted for all conversation on the subject to subside; the address was recommitted with a vote of the House, that nothing for or against the constitution should be introduced; this I wish had not been done, as there was strength enough to have carried the address in its original form.

“I must do a leading part of the minority the justice to say, that their good conduct has continued in the trial of strength in the Legislature, they have given up their party, rather than sow sedition in the country, when it can no longer effect a decision.”

So far as any matter of opinion may be contained in the above letter, I do not pretend to affix more authority to it than naturally belongs to an opinion; but the reputation of the gentleman who wrote it, and his means of information, place it beyond a doubt as to matter of fact.

I have been induced to trouble the public with this eclaircissement, because I considered a formal declaration of the representative body of a people, as a circumstance of serious concern, which would much influence the public mind. You in particular will be satisfied with the investigation, since the peculiar excellence of a free press is “*to set the truth in fairest light.*” I am, sir, Your obedient servant,

1. Reprinted: Baltimore *Maryland Gazette*, 16 May. “A Bostonian” was probably Jonathan Williams, Jr., who sometimes used that pseudonym. Williams—a native of Boston and a grandnephew of Benjamin Franklin—was living in Philadelphia at this time, contributing Federalist pieces to the newspapers. For more on Williams, see CC:Vol. 4, pp. 359–60.

2. A reference to the Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer's* 28 April reprinting of an extract from a 19 March Massachusetts letter and to Phanuel Bishop's amendment to the legislature's reply to Hancock's speech. Both items appeared in the *New York Journal* on 24 March (RCS:Mass., 1677).

VI-F. Public and Private Commentaries on the Constitution 6 February–14 August

Public Commentaries

The public debate in Massachusetts over the Constitution did not end with the adjournment of the state Convention on 7 February. During February every Massachusetts newspaper published some of the Convention's debates, while in March all but two newspapers did so. (The *Hampshire Gazette's* reprinting of the debates continued into April, even though the debates were published as a volume in mid-March by a Boston printer.) Coverage of the Convention included the widespread reprinting of both the Convention's Form of Ratification, which contained nine recommendatory amendments to the Constitution, as well as Elbridge Gerry's 21 January letter to the Convention's presiding officer complaining about his treatment in the Convention (and its accompanying "A State of Facts").

Newspapers also carried accounts praising the acquiescence of the Convention's minority; reports describing the celebrations of ratification by Massachusetts towns; and Governor John Hancock's 27 February address to the Massachusetts legislature, praising the state Convention and its recommendatory amendments to the Constitution. One newspaper, the *American Herald*, included an account about the state legislature's failure to agree on a reply to Hancock's speech. Various papers reported the growing support in the state for the Constitution; and they published criticisms of those who continued to oppose it. Before the statewide elections on 7 April for governor, lieutenant governor, and state senators, newspapers concentrated on the close race for the lieutenant governorship among Samuel Adams, Benjamin Lincoln, and James Warren, paying particular attention to each candidate's position on the Constitution.

Through the end of May, the press also printed many items about events in other states. Newspapers reported on (1) the out-of-state celebrations of Massachusetts ratification; (2) the prospects for ratification in other states; (3) the ratification of the Constitution by Georgia; (4) the ratification of the Constitution by North Carolina which proved false; (5) the calling of state conventions by the South Carolina and New York legislatures; (6) the proceedings and adjournment of the New Hampshire Convention without ratifying the Constitution; (7) the refusal of the Rhode Island legislature to call a state convention and its submission of the Constitution to a statewide referendum; (8) the

rejection of the Constitution by the Rhode Island referendum; (9) the petition campaign in Pennsylvania seeking to overturn that state's ratification of the Constitution; (10) the unrest and violence in western Pennsylvania and New York's Ulster and Orange counties caused by opposition to the Constitution; (11) the elections of delegates to the Maryland, New York, North Carolina, and Virginia conventions; (12) the riot in Dobbs County, N.C., during the election of Convention delegates; (13) the ratification of the Constitution in Maryland and the ensuing celebration in Baltimore; (14) the complaints about the Confederation post office's refusal to allow the free circulation of newspapers through the mails; (15) the fear of foreign threats, especially from Great Britain, if the Constitution was not ratified; and (16) the support of the Constitution by such prominent individuals as John Adams and George Washington, with the latter projected as the first U.S. president. Many of these reports were initiated by the *Massachusetts Centinel*, one of America's most prolific newspapers. (See accounts originated by the *Centinel* in CC:Vol. 4, pp. 184-85, 465, 508, 515-16, 520, 521-22, 524-25, 532-33, 534, 536-37, 538; CC:Vol. 5, pp. 400-1, 402-3; and CC:Vol. 6, p. 374. For a good opinion of the information to be found in the *Centinel*, see Charles Vaughan to Benjamin Franklin, 27 February [CC:568].)

Massachusetts newspapers published only a few major original items about the Constitution after the Convention adjourned, including: (1) a letter from Worcester County, *Independent Chronicle*, 21 February, describing growing support for the Constitution in Antifederalist Worcester County; (2) an extract of a Boston letter, *American Herald*, 10 March, attacking Antifederalist Nathaniel Barrell for voting for ratification in the Convention; (3) the dissent to the Convention's ratification of the Constitution by delegates Consider Arms, Malachi Maynard, and Samuel Field; "Philanthrop's" response to these dissenters; and "Phileleutheros'" responses to "Philanthrop," *Hampshire Gazette*, 9, 16, 23 April, 21 May, and 4 June; and (4) Elbridge Gerry's response to Maryland "Landholder" X, *American Herald*, 18 April, who had criticized Gerry's role in the Constitutional Convention. Another piece was Mercy Otis Warren's Antifederalist pamphlet, signed "A Columbian Patriot," probably printed by Edward Eveleth Powars of the *American Herald*. What was possibly an additional major Antifederalist item was rejected by the staunchly Federalist *Massachusetts Centinel*. On 5 March the *Centinel* declared that "'Cato' is received, but as it may produce dissensions, and cannot possibly do any good now, since the system is fixed, we have sealed it up, and desire the author to call for it." (In this same issue, the

Centinel reprinted two paragraphs from another newspaper warning its readers about their veracity since they were "extracted from a rank antifederal New-York paper," the *New York Journal*.)

On the other hand, the press continued to print many major out-of-state items. The principal Federalist pieces included "An American (Tench Coxe): To Richard Henry Lee," *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 28 December 1787 (CC:392-A); *Pennsylvania Packet*, 14 January 1788 (CC:448); "Philanthropos" (Tench Coxe), *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 16 January (CC:454); "Curtiopolis," *New York Daily Advertiser*, 18 January (CC:457); "A Freeman" I (Tench Coxe), *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 23 January (CC:472); "A.B.: The Raising" (Francis Hopkinson), *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 6 February (CC:504); "A Citizen of the United States," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 13 February (CC:526); Spurious *Centinel* XV, *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 16 February (CC:534); "Elihu," *Hartford American Mercury*, 18 February (RCS:Conn., 590-92); "A Yankee," *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 21 February (CC:552); "The New Litany," *Virginia Herald*, 21 February (CC:553); the last "letter" of John Adams's *Defence of the Constitutions*, *New York Journal*, 23 February (CC:557); "A Dialogue between Two Neighbors," Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 29 February; "The Landholder" X, *Maryland Journal*, 29 February (CC:580); "The Landholder" X-XIII (Oliver Ellsworth), *Connecticut Courant* and *Hartford American Mercury*, 3, 10, 17, 24 March (CC:588, 611, 622, 641); "Aristides," *Maryland Journal*, 4 March (extra); a letter from a New York Quaker to a Dutchess County Quaker, dated 3 March, *Poughkeepsie Country Journal*, 18 March (CC:624); several paragraphs from correspondents, *Virginia Independent Chronicle*, 19 March (CC:629); Georgia Constitutional Convention delegate William Pierce to St. George Tucker, 28 September 1787, *Gazette of the State of Georgia*, 20 March (CC:634); "Purported Letters from George Bryan to John Ralston," *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 26 March (CC:647); James Iredell's Address to the Freemen of Edenton, N.C., c. 28-29 March (CC:649); long extracts of a letter from Benjamin Rush to David Ramsay, *Charleston Columbian Herald*, 14 April (CC:680); "A Citizen of New-York" (John Jay), *An Address to the People of the State of New York*, 15 April (CC:683); and "Peter Prejudice" (John Mifflin), *Philadelphia Federal Gazette*, 15 April (CC:685).

The principal out-of-state Antifederalist writings, many of which were reprinted in the *American Herald*, were *Genuine Information* II, V-X, XII (Luther Martin), *Baltimore Maryland Gazette*, 1, 11, 15, 18, 22, 29 January, and 1 and 8 February 1788 (CC:401, 441, 451, 459, 467, 484, 493, 516); "Brutus" VIII, XIV-XVI, *New York Journal*, 10 January, 28 February, 20 March, and 10 April (CC:437, 576, 632, 674); Luther Martin

to the Printer, *Maryland Journal*, 18 January (CC:460); “Philadelphien-sis” VIII (Benjamin Workman), *Philadelphia Freeman’s Journal*, 23 January (CC:473); “Expositor” I (Hugh Hughes), *New York Journal*, 24 January; a poem in the *State Gazette of South Carolina*, 28 January (CC:481); “Centinel” XIII-XIV (Samuel Bryan), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 30 January and 5 February (CC:487, 501); an extract of a letter from Maryland’s Eastern Shore to a Philadelphia gentleman, dated 29 January, *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 8 February (CC:515); Phanuel Bishop’s amendment to the Massachusetts legislature’s reply to Governor John Hancock’s 27 February address, *New York Journal*, 24 March (RCS:Mass., 1671–72, 1677); James Bowdoin (fictitious) to James de Caledonia (i.e., James Wilson), *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 27 February (CC:570); “Algernon Sidney” III, *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 4 March (Mfm:Pa. 480); “A real state of the proposed constitution in the United States,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 7 March (CC:603); *Philadelphia Freeman’s Journal*, 12 March (CC:614); Luther Martin: Address No. I, *Maryland Journal*, 18 March (CC:626); “Watchman,” *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 26 March (CC:Vol. 4, pp. 572–73); amendments proposed by William Paca in the Maryland Convention, *Maryland Journal*, 29 April (CC:716–A); and the address of the minority of the Maryland Convention, *Annapolis Maryland Gazette*, 1 May (CC:716–B).

For the names and dates of Massachusetts newspapers that printed or reprinted items published in *Commentaries on the Constitution: Public and Private*, see the table in Mfm:Mass.

Private Commentaries

Among the more valuable letters written after Massachusetts ratification were those by Federalists John Avery, Jr., Jeremiah Hill, John Howard, Samuel P. Savage, and David Sewall, and those by Antifederalists John Bacon, Silas Lee, Samuel Nasson, Thomas B. Wait, and William Widgery. Nasson and Widgery had been delegates to the Massachusetts Convention, with the latter among the acquiescent minority. George Thatcher, a Massachusetts delegate to Congress in New York City, was the recipient of many letters written by residents and former Convention delegates from Maine. George Washington received informative letters from Federalists Caleb Gibbs and Benjamin Lincoln (a Convention delegate). In New York City, Secretary at War Henry Knox was kept well informed by, among others, Henry Jackson and Convention delegate Nathaniel Gorham.

Letter writers reported on the ratification of the Constitution by the Massachusetts Convention and its impact both within and outside the

state; analyzed the vote on ratification; praised and criticized the leaders and speakers in the Convention; assessed the role of Governor John Hancock with respect to recommending amendments to the Constitution in the Convention; lauded or disapproved of the acquiescence of the Convention's minority; described the strategies of Federalists in the Convention, especially respecting recommendatory amendments; forwarded newspaper reports on the Convention to correspondents and informed these correspondents about the book edition of the Convention debates; reported the celebrations of ratification in various Massachusetts towns; commented on the manner in which towns treated Antifederalists who voted to ratify in the Convention; remarked on the growing support for the Constitution throughout Massachusetts; found fault with Convention delegate Samuel Thompson and others for their refusal to accept Massachusetts ratification; continued to criticize or defend the Constitution; expressed delight with the peaceful political situation in Massachusetts; described the failure of the Massachusetts legislature to agree on a reply to Governor John Hancock's 27 February address; reflected on the need for amendments to the Constitution and another general convention; and speculated on and sought information about ratification prospects in other states, especially New Hampshire whose convention met soon after the Massachusetts Convention adjourned.

**Caleb Gibbs to George Washington
Boston, 9 February¹**

It is with infinite satisfaction that I take the earliest opportunity of Informing your Excellency that on the 6th. Inst. at evening the Convention of this Common Wealth, Assented to & Ratified the proposed Constitution for the United States—

It gives all ranks of people great pleasure, thus to see a glimmer of a hope that this Country is in a fair way of appearing respectable both at home and abroad by the Establishment of a government wherein Justice & Energy presides; I have done myself the honor of transmitting your Excellency the best newspapers in this Capitol which contains almost all the debates of the Convention but it was impossible to obtain the whole. There is a subscription on foot to have the whole in a pamphlet² if it is accomplished I will endeavour to forward one to your Excellency. The Minority your Excellency will please to observe by the last paper seem to be easy & Conciliatory.³ it was said by many of them on the day of Ratification at the Senate Chamber, that If the vote was to be reconsidered & Cast again there would be but few against the

adoption of the Constitution—It would take more time than the post would allow me to give you an account of the whole of the characters of the Minority, but thus much I will say that a large proportion of them of the Eastern Counties of Lincoln, Cumberland & York (or Province of Main) who have for these several years been Endeavouring to bring about a separation from this Common Wealth Others of the Western & Southern Counties of whom more than *twenty* have this moment a *State Warrant* against them for being some of the foremost in the last Winters Rebellion,⁴ & Principal part of the remainder are Insurgents & some of the most atrocious Characters in existence—This is *real fact*, that very few of them are men of very little property & very much in debt & wish only to oppose the Constitution, because if not adopted they may have it in their power to pass tender Acts, & emit paper money to pay a Just debt they owe in Specie, Genl. Warren who was Pay Mr. Genl. in 76. is one of the greatest *Antifederalists* we have among us, but he could not obtain to get his Election for Convention.⁵ *he acts like the snake in the grass*. N. Hampshire Convention meets on Tuesday next. I had the pleasure to See the Honble. Mr. Langdon who attended several days at our Convention & he told me that If Massachusets. adopted the Constitution, N. Hampshire would not be one week in session. Some of the principal gentlemen of Newport, & Providence⁶ have been attending the debates here, & they said the same a[s] Mr. Langdon did, *that is*, A Convention they were Certain would be called immediately & no doubt but the Constitution would be adopted. I cannot write your Excellency as full as what the papers will Communicate & by Comparing those in the opposition especially those who debated on the Constitution you will see the Characters I have alluded to. Those are the feeble speakers of the Rabble. I shall be happy to hear from your Excellency after receipt of this & any thing in my power to Communicate worth notice I shall endeavour to forward

Mrs. Gibbs (altho a stranger to you & Mrs. Washington) desires her most respectfull Compliments may be offered & pray sir make mine to Mrs. Washington & all freinds—Mr. Hancock's Indisposition was such as prevented his attendance in the early part of the Convention, but fortunately he recovered so much as to be in the house a week or more previous to the great question, & many of our ableest politicians say if he had not been well enough to have come out & appeared in Convention, it was more than probable the *important* question would have been lost—

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. Gibbs (1748–1818), a clerk of the Boston Market and merchant, commanded Washington's bodyguard during the Revolution and fought at Yorktown (1781). Gibbs and Washington apparently had not been in contact since Gibbs

visited Mount Vernon in 1786. From 1789 to 1794, a financially strapped Gibbs sought a federal job, which he eventually obtained by 1796. On 29 February Washington replied to Gibbs, and on 22 March the *Massachusetts Gazette* printed an extract from Washington's response, which circulated throughout America (RCS:Mass., 1655-56).

2. For the publication of the Massachusetts Convention debates, see RCS:Mass., 1132-36.

3. Probably a reference to the *Independent Chronicle*, 7 February; the *Massachusetts Gazette*, 8 February; or the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February, all of which printed reports on the debates for 6 or 7 February, when some Antifederalists promised to support the Constitution.

4. Shays's Rebellion.

5. James Warren was paymaster general of the Continental Army from 27 July 1775 until he resigned on 19 April 1776.

6. For several Rhode Islanders who were in Boston and observed the Convention debates, see Henry Jackson to Henry Knox, 20 January (RCS:Mass., 1538, note 3).

Benjamin Lincoln to George Washington Boston, 9 February (excerpt)¹

In my last² I had the pleasure of announcing to your Excellency that we had adopted the reported constitution. Nothing very material has taken place since saving what is mentioned in the enclosed paper by that you will learn what was the temper of many of those who had been in the opposition I think they discovered a candour which does them honor and promises quiet in the State. Some however will I fear sow the seeds of discontent and attempt to inflame the minds of the people in the country—They have no really [i.e., real] object as they cannot be certain it will ever pass nine State[s]³ I hope and trust this consideration will quiet them at present when it shall have passed nine State[s] it will be too late for any one State to think of opposing it.—

Considering the great disorders which took place in this State the last winter,⁴ and considering the great influence the spirit which then reigned has had since upon all our operations it must be supposed that we have got through this business pretty well and considering also that when we came together a very decided majority of the convention were against adopting the constitution Every exertion will be made to inform the people & to quiet their minds. It is very fortunate for us that the Clergy are pretty generally with us they have in this State a very great influence over the people and they will contribute much to the general peace and happiness

Subscription papers are out for printing all the debates in the convention they will probably be printed if they are I will forward to your Excellency one of the books⁵—Should they not I will forward the remaining news papers as they come out. . . .

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. For the remainder of this letter, see RCS:Mass., 1624. For Washington's 29 February response, see RCS:Mass., 1653.

2. See Lincoln to Washington, 6 February (RCS:Mass., 1581-82).

3. Article VII of the Constitution provides that nine states were sufficient to establish the new government among the ratifying states.

4. Shays's Rebellion.

5. On 19 March, the day after publication of the *Debates* was announced, Lincoln sent the volume to Washington (Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 165). For the publication of the *Debates*, see RCS:Mass., 1132-36.

Henry Van Schaack to Theodore Sedgwick Pittsfield, 9 February¹

Thanks, My dear friend, to you and all our Compatriots for the noble and efficient exertions made in the late Conventions—Most sincerely do I give you my benediction “well done thou good”² &ca.

I long with the impatience of a sincere friend to Embrace you on this truly important happy occasion—I wish most ardently to have particulars from your own mouth or from your pen—Why not come and dine with me next week on fish so as to unbend the mind a little.—Poor Mrs. S too wants a little relief—She will tel you that I was at your house yesterday—She will inform you of the frame of mind I was then in, and you will, without my saying aloud, easily conceive how my feelings now are. Give our Stockbridge friends my hearty congratulations on this happy occasion—

How will the Quondum Priest³ feel?

Have you seen Gerry after the Assent & Ratification took place? What a pleasing reflexion must it be to a good heart to discover so much wisdom virtue and patriotism in the Commonwealth as to prefer a Social Compact to Anarchy—I shall now rejoice that I am an American born—The adoption of this Constitution will give us lustre and dignity throughout the world—I now feel confident that the business of adoption throughout the Continent is secure. Adieu Heaven bless you prosper you and give long life that you may reap the blessed fruits of your political labors.

[P.S.] Can you think of quitting public life before you have been a member of the New Congress?—I know Mrs. S will tel me that you cannot or will not.

1. RC, Sedgwick Papers, MHi.

2. Matthew 25:21. “His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant. . . .”

3. A reference to John Bacon of Stockbridge who was a pastor of Old South Church in Boston until he was dismissed in 1775. For his opposition to the Constitution, see RCS:Mass., 741, 884, 1034-43, 1114.

William Widgery to George Thatcher
Boston, 9 February (excerpts)¹

you Will Excuse my neglect in answering yours of January the 9th When you Com to hear that My anxiety for proventing the New Constitution being adopted, has engaged my Time and attention for this four weeks but I am at Last Overcom by a majority of 19. in Cluding the presidant whose very Name is, an Honour to the State, for by his coming in and offering Som amendments which furnished many with Excuses to their Constituants, it was adopted to the greate Joy of all Boston, & after Taking a parting Glass at the Expence of the Tradesmen in Boston we Desolved; one thing I mos menchen the Gallerys was very much Crouded, yet on the Desition of so important a Question as the present you might have heard a Copper fall on the Gallery floor, their was Such a profound Silance: on thirs Day, we got throu all our Business . . . one thing more Notwithstanding my opposition to the Constitution, and the anxiety of Boston for its adoption I must Tel you I was never Treated with So much politeness in my Life as I was afterwards by the Treadsmen of Boston Merchents & every other Gentleman. your oald frend Thompson² says he will oppose it as Long as he has a Hand to moove unless 13. States Comes in to the Measure. the Voters on the Constitution ware 167. &. 186. Sir your good Disposition is Such that I think you will Pardon my neglect and answer me by a Letter if I inquier of you how matters are conducted at New York and Phillidelphia, with respect to the New Constitution. I have heard that at New York the House of Representatives passe'd an act to Call a Convention, and the Cennet nonconcored them.³ your frend Rynes Lost his Case with Buckman & paid 150. Dollars Cost.

1. RC, C. P. Greenough Papers, MHi. For the excerpted portion of his letter describing the Boston procession, see RCS:Mass., 1624–25.

2. General Samuel Thompson of Topsham.

3. On 31 January the New York Assembly passed a resolution calling a state convention, and the next day, after strong opposition, the Senate concurred by a vote of 11 to 8.

John Quincy Adams Diary
Newburyport, 11 February (excerpt)¹

We have had this day very little studying in the office. Mr. Parsons is so fond of telling of all the manoeuvres which they used in and out of convention, that he has given the same story to every body that came into the office through the course of the day. He mentions with great complaisance, the formidable opposition that was made, as it naturally

enhances the merit of the victory. he speaks with pleasure of every little trifling intrigue, which served to baffle, the intentions of the *antifederalists*; though many of them to me exhibit a meanness which, I scarcely should expect a man would boast. Mr. Parsons makes of the science of politics the science of little, insignificant intrigue, and chicanery. these principles may possibly meet with success sometimes; but it is my opinion that fair, open and candid proceedings, add an influence, as well as a lustre to the most brilliant capacity. . . .

1. MS, Adams Family Papers, MHi. Printed: Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 360.

**David Sewall to George Thatcher
York, 11 February (excerpt)¹**

. . . I can acquaint you with no News respecting the federal Constitution, as I conclude the News Papers & Letters from Boston, have by this arived in plenty on that head—how quick Important Intelligence Circulates, last friday a little after noon We had the Thursdays Paper containing the Intelligence with the Yeas & Nays—Your Letter and other matters made a Proselite of Mr. B.² Who at the time of his Election was a flaming Antefederalite, how his *particular Electors* will relish it, I cannot say, But, inter nos, they were such as it would degrade a Man of Sensibility and Integrity, if it was known and realized that he was a *genuine* Representative of them—I am gratified that Ursa Major³ has been fully mistaken in his predictions of the Sentiments of the Eastern Territory, and that there was a majority to the Eastward of Piscatiqua River⁴ in favour of the Constitution altho' York County was deficient Yet Cumberland and Lincoln Supplied its deficiencies—altho' so small a Majority as 19 upon the whole Yet When We look into the *yeas* and *Nays*, it appears to me there is $\frac{1}{10}$ of every thing Valuable—and as a Gent. from N. Ham'p. who called upon me on Saturday very Judiciously observed that the Antifects. in M[assachuset]ts would generally Come under one or other of these heads 1 such as Were for Paper Money. 2d others Who were for Cancelling the State debt at a depreciated Value of $\frac{4}{5}$ or $\frac{6}{10}$ in the lb. or Thirdly those Who were for Erecting a New State to the Eastward of Piscataq. Many of Whom reside in Worcester County—for they Suppose if We are disunited—*Worcester* will be the Seat of Government—But to these 3 Causes might be possibly Added a 4th. Class Who are Shazites in principle & practice. Who are averse to any Government

Some say there were 20 or 30 of his officers in the Convention, several of the Names are such, as stood at our Bar, and owe their present

liberty and perhaps their Lives to the Clemency of Government⁵ Who having been Worsted by Genl Lincoln last Winter in the field are & have been endeavouring to make a better Campaign in the Cabinet

N. H. Convention sits this Week at Exeter, and I cannot Conceive there is a doubt But they will ratify the federal Constitution

It is said that Ursa Major Threatens to spend the time between this & the Sitting of our Genl. Court ye 27. Instant⁶ in Spreading Antifedl. Sentiments in N. H.—should he make himself busy in that Business—I should not greatly grieve, if he met with a Simular Fate to that which overtook a Vermont Justice at N. Hampton the last S.J.C. [Supreme Judicial Court] for exciting Sedition in Hampshire County.⁷

I Want to hear if there is a Sufficient representation of the States as to make a Quorum for the great Purposes of the Union—for I do not Recollect to have seen any Account of Your appointing a President.⁸ . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

2. Thatcher wrote Nathaniel Barrell, a York Convention delegate, on 22 December and on 27 and 28 January. Barrell did not receive the January letters until 7 February, the day after the Convention ratified the Constitution. See Barrell to Thatcher, 15 January and 20 February (RCS:Mass., 717–19, 1589–90). None of Thatcher's three letters to Barrell has been located.

3. A reference to Antifederalist Samuel Thompson, former Massachusetts Convention delegate from Topsham, Maine. Ursa Major (Great Bear) is the most conspicuous constellation in the northern sky.

4. The Piscataqua (or Pascataqua) River separates New Hampshire from York County, Maine.

5. For the pardons granted after Shays's Rebellion, see CC:Vol. 1, p. 92.

6. Samuel Thompson represented Lincoln County in the state Senate.

7. During its April 1787 session in Northampton, Hampshire County, the Supreme Judicial Court sentenced Silas Hamilton of Whitingham, Vermont, "to stand one hour in the pillory, and be publicly whipped on the naked back twenty stripes, for exciting and stirring up sedition and insurrection" in Massachusetts (*Hampshire Gazette*, 25 April 1787).

8. Congress attained a quorum on 21 January 1788, and the next day Cyrus Griffin of Virginia was elected president.

John Avery, Jr., to George Thatcher
Boston, 13 February (excerpt)¹

Your obliging Letter of the 3d. Inst I received yesterday, and am much pleased to find that your sentiments respecting the proposed Plan of Government coincides with my own, and wish, sincerely wish that the Example of Masstts. may be followed by all the States, and as you observe they stand so high in their Estimation I make no doubt they will meet with their Concurrence and that we shall have as perfect

a System as can be made in this imperfect State—The Unanimity in the Convention would have been greater; but the fears of many operated so strongly on their Minds, or rather in my Opinion they were so powerfully impressed with Bugbears least these very Gentlemen delegated from among themselves should prove Rascals and rivet their chains; therefore they wished to reject the Constitution till proper Amendments were made; indeed they would not run the hazard to trust any body of Men, however virtuous, least they should prove traitors—I told them, that if they were to choose the most abandoned Villains in the Commonwealth, which was not like to be the case, that they would not find one of them dare to act contrary to the general Sentiments of the People—but there was no reasoning with some of these Geniuses; they came with a determination to reject the Constitution and it must be rejected right, or wrong, and I wish that their Conduct might meet with the Approbation of their own consciences: however there appears to be an overruling Providence in the Affair and I can't but think that we shall be a great and flourishing People *with common Prudence*—I have, my friend, dreaded the Consequences of a rejection by this State, and had it have been the case, I see no other alternative than the several States would have been disunited, the Minds of the People sowed, Anarchy and Confusion to have taken place and in the course of a few Years some despot would have ruled over us with a rod of Iron; however these gloomy Apprehensions have vanished and I feel happy that this State have adopted the proposed system, and I feel pleased upon Reflection there was no greater majority in favour of it; as it will prevent many groundless jealousys taking Place in the Minds of our Southern Brethren; for had the people of this State been united in the Measure perhaps they would have said that it was because that this State expected to reap greater advantages than the other States in the carrying trade &c (and there is another Reason I have that it will convince the Congress of the necessity of agreeing to these Amendments proposed, or something like them to quiet the Minds of the People) and as there was so fair and so generous a discussion of the Subject I think these Apprehensions must be removed—His Excellency has done himself great Honor in his proposing the Amendments as they have greatly tended to reconcile all parties and dissipated many Evils from the Minds of many—he came out, after a painfull Illness to the great Hazard of his Life and he has received no disadvantage from it and I know he must feel happy upon the Reflection of having done so much good—And if Massachusetts has that influence, you are pleased to suggest, the Adoption of it by this State will lay a foundation

for a good efficient Government and that we shall live in Peace happiness and safety for a long time yet to come 'till dissipation and Ignorance become the prevailing disposition of the People: but while the States pay attention to instruct the youth as they grow up and set good Examples of Morality before them and impress upon their Minds a spirit of Industry, we shall have every Blessing to attend us—We have every thing among ourselves to render us a happy People and to make us more happy I wish that the several States may lay aside all local prejudices and contracted Ideas—

I am greatly pleased with your Information that some of the most powerfull opposers to the federal Constitution in the other States have altered their sentiments—they have done themselves honor and hope they will be greatly instrumental to its adoption; and indeed every good man must feel happy in promoting the General Good. . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 13 February (excerpt)¹

My dear Harry

This night week I gave you the pleasing information, that this State had ratified the Federal Constitution, & I see you this moment opening your Letters and enjoying the highest satisfaction resulting from that important intelligence²—our good friend Mr. King left here on Friday Eveng. with an intention to arrive as early as the post³—he will be able to give you every particular that took place on Thursday & Friday as he was on the spot—much is due to him for his *exertion & abilities* in our convention, he is Harry most certainly an able & charming fellow, tender him my regards—

Yesterday all the *Uniform Companies* in this Town, & Roxbury paraded in high Military dress, & formed in Battalion and marchd into State Street, after having passed in Review before his Excellly the Governour—

several Gentlemen from the remote parts of the State, inform that the people are universally pleased with the adoption of the Constitution,

This day the State of New Hamshire meet in Convention,—& yesterday *Judge Sullivan* informed that State would certainly ratify it, by a Majority of two to one⁴—I pray god that may be the case—

I inclose you the papers altho they are not interesting to you, as they were the last week. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

2. See Jackson to Knox, 6 February (RCS:Mass., 1580-81).

3. Rufus King and the post arrived in New York City on 13 February.

4. James Sullivan was possibly in New Hampshire at this time. In a 9 February letter to John Langdon, a delegate to the New Hampshire Convention, William Heath indicated that Sullivan had been engaged to convey Heath's letter safely to Langdon. (See Heath to Langdon, 9 February, Mfm:Mass.)

Elbridge Gerry Acquiesces to Massachusetts Ratification 13-28 February

Following the heated debate in the state Convention on 19 January and the fracas that occurred after the Convention adjourned for that day, Gerry, who had been invited to answer questions concerning the Constitution, refused to return to the Convention. (See RCS:Mass., 1175-81.) After the Convention adjourned on 7 February, interest in Gerry's attitude heightened and reports circulated that Gerry, like some other Antifederalists, had acquiesced to the ratification of the Constitution.

*Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard
Boston, 10 February (excerpt)¹*

. . . Gerry is crest-fallen but acquiesces. . . .

Hampshire Chronicle, 13 February²

We have a right to assure the publick, from indisputable authority, that the Honourable ELBRIDGE GERRY openly declares, that notwithstanding he has uniformly opposed the adoption of the Constitution by this State, he now, since its ratification by a respectable Majority, considers it as his and the duty of every honest man in the community, to give it all the support in his power; and that he himself will certainly use his influence for this purpose.

*Henry Knox to Edward Carrington
New York, 14 February (excerpt)³*

. . . The minority behaved with moderation and some of them declared their intention of uniting their influence in Support of the constitution—Mr Gerry although not of the convention has pledged himself to this effect. . . .

Pennsylvania Gazette, 27 February⁴

Our last paper announced to our friends the patriotic, temperate and manly conduct of the minority of the Massachusetts Convention.⁵

We are happy in being able to inform them, that the eastern papers give us an authoritative assurance that the Honorable Eldridge Gerry, Esq; of that state, who declined to sign the recommendation of the new Constitution in the Fœderal Convention, now declares, since it has received the sanction of the majority of the people, that he will firmly support it.

*Richmond Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser, 28 February*⁶

With the highest satisfaction we announce to the public, that the Convention of the state of Massachusetts adopted the new Constitution on the 6th instant, by a majority of 19—187 yeas—168 nays.—And that Mr. GERRY has declared, since the adoption of the Constitution, that he will steadily support it.

1. RC, Belknap Papers, MHi. Printed: *Belknap Correspondence*, Part II, 17–19. For other excerpts from this letter, see RCS:Mass., 1583–84, 1625.

2. Reprinted in the *Worcester Magazine*, 6 March, and in eleven other newspapers by 27 March: Vt. (2), N.H. (1), N.Y. (2), Pa. (4), Md. (1), N.C. (1).

3. FC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. For the complete text of this letter, see Mfm:Mass.

4. Reprinted: *New York Daily Advertiser*, 5 March; *Richmond Virginia Gazette and Weekly Advertiser*, 13 March.

5. See *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 20 February (RCS:Mass., 1651–52).

6. Reprinted: *Winchester Virginia Gazette*, 14 March.

Jeremiah Hill to George Thatcher Biddeford, 14 February (excerpts)¹

By yesterdays post came to hand yours of the 27th. ulto. & of the 3d. inst: Mr. Smith did not go to the Convention. my conjectural reasons I gave you in a former Letter,² you say the party that chose him *certainly had sentiments of one kind or the other*, that is doubtful with me: but suppose they had, you say *they ought to have been convey'd to the Convention*, why ought they to have been convey'd to the Convention? will a feather turn the Ballance of the poles?^(a) but away with these things, the Matter is settled in favor of the government, and I hearty congratulate you on the Occasion as a Citizen of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I think the antifederalists (at least a number of them) really did honor to themselves as republicans after the question was decided, by their true & genuine speeches, which you will of course see in the public papers, widgey is really elated with the honor he got by that Manœuvre, which he thinks is more than a ballance for all his former deviltry. Thompson is roaring about like the old Dragon to devour the *Child*

now it is born and breathes forth fire, arrows, and Death, but his Hosts are almost fled & the Inhabitants of this Earth are singing out *now is Salvation come*, the old Serpent is beaten down and anarchy and Confusion is rooted out and the republican Angel and his Hosts are proclaiming Peace, wealth, Honor, Liberty, and Independence.³—

I hope you will be enabled to stand friends wait & Lee's⁴ antifederal Charges. politicks not based upon Reason will never start an old politician. they are like Boys with pop guns squibing at an Alexander, genuine politics like an old file wears slow but will at length unperceivably obtain the wished for End—

I will say but very little about the debates in Convention for it is written *thou shalt not revile the gods*,⁵ Mr. Simmes Speach & Govr. Bowdoin's answer⁶ I think are well done and Govr. Hancock's recommendations are a compleat finesse—

Newhampshire were to convene yesterday to consider on the new Constitution: by the *domestic telltale* we are informed that they will certainly adopt it, & dont expect to be more than 3 or 4 days about it. I am happy to hear that the Spirit of Federalism revives in Virginia & New York & I dont doubt but that it will be adopted by every state in the Union. We have received the news that N. Carolina has adopted it,⁷ and I wish to know the times when the other States set on the matter—

. . . next Monday we all hands mean to celebrate the ratification of the new federal Constitution at Myer's the evening is to be ushered in with a cold Collation, violin Cards, Usquebaugh⁸ &c. &c. we mean to give no offence to greek nor Jew, federal nor Antifederal but become all things to all Men⁹ if by any means we can gain Some. the Anti's here are dumb with Silence¹⁰ I have scarce heard one of them speak since except Colo. Scammon¹¹ who says he is determined to fulfil the Scriptures & rejoice with them that rejoice & weep with them that weep.¹² . . .

(a) when the dumb man did not speak in old times the people in that day formed their Ideas of his designs by his Actions, and actions you know often speak louder than words—

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

2. For Antifederalist Allison Smith's election as a delegate from Biddeford, and his refusal to attend the Convention, see RCS:Mass., 906-9.

3. Revelation 12.

4. Thomas B. Wait and Silas Lee.

5. Exodus 22:28.

6. A reference to speeches by William Symmes, Jr., on 22 January, and James Bowdoin on 23 January (RCS:Mass., 1307-11, 1317-23).

7. For this false report, see RCS:Mass., 860.
8. Irish and Scottish Gaelic: whiskey.
9. 1 Corinthians 10:32. "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." Colossians 3:11. "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."
10. Psalms 39:2.
11. Colonel James Scammon represented Pepperellborough in the state House of Representatives.
12. Romans 12:15.

Henry Knox to George Washington New York, 14 February¹

It is with great satisfaction that I inform you that last evening the news arrived here of the adoption of the new constitution in Massachusetts on the 6th instant. The members present in the convention on the decision of the question 355.—187 affirmatives 168 negatives—majority 19.

It may be asserted with great truth, that the subject was most candidly examined and debated. Many of the minority declared their determination of inculcating the principles of acquiescence and union, among their constituents²

The opposition arose from local causes, which existed previously to the general convention of Philadelphia in May and is to be classed under the following heads.

1st. The part of the insurgent interest who oppose every species of government, that may prevent their return to great Britain—The persons who influence the insurgents,³ have been fixed on this point, and consider the constitution, as the greatest obstacle to the accomplishment of their wishes.

2. Desperate debtors who are warmly attached to paper-money and tender Laws.

3 Honest men, without information, whose minds are apprehensive of danger to their liberties, but like people groping in the dark, they possess, no principle whereby to ascertain the quality, degree or nearness of the danger—Their suspicions render them incapable of conviction.

The 1st and 2d classes constitute probably $\frac{3}{10}$ ths of the opposition in the convention of Massachusetts—45 members were present from the Province of main 25 of whom voted for the constitution.⁴

I enclose a news paper⁵ containing a description of the demonstrations of Joy by the people of Boston on the occasion

There is not a doubt but that the Majority will be perfectly efficient within the State of Massachusetts But the example to the other States particularly to this [New York], will not be so influential as if the majority had been larger—

The Convention of New Hampshire assembled yesterday—About 20 days hence I hope to have the pleasure of informing you of the adoption of the constitution in that State.

1. RC, Washington Papers, DLC. This recipient's copy and Knox's retained copy contain many stylistic differences. The retained copy is in GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. For a similar letter, see Knox to Edward Carrington, 14 February (Mfm:Mass.).

2. On 13 February Knox wrote that "The minority behave with magnanimity on the occasion declaring they will support it [the Constitution] with their lives and fortunes" (to Robert R. Livingston, Mfm:Mass.).

3. A reference to Shays's Rebellion.

4. The delegates from Maine's three counties voted 25 to 21 in favor of the Constitution.

5. Probably the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9 February (RCS:Mass., 1614, 1617-22).

Silas Lee to George Thatcher Biddeford, 14 February¹

As antifederal as you may think me, I can sincerely congratulate you on the adoption of the N. Constitution in this Commonwealth—It has ever been, as it now is, my opinion, that that is the safest of the Alternatives—Notwithstanding I have great doubts whether the Liberties of the people are not exceedingly e[n]dangered by it—and the Idea of an amendment, together with the further consideration that something Must immediately be done, & that this Country can scarcely be in a worse situation, are far the greatest arguments in my mind to Justify its ratification. From what you have heretofore wrote me, I have been led to think that you saw no imperfection at all, in the plan, & that you espoused its adoption, not with the violence & implacability of a partizan, who condemns every man to the stake, or halter, that is not of his colour; that I knew was impossible, but rather, with the *resolute warmth* of an honest Man, who was *possitive that he was right*—and I confess to you that I feel not a little flattered to find from your last letter, that my Sentiments have not been wholly opposed to yours—& that you seem to think it wants amendments—which I hope will immediately be taken into Consideration—But I hope the precedent of the late federal Convention will not be followed by the next that may be appointed; viz instead of revising or amending this in certain parts,

which may be found inconvenient, they will not with one Stroke wipe the whole away, as was the fate of the old Confederation, & propose a new one; but on the contrary provide a remedy for the inconveniencies felt, without interfering with or altering the advantages already experienced—But, altho you say, that “it will ever be as easy to alter & amend, as it can be to form another, if not more so,” you seem to think, by what follows, that every General Convention will propose a plan of their own—notwithstanding, I suppose you must mean, their commission impowers them only to amend—This I have ever understood was the fact in the late federal convention But altho composd of the first characters in the Continent I, by no means, think it the *less unwarrantable* on that account—when Officers throw aside their commissions, or Servants their orders, then the liberties of the people depend entirely upon the humour of the one, & the property of the Master on the uncertain conduct of the other, which may be good or bad as the disposition of the agent may happen to be—& then indeed all Laws or rules are wholly afloat[.] But as to the Constitution, it is established in this State & I doubt not but it will soon be through out the whole—I shall therefore find no more fault with it, but rather examine & enquire into it for the sake of information—hoping that it will prove to be not only the best in the world, but also that the people will be perfectly happy under it—In a former letter I mentioned Mr Wilson²—I believe I was wrong then, in part at least. At another time I may explain myself—I differ so far from the opinions of your friends with you, respecting the Opposition in this State, that on the contrary, I am surprised at the struggle that was made—I think Most of the Opposers have done honour to their places, both by the ingenuity of some of their arguments, & the liberality of their Conduct after the decision. . . .

1. Printed: Goodwin, “Thatcher Papers,” 338–39. This excerpt represents the complete text as published by Goodwin. See also Lee to Thatcher, 22 February (Mfm:Mass.).

2. See Lee to Thatcher, 23 January (RCS:Mass., 782).

Thomas B. Wait to George Thatcher
Portland, 14 February (excerpt)¹

. . . Your Letters of Jan'y 29 and Feby 4, are now on the table—You are better acquainted with me than I am with myself—I have been at peace with the Constitution for almost a fortnight!!—and should have told you so in my last, but I was half ashamed—Now don't laugh at me, Geo. Thatcher—I am a child—have patience with me—as I grow older will endeavour to do better.—Let the world say what it will,

I had rather *submit* to truth, than *persist* in error.—The Constitution is not without its imperfections; but when I heard that our Convention had assented to, and ratified it, I rejoiced most heartily. The British Constitution I knew to be the best in the world—and that the people enjoyed a good degree of liberty under it—so much that I felt almost willing my dear countrymen should compound for the same forever—I compared their *hereditary* king and nobility with our *elective* President & Senate—the bribery and corruption of their parliamentary elections, with the (probable) impartial and uninfluenced conduct of our Electors—I took into consideration the subject of your ingenious letters on our present improved state of morals &c compared this with the miserable ignorance of a British *railor*—and I was satisfied.—I have only room to say that I love you. . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

James Madison to George Washington
New York, 15 February¹

I have at length the pleasure to inclose you the favorable result of the Convention at Boston. The amendments are a blemish, but are in the least offensive form. The minority also is very disagreeably large, but the temper of it is some atonement. I am assured by Mr. King that the leaders of it as well as the members of it in general are in good humour; and will countenance no irregular opposition there or elsewhere. The Convention of N Hampshire is now sitting. There seems to be no question that the issue there will add a *seventh* pillar,² as the phrase now is, to the fœderal Temple.

1. RC, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Amsterdam.

2. For the use of the pillars as a metaphor, see RCS:Mass., 524–26, 1603–4.

Massachusetts Gazette, 15 February¹

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in SALEM,
to his friend in this town, February 13.

“I am not able to describe to you the pleasure I felt on perusing the amendments which were proposed by his excellency the governour and the honourable committee of the convention, to be annexed (as recommendatory) to the ratification of the federal constitution. The probability that those amendments will meet the approbation of the several states in the union, has entirely calmed all my fears respecting the constitution, and I think it will not be rejected by any one of the United States.”

1. Reprinted: *Boston Gazette*, 18 February; *Newport Herald*, 21 February; *Worcester Magazine*, 28 February.

**John Quincy Adams to William Cranch
Newburyport, 16 February (excerpt)¹**

Mr. Parsons, brought me, a volume of the defence² &c. with a packet from Europe, and a Letter from you; I had expected them for four or five weeks, and was very fearful they had miscarried. I would caution you not to give any letters nor packets for me to Mr. Parsons, unless it be just before he is coming home, for he is generally so much engaged in business when at Boston, that he would never think of forwarding letters entrusted to him.

The great Question it seems is decided, and according to your wishes. you and Freeman³ are both pretty confident, that I should have been converted, had I attended the debates: this I will acknowledge, that had I been a member, it is probable I should have given a *federal* vote; not from the arguments and characters which favoured that side, but from those which appeared on the other. Not because a *Dana*, a *King*, a *Parsons*, a *Bowdoin*, a *Hancock* and a long train of the fathers of their Country supported the Constitution, with all the captivating charms of eloquence, and the weighty influence of conscious integrity, but because, a *Willard*, a *Spring*, a *Thompson*, a *Bishop*, and a number more who have appeared to wish nothing but a subversion of all government, were the only opposers.—The great points upon which the opposition in my mind was founded, were scarcely mentioned in convention; I must freely acknowledge, that I still lament, the want of an adequate representation of the people, and of rotation in the offices of government: the blending of the legislative and executive powers in the Senate; and the *indefinite* powers granted to the administrators; but I am convinced that opposition now would be attended with immediate evils, without being productive of any good effects, and you may now consider me as a strong *federalist*; though I should make a poor disputant in favour of that side.—The convention in New Hampshire are now in session. The appearances are against the Constitution; but the influence of abilities, of property, and of example will probably have the same effect there that they had in our convention, and a small majority may decide in imitation of Massachusetts. . . .

1. RC, privately owned by the descendants of Eugene DuBois of Oyster Bay, N.Y., as of October 1982.

2. On 27 January Cranch wrote Adams that he was sending him the second volume of John Adams's *Defence of the Constitutions* (Cranch to Adams, 22, 27 January, RCS:Mass., 1544).

3. See Nathaniel Freeman, Jr., to Adams, 27 January (RCS:Mass., 1551).

**John Quincy Adams to Oliver Fiske
Newburyport, 17 February (excerpt)¹**

. . . The federal constitution it seems is at length with infinite pains & difficulty adopted in this Commonwealth. you I presume are a staunch federalist, and as such will rejoyce at this measure: it will perhaps surprize you that from the first appearance of this System, I have been a strong *antifederalist*; though upon very different principles than those of your Worcester insurgents;² and however dangerous the tendency of the plan may be, I am convinced, that any further opposition to it at present would be productive of much greater evils—The convention of New Hampshire are now sitting at Exeter, and the appearance, is similar to that at the commencement of the session in this state; both sides have their hopes and their fears; but I think it probable the final effect will be favourable to the Constitution.

1. RC, The *Forbes* Magazine Collection, New York (© All rights reserved). The letter was begun on 31 January and completed on 17 February. Like Adams, Fiske (1762–1837) graduated from Harvard College in 1787. He was active in the suppression of Shays's Rebellion. Fiske studied medicine and practiced in Worcester for many years. For Adams's biographical sketch of Fiske written on 26 March 1787, see Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 185.

2. A center of Shaysite activity, Worcester County's state Convention delegates voted 43 to 7 against the Constitution.

**Victor DuPont to Pierre Samuel DuPont de Nemours
New York, 17 February (excerpt)¹**

. . . The political situation, with respect to the state of Massachusetts along with the others, is that, Massachusetts having accepted, the new constitution can be regarded as having been accepted for all America. Thus the American people, who since the war had fallen into a sort of anarchy in a nullity of laws, into a liberty pushed so far that it was no longer liberty, are going to establish a new and durable force, and the United States will be, if it wishes, the first power of the world because of the richness of its soil and its position.

But I am losing myself in politics: we will also talk of that another time. . . .

1. Copy (Tr), Victor DuPont Papers, Eleutherian Mills Historical Library, Greenville, Del. Victor Marie DuPont (1767–1827), the elder son of Pierre Samuel DuPont, was

attaché to the French legation in the United States from 1787 to 1789. The elder DuPont (1739–1817), a physiocrat and prolific writer on political economy, was France's Inspector General of Commerce.

**Samuel P. Savage to George Thatcher
Weston, 17 February (excerpt)¹**

. . . I have now the pleasure of congratulating you on the Adoption of the new federal Government, it was obtained by a very small Majority considering the pains taken by those in its favour. most of the leading Opponents did themselves honour when they found the yeas had prevailed, but your friend Tompson² (of Topsham) had entered too deeply into the Opposition, to think he might be mistaken. The General would, in my Opinion make a better hand to lead on a forlorn hope; than to engage a Bowdoin, a Parsons or a King in a Cabinet of Counsellors, his Zeal, to render it efficacious needs the Addition of good sense, lear[n]ing & prudence.—Pray does all parts of the Parade of the Congress Convention strike you with equal pleasure?—I have not heard one word from N Hampshire since their Convention sat, but as the same Spirit prevails in the Western parts of that State I am apt to think their proceedings will be slow and their Majority, (if accepted) but small.

Your Observations on the Cause, why so few States are represented in Congress, are just, I rather wonder, all things considered, why there are so many do it, considering the Expence and the Inefficacy of the Doings, and was it not for their Connections with the Nations in Union with us, I believe there would be no Congress.—Would to God nine States may adopt the new Government, and then, & not till then, do I expect to see better times.

Jōs (your Brother)³ seems anxious, lest by some means or other, his Corpse [i.e., corps] will be dismissed—if any thing of that sort should be tho[ugh]t necessary, you will I doubt not think of him for good. he is at present in that line of life that su[i]tes him, and in which he makes some figure, and if he s[h]ould fail in this, he cannot, as he was but a Boy when he adopted it, ever make an equal figure in any other.—he has no particular reason that I know of for his Solicitude but the frequent mutations of Congress, occasioned by the Derangment of their fina[n]ces.—Knox is the man that can best serve him being in that line, but Knox, like other men, has his particular friends, tho I believe Jos has some Share in his Esteem as a Soldier.—

Pray does not national Securities rise, as proportion as States join the federal Constitution? all the little Interest I have is in publick Securities

& altho I have been frequently advised to part with them, I have hitherto kept them, in hopes that it would again be in Vogue for States to be as honest, as it is fit individuals should.

All are well & wish you happy—my very cordial respects to my worthy Fr[ien]d Mr Otis, & believe me Yr Frd Affecy.

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.
2. General Samuel Thompson.
3. Joseph Savage, Samuel P. Savage's son and Thatcher's brother-in-law, was an officer in the Continental artillery.

Independent Chronicle, 21 February

Mess'rs ADAMS & NOURSE, *If you can find room in your useful Paper, for the following LETTER, from a Gentleman in Worcester County, to his Friend in Suffolk, you will gratify me,—and I hope, not displease any of your Customers.*

DEAR SIR, The Federal Constitution, I find, is at length adopted, by the Convention of this Commonwealth.—Shall I congratulate you on this great event? Were my feelings congenial with your's, I undoubtedly should: Possibly they are so, more fully than you imagine. You know I have had my doubts, difficulties and fears, respecting the system of government; for which you have been a steady and powerful advocate. Many of my fears you have removed, by your kind communications, in private:—Others have been dissipated, by looking over the debates of Convention, which have been given to us in the public prints. Though I cannot say my mind is entirely satisfied, in every point, it is so far, that upon the whole, I rather rejoice than mourn, at the determination of that respectable body. The object in your mind, is now undoubtedly shifted, or rather advanced, from the adoption, to the support of this plan of government, by obtaining a good administration. In this I shall most cordially unite my endeavours with yours: And so I doubt not will multitudes, who were not quite clear as to the propriety of adopting it. I was highly pleased with what, I understand, a number of the minority said, immediately after the question was decided.—This was much to their honor:—Dr. Tyl-r, of D—, I perceive, said “He was fairly beaten, and he was determined to go home, and endeavour to cultivate a spirit of peace and harmony.”¹ I hope he will do as he said. I rejoice to find this pacific disposition considerably prevalent in this county—in which there were, I understand, a greater number of NAYS, than in any other;² I wish it may increase more and more;—My exertions for that purpose, so far as I can make them, without acting out of character,

will not be wanting. I have been greatly pleased, in hearing a number, who were among the opponents, express their hope, that the Constitution would operate for the general good; and their determination, readily to submit to, and support it—and use their influence with their connections and friends to do the same. They remarked, (and I think very justly) that a ready and quiet submission to a majority, in such cases, is the great principle of all republican government, without which it cannot be maintained. I am glad to find that the Delegates from this county, and I trust of all the other counties, acknowledge the debates in the Convention, were conducted with great candor, fairness and impartiality;—That the leading speakers in favour of the Constitution, endeavoured, with all the marks of tenderness, friendship, and brotherly affection, to answer the objections of the opponents, and remove the difficulties from their minds; and that the decision was finally made with great decorum, without any appearance of triumph or exultation, in the majority. I have remarked to several, that the inhabitants of this county can have no pretence for justifying an opposition to the government, under this Constitution, till a full and sufficient experiment is made of its operation. Worcester county, though not possessed of so much property, nor taxed so great a sum, as either Suffolk or Essex, yet had a greater number of Delegates in Convention, than either of them.³ The people were fully represented. And I could also remark, with truth (though I chuse to avoid every thing irritating) that this county has been ever since the war, and now is, much more delinquent in seasonably paying their quota of taxes into the public treasury, than either of the counties I mentioned, or several others; which hath been a hardship on those that have made the most prompt payment; as they have been obliged to pay a part of interest money, which would never have become due, had all the counties paid as seasonably as they. I hope the friends to liberty, as connected with, and founded on good government, (and I know of no other political liberty) in all parts of the State, will use their utmost endeavours, in every wise and prudent way, to quiet and conciliate the minds of those who have not thought so favourably of this system of government—so far at least, as to render them willing to make a fair and full trial of its operation: And I hope they will find the beneficial effects of it much greater than they have been ready to expect; and that the evils which they feared from it were but imaginary. By experiment, the defects of it (and defects there are in every thing produced by human wisdom) will be best discovered; and what articles need alteration and amendment. I have confidence that the amendments proposed by our worthy Governour, will soon be made, and become part of the Constitution.

And I think the door is open to obtain any others, that may be found necessary. This hath reconciled me to the adoption of the plan; and I feel myself more and more happy in the hopeful prospect, that it will be instrumental, under Providence, and in the hands of a good administration, to free us from many of our present embarrassments. It will, I am confident, be as beneficial to the landed interest, as to commerce. I trust it will promote the free circulation of money—and give new life and vigor to every branch of business. Pray write me, how the *few* in your county, who were opposed to it, now stand affected, since its adoption.

I am, dear sir, with affection and esteem,

Yours, &c.

1. See Convention Debates, 6 February, P.M. (RCS:Mass., 1488). For John Taylor of Douglass, see also *Massachusetts Centinel*, 12 March (RCS:Mass., 1654).

2. The vote from Worcester County on whether to ratify the Constitution was 43 to 7 against ratification, ten more votes against ratification than the next highest county.

3. Worcester County elected 52 Convention delegates (50 voted), Suffolk 40 (39 voted), and Essex 45 (44 voted).

Henry Jackson to Henry Knox
Boston, 24 February (excerpt)¹

my dear Harry

I recd. your favor by the post last Eveng—we are perfectly quiet in this State with respect to the adoption of the New Constitution.—*Fed's* & *Antis* almost to a Man united, and determind to give it every support—except in a few instance their never was a *Manortity* that behaved with more dignity than those on the present question, they have certainly done themselves great honor. . . .

1. RC, GLC 2437, The Henry Knox Papers. The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

Samuel Nasson to George Thatcher
Sanford, 26 February (excerpts)¹

My Dear Friend (or is this only a Compliment you may depind upon it it is not with me) in my lasst a few moments befor I left Boston² I informd. you that the New plan of Government was Adopted by a Small Majority of only Nineteen my Name beaing in the Smallest Number if their is any Pleasuer in Beaing in the Monority on Such Great Questions I have it first in Contemplating that I have done my duty and in Receiving the thanks of my fellow Citizens through the Countery when I Arrived att the County of York I Received in General the Thanks of

all I mett, while our Freind Bariel³ (for Such I yet Esteeme him) was much Abused how far the Town will Carry their Resentement I Cannot Say I Strove as much as in me Lay to keep down the Spirite of the peopl and I hope that they will not hurt his person or his propety he did not Return with me so that I Cannot Give any Account of him but he was Much to Blame I think not for his Voting but for Striving to Enflame the Minds of the Town and County against the then parposed Plan and by that means Got himself Elected to go to Boston⁴ as the Plan is now adopted I make no doubt but the Eastward parts who have Ever been uniform in the Support of Government will be so Still and I have not the Least doubt that when Calld. upon will Turn out Even to Support this New plan when many who now appears forward will Scrink back for my Part I Expect to be like the Vicker of Bray⁵ that is Let who will be King I hope to be looked upon a Good Suggest that is I mean by my Conduct to Declare it to the World I hope that we Shall Continue Peacable and Try this New Constitution and allso hope I Shall be Agreeably Surprised by finding it to turn out for the Best I am now Just Setting out for Boston to attend the Generall Court my Pollitical day is Just at an End for the Town of Sanford is so poor I Cannot Recomend it to them to Send any Member Next Year as you know they must Pay the Cost of Sending However my own Town with others have offerd to Assist to Send me again

but I Cannot yet Say if I was Chosen whether I Should attend I have lately thought I would not and it not for any reason that I have as to the Administration or that I do not like the Life but I feel the want of a proper Edierstation I feel my Self So Small on many Occations that I allmost Scrink into Nothing Besides I am often obliged to Borrow from Gentelmen that had advantadges which I have not this to a Greater Soul you must know is Such a Burden that Cannot bour but why Should apply to you for you Never had the Experiance Beaing Blessed with what I want—

but to Return as it will be uncertain whether I Shall be at the Next Election I do now Intend to do my Best to fix my Freind Thatchers and allso my Freind Oatis⁶ whom I asteem as a Honest man which one is the Greater Charitcher this you know is Borrowed from Pope⁷ you know their must be one Choice under the old Constituion

Newhampshir Convention is Setting and I hear it is with them as it was with us the Country Members Mostly against the Traiding Towns for it how it will Turn I Cannot tell hope for the Best. . . .

[P.S.] Write me when you Can find Time I Long to have the History of your Progress how the Constitution is like to go in New York—

I wish you to have Some good office Confaired upon you for I think we Shall have but little to do in the County of York

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.
2. See Nasson to Thatcher, 8 February (RCS:Mass., 1649).
3. Elected as an Antifederalist, Nathaniel Barrell of York voted to ratify the Constitution.
4. See RCS:Mass., 1072-73.
5. In the anonymous English ballad "Vicar of Bray," the vicar altered his religious opinions with the times so as to keep his post. The repeated refrain was "And this is law, I will maintain,/Unto my dying day, sir,/That whatsoever king shall reign,/I'll still be the Vicar of Bray, sir!"
6. Samuel A. Otis, who was serving with Thatcher as a delegate to Congress.
7. Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, 248 ("An honest Man's the noblest work of God").

William Vassall to John Lowell

Clapham Common, 26 February (excerpt)¹

. . . I sincerely rejoice, that it is highly probable the Constitution agreed on, by the federal Convention on the 17. of last September, will be adopted by the United States, and thereby an Efficient Government will be established—I am sorry That as the Persons to whom I lent the small Sums, for which the notes of hand I left with Dr Lloyd were given, had not the honesty to discharge said notes, the Courts of Justice were so obstructed by Act & Resolves of the Genl Court, Insurrections &c as that they could not be Compelled by a process in law to pay them. This and many other Events, which have happened in the United States in the last Twelve years, have fully convinced me, that without an Efficient Government no State or Society of Men will be just or happy. By an Efficient government I mean, a judicious firm & honest Legislature, that will make wise & Equitable Laws, And as Horace expresses it, *Justos et tenaces propositi Vires*² be Armed with full compulsive power to Execute said Laws, i.e To defend the State, to administer justice to Every one without partiality or respect of persons, to protect the Innocent, and to punish the Guilty. I am clearly of opinion, that if an Efficient Government shall be established in the United States, by the adoption of the Constitution agreed on by the federal convention, Real estates will certainly rise in their Value, therefore I shall not force a Sale of my landed property at this Time. On mature consideration it appears to me, That my reasoning, in the State of my Case Sent to Dr Lloyd,³ on the Acts therein Cited, is Conclusive & Unanswerable; And as I am One of the Many who think themselves Aggrieved by what you Term a temporary Confiscation of the real Estates of Absentees, I flatter

myself that if an Efficient Government Should be established in the United States, by the adoption of the aforesaid Constitution, I shall be permitted to prove the Truth of what I have asserted in the sd. State of my Case, & shall obtain an adequate Compensation for the damages I have Sustained. . . .

1. RC, Cunningham Collection of James Russell Lowell Papers, MH. Vassall (1715–1800), a Harvard College graduate (1733) and a former well-to-do resident of Boston, refused to take sides in 1775 and moved to England. He was proscribed as a Loyalist under an act passed on 16 October 1778 and his Massachusetts property was confiscated. In the 1780s Vassall, now living in a London suburb, unsuccessfully petitioned the Massachusetts General Court for relief, and he had no more success with the new federal courts in the 1790s.

2. Horace, *Odes*, Book 3, poem 3, verse 1: “iustum et tenacem propositi virum” (the man of firm and righteous will).

3. Accused of Loyalism during the Revolution, Dr. James Lloyd of Boston, a prominent obstetrician and surgeon, represented Vassall’s Massachusetts interests and petitioned Governor John Hancock, requesting that Vassall be permitted to return from exile.

John Bacon to Elbridge Gerry Stockbridge, 27 February¹

On 30 November 1787 the Stockbridge town meeting, “after a Long dispute,” elected Theodore Sedgwick a delegate to the Massachusetts Convention. Sedgwick’s principal challenger was John Bacon, believed to be “a bitter enemy” of the Constitution. Sedgwick’s arguments in the town meeting, declared Bacon, convinced him that “the objections against the constitution are not of sufficient weight to justify a rejection of it”; and, upon Sedgwick’s request, Bacon so informed Sedgwick about this position in a 1 December letter. Bacon’s supposed conversion was both praised and satirized in newspapers for the next several weeks. (See RCS:Mass., 1034–43.)

In January 1788 Bacon went to Boston, where he apparently tried to convince delegates and others to oppose those parts of the Constitution that he found objectionable. Elbridge Gerry was among those with whom he spoke. When Bacon returned to Stockbridge, he called at the post office looking for a letter that Gerry had written him before they had spoken in Boston; even though “several” people saw the letter, it could not be found. Bacon believed it had been stolen. On 27 February Bacon wrote Gerry and apprised him of the situation. Bacon also expressed his continued opposition to certain provisions of the Constitution and recommended ways in which it might still be opposed and amended.

On 15 March Gerry wrote Boston postmaster Jonathan Hastings, requesting that Hastings investigate the purloining of Gerry’s letter to Bacon and letters between Gerry and his New York friends. Gerry equated the stealing of letters to “a species of robbery nearly allied to highway robbery,” which was “in many countries . . . capitally punished” (Mfm:Mass.). The next day Hastings assured Gerry that his letter to Bacon had been forwarded to Stockbridge and that the Boston Post office had been “particularly attentive” to the safety of all of Gerry’s mail (Mfm:Mass.).

The letter which you did me the honor to address to me some time before I had the pleasure of seeing you in Boston, has never come into my hands. Soon after I returned from Boston, I called at the Post Office, & was informed that a letter had been lodged there for me; but on examining the Office, it could not be found. It had been seen & noticed by several Persons who were in the Office, the day that I called for it; & by some of them, undoubtedly taken & secreted. Being ignorant of the purport of the letter, I shall not be so likely to get hold of a Clew by which I might possibly be able to detect the person who has been guilty of this base Conduct.

The New Constitution, it seems, has been ratified by the Convention of this State. Is it now in such a Situation that no further attempt to prevent its Establishment can, with propriety, be made on the part of this Commonwealth? Might the Legislature, in their present Session, consistantly take up the Matter, & recommend to the Inhabitants of the several Towns, at their next Elections, to authorize their Representatives to reconsider the Doings of the late Convention of this State on the Constitution, & to ratify the same, with such amendments as they may judge necessary? I am, I confess, in doubt, both as to the propriety of a measure like this, & also, as to the prospect of Success, if it should be attempted. I will venture, however, to inclose the form of a Resolve² which, in my solitary moments, I have drawn for this purpose, & wish to submit the Eligibility of an attempt of this kind to your wise consideration. I feel a considerable degree of anxiety respecting the Government that seems to be on the point of gaining an Establishment, & find the want of a discreet & wellinformed Friend whom I might, in confidence, consult. Should you think fit to communicate the Purport of this Resolve to any judicious Friend, or Member of the Genl Court, you will be pleased to do it with caution, & in confidence. If you should think it best (as you probably will) that no attempt of this kind should be made, I must ask the favor that you would keep the whole, as coming from me, a profound Secret. I perceive that on my leaving Boston, I was immediately represented as having again changed my Sentiments respecting the Constitution. This, like some other Reports, is without the least Foundation in Truth: Whether this was designed to influence any particular Member of the Convention with whom I might be supposed to have some small degree of Interest; or only to represent me as a mere changeling, is immaterial: I find it was urged for the Purposes of both.

I wish that an early & prudent attention might be paid to Elections, both in the National & State, Legislative & Executive Departments of Government. I conceive it to be a matter of special Importance, that when we begin to practice on a Constitution like that which is now

before us, we should have Men in the Administration, who, from Principle & Habit, are firmly attached to the Liberties of the People, & the Rights of the particular States.³ Such Presidents [i.e., precedents] may be early made as may be attended with permanent Effects, & serve to establish an Authority next to that which is expressly prescribed in the Constitution itself. I am not able to determine what proportion of the People in this County are in favor of the Constitution, or whether it has now a greater or less number of friends than it had before its Ratification by the Convention of this State. I was sensible, while I was in Boston, that the Opposition suffered exceedingly by being conducted by unskilful hands. I am persuaded that a small number of able Men in the Convention, well skilled in publick Controversy, would have had an easy task to have prevented the Ratification.

Be pleased to present my most cordial Salutations to Mrs. Gerry. P.S. Since writing the above, I am happy to find that Col Williams Representative from W. Stockbridge is going to the Genl. Court.⁴ I therefore cheerfully embrace the Oppy. of writing by him. He is a Gentleman of Discretion, in whom the fullest Confidence may be placed.

1. RC, GLC 7300, The Gilder Lehrman Collection, on deposit at The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York. Gerry docketed this letter as answered on 19 March; his response has not been located.

2. The enclosed resolve has not been located. On 21 March Henry Van Schaack wrote his brother Peter that "A Motion has been made in the lower house to annul the adoption of the Constitution by the Convention and submit the New System to the people at large—very few in favor of the Motion—This looks well!" (Mfm:Mass.).

3. A year later Bacon wrote Gerry to congratulate him on his election to the U.S. House of Representatives. Bacon noted that "Altho I do not imagine that Mr. Gerry, or any other individual, can effect everything, I must, nevertheless, consider your election as bearing a favorable aspect on the operation of our new government. It will check the sanguine views of our violent Constitutionalists, and add strength and importance to the sober friends of liberty and government" (26 February 1789, DHFFE, I, 659). Bacon had received only three votes to represent the Hampshire-Berkshire district in the U.S. House of Representatives.

4. On 22 November 1787 West Stockbridge elected Colonel Elijah Williams, a farmer and the town's representative to the state House of Representatives, to be a delegate to the Massachusetts Convention, but he refused to serve and was replaced by Thomas Lusk, who spoke and voted against ratification of the Constitution (RCS:Mass., 1065–66).

Nathaniel Barrell of York, Maine, and the Constitution 27 February–10 March

On 27 February the *New Hampshire Mercury* printed an "Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Boston to his sister at York," Maine, dated 13 February. The extract was reprinted in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 5 March, and *New York Morning Post*, 18 March. Both reprintings inserted a footnote stating that "Nathaniel Barrell, Esq. represented this town [York] in the late Hon. Convention,"

suggesting that the letter was written by Boston merchant Joseph Barrell to his sister-in-law Sarah (Sally), the only child of Jonathan Sayward of York. On 10 March, five days after the letter appeared in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, an anonymous writer published a poetic parody of the letter in the Antifederalist *American Herald*, where the converted Antifederalist is referred to as "N—" and his wife as "Sal."

In his letter, Joseph Barrell praised his brother Nathaniel for voting to ratify the Constitution in the Massachusetts Convention on 6 February, even though Nathaniel had been elected as an Antifederalist. (See York election in RCS: Mass., 1072-73.) Nathaniel Barrell announced that he would support the Constitution in a lengthy speech that he delivered to the Convention on the morning of 5 February. In turn, the anonymous writer in the *American Herald* chided Barrell for changing his mind, reminding readers that Barrell had been a Loyalist during the Revolution.

New Hampshire Mercury, 27 February

Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Boston to his sister at York.

Boston, 13th February 1788.

DEAR SISTER, My brother has shewn me your letter of the 4th instant, and did I not know your hand writing, I should hardly suppose it genuine, or *possible*, that you could *fear* wounding his *delicacy*, by even an *assurance* he had changed his political sentiments since he left home: but my surprize increases when you go on, and call instability, what every rational being who has heard the arguments, will call a laudable conviction, pleasing to God and all good men; and after which, had he suffered his name to be handed to posterity, justly execrated by unborn millions—what could it be but *Thompsonian* obstinacy¹—unequaled in history, detestable to every person of common honesty, and justly meriting contempt and abhorrence.

You quote a maxim that "*Unstable men will never excell*": and while you are explaining your idea of instability, I will make a maxim—*Obstinate fools should never be trusted*:—What! is it instability to alter an opinion, hastily formed *in a remote corner of the earth*—and without any arguments? Or what would you call it, to retain this whim (for I cannot call it opinion) after the collected wisdom of the state had been employed a month in the most serious debates; when, on the one side, torrents of good sense, sound reasoning and honorable sentiments, have been lavished to oppose the most *futile notions* and *designing ignorance*, that ever disgraced any party? look to the yeas and nays on this great question; see on the one hand names respectable in every view—(I say nothing of property, because of the senseless cry of some designing fools against it)—Men who have fought our battles, and supported our councils, in the most trying times; and on the other,

wretches, many of them who an honest man would scorn to set with the dogs of his flock—men who never were for any government but such as their ignorant and wicked hearts could devise, that their worse heads might exercise—a government of such men would be worse than even the anarchy they strove but a few months past to introduce; of these men are a large proportion of the nays to this question, and scarcely one who has any pretensions to honor or honesty; and would you, my sister, wish the name of your husband enrolled in such company, to be held in detestation by even his own children (for such must be the case if they are honest men) to be handed to the latest generation as an *Antifederal*—an epithet so much worse as to entirely obliterate those of *Tory*, and the many others which have in our late struggles but justly been given.

I will not enlarge: only suspend your opinion for a few months, and 'till my brother gives you the reason which has induced him to step from the road to infamy, and honor his name in the respectable list of which he is a part; for myself, no occurrence could happen half so humiliating to me, as to find his name a *nay* to this question, which if we are wise, I have not a doubt will be productive of every good that can be expected from a good government.

I am your affectionate brother,

American Herald, 10 March

“*Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in Boston, to his Sister in York.*”—
(See the Centinel of the 5th of March, instant.)

“DEAR SISTER,”

Your Letter which to me is shown,
In stroke of pen I long have known,
Is really much surprising:
For you, at once, have damn'd our race,
As quite unfit for post or place,
And deem'd untaught for rising.
“*That men unstable ne'er excel,*”
Our changing lives have witness'd well,
For fools are ne'er advancing
In church and state, we've shifted still,
As winds go whistle where they will,
Or meteors fall in dancing.
A maxim I'll oppose to that
Which plies to me tho' not to N——,
That fools are never trusted,

And *brawlers*, always drown'd in strife,
 Must daily drag a hated life,
 With all the world disgusted.
 The Constitution's very good,
 On H——k's motion,² *understood*,
 And with it fairly blended.
 'Twas made by men who used to fight,
 And though not now, it may be right,
 When properly amended.
 Now, how cou'd N. on Old-York's rock,
 Where sapient eye ne'er deign'd a look,
 Have dar'd *alone* to judge it?
 While those who wou'd be in the right,
 Must surely see, by *second sight*,
 Well fix'd on fed'ral budget.
 The truth by strongest force *is made*,
 Or lies in learning well-display'd,
 As popes, and priests, now hold it.
 The truth by force is brought to light,
 For all is problem till in sight,
 The *battle* does unfold it.
 They're rogues, and knaves, and silly elves,
 Who think not as our wiser selves,
 But here, dear Sal's, the biter:
 That when *we* join the greater throng,
 They then conclude they're in the wrong!
 For how can *we* come righter?
 But here I can no more enlarge,
 My brother will himself discharge,
 When fresh he goes to greet ye,
 No more a tory's name long worn,
 His brow enlight'ned shall adorn,
 A quite new man he'll meet ye.
 Then why shou'd he *our name* disgrace,
 By putting *it* in such a place,
 As when *it* stands recorded,
 For many a long disgraceful year,
 With *rogues* and *rascals* will appear
 In its *nat'ral rank* regarded.

1. A reference to Antifederalist Convention delegate Samuel Thompson of Topsham who continued his vigorous opposition to the Constitution after the state Convention adjourned.

2. A reference to John Hancock's 31 January motion recommending amendments to the Constitution.

Jeremiah Hill to George Thatcher
Biddeford, 28 February (excerpt)¹

. . . the adoption of the new Constitution by the Massachusetts has I think cemented the parties together rather than stired up new Animosities. the federal party has taken and are taking every measure to promote & encourage Peace Union & Harmony by paying particular Attention to the Anti's especially those of any Influence, which they appear reciprocally fond of encouraging, very few exceptions. Gen. Thompson did not return home after the Convention dissolved as the Genl. Court was to set in 12 or 14 days² & it is rumoured that he has been very noisy during that time, but I don't hear to any purpose some say he took a Tour into the western Counties and they say further that he made it in his way to call & see the New hampshire Convention to stir up what Strife he could there, this Convention has adjourned to sometime in June next³ one Reason which I have heard offered for the adjournment, and which I think is probable was this, several Members who had Instructions positively to vote against it, upon hearing it discussed were in heart in favor of it, but unwilling to vote against such Instructions joined the party for Adjournment in order to use their Influence with their Constituents for different Instructions. Brother Widgery call'd on me last evening in his way to Boston he tells me they are very easy & quiet in the circle of his Acquaintance. Mr. Cutts of Berwick⁴ & our friend Nason is a little noisy about it, but I believe they are only airy puffs blown out occasionally, perhaps to serve a particular purpose, that is, it is whispered about that he (Nason) is making Interest for a Seat in the Senate the ensuing Year, & perhaps Cutts is a spare Trumpet. these things are sacredly committed to a friend what shall I say more or rather what shall I say next? why, I will tell you the news of the day, a young *Cobbite* arrived into town last night but instead of *Bena & Polly*, it has a full set of *propria quae maribus*⁵ all cleverly doubtless you remember the Minority in the Massachusetts Convention consisted of 168 members 106 of whom belonged to the three western Counties which were in Opposition to government the last year, and I am informed that the chief Opposers in the new hampshire Convention were of the same Clan, that is belonged to the Circle that arose last year to oppose the Genl. Court of that State,⁶ what a pity it is that such desperadoes should be permitted to infest civil Society? or rather what a pity it is that civil Society cannot be so well established as to prevent such obnoxious beings from shewing their Spite to the well

disposed However we must like the industrious bee such honey from every obnoxious weed—

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.
2. Samuel Thompson was a member of the state Senate.
3. For a full discussion of the adjournment of the New Hampshire Convention from 22 February to 18 June, see CC:554.
4. Richard Foxwell Cutts, a former Berwick, Maine, town selectman, voted against ratifying the Constitution in the state Convention.
5. Latin: things appropriate to males or husbands.
6. For the unrest in New Hampshire in the fall of 1786, see RCS:Mass., 324, note 4.

**Tristram Dalton to John Langdon
Newburyport, 29 February¹**

Be pleased to accept my sincere thanks for your favors of the 23d Instant—

From the reasons that you mention, the Adjournment of the Convention in New Hampshire was political & necessary—this step will probably lead to a more full adoption of the proposed constitution—

In this Government, an adjournment would have been fatal, as County Conventions would have taken place²—which are the ruin of all beneficial Systems. The Gentlemen in favor of the federal Plan would have preferred a rejection of it to an adjournment. with you the case is otherwise—It being very probable that all the States, unless New York should be an exception, for Rhode Island is scarcely in our estimation, will ratify the general Constitution, previous to the second meeting of your Convention, I flatter myself the vote will be unanimous in N. Hampshire—

The southern States are sensible of the, *just*, advantages that the Eastern Ones will probably reap from this adoption; they must, therefore, be surprized at the small majority in this—and the hesitation in your's. These circumstances may serve to lull their suspicions—and to induce them more easily to adopt this Government, which is the only hope of salvation left unto us—

I was much disappointed in not having the pleasure of seeing you at Exeter, during the session—Weather—Roads—Business—all combined to hinder me—untill the very day the Convention adjourned—

If possible, I will be at Concord in June³ wishing much to discourse with you before—In Boston many nice strings were touched, gently, & they added to the harmony—

1. RC, Langdon Papers, Portsmouth Athenaeum, Portsmouth, N.H..
2. In Massachusetts, county conventions, to which towns sent delegates, petitioned and made recommendations to the General Court. For instance, in July and August 1786,

several county conventions met and petitioned for debtor-relief measures. These conventions were a prelude to Shays's Rebellion.

3. The second session of the New Hampshire Convention was scheduled to meet on 18 June.

Silas Lee to George Thatcher
Biddeford, 29 February (excerpt)¹

My Dear Uncle

. . . As to the Constitution, it is fixed—I have already congratulated you upon that Matter—If I have had doubts respecting the security of the Liberties of the people under it, I am by no means against it—nor have I ever been—The Arguments made use of in our late Convention; have removed almost every doubt or difficulty from My Mind—But for the sake of further information, I shall make some observations upon two or three parts of your letter by the next post—as your letter did not arrive 'till yesterday, & the post returns this forenoon, I have not time to do it this week. . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

Thomas B. Wait to George Thatcher
Portland, 29 February¹

In your last Letter to Brother Silas² you inquired concerning our Separation from Massachusetts—I do not know how your Biddeford correspondent will answer the interrogation—Nor do I care—I am determin'd to say something about it—

The vastness of the object that has, since your departure, and still does attracted the public mind, hath left not a crack or crevice for the territory of *Sagadahock*³—But when the general agitation occasioned by any Phenomenon shall subside, then will an opportunity offer to contemplate its effects—

The adoption of the proposed national Constitution, which I now begin to look upon as certain, will alter the opinion of our Boston Brethren—instead of opposing, they will assuredly advocate our separation—so will every man on this side Philadelphia.—The acquisition of two Senators in the northern interest, will be considered as an object of magnitude—The independence of Vermont⁴ will, also, on the same principles, be contended for—and obtained—What say you?—

I have actually written my vote for the Governour of Main;—but it is for a man who I am very certain *you* would not vote for.—

I think you have written to, and received Letters from Genl. Thompson—Do for God's sake write him once more—he conducts as if the

Devil had possessed him. His opposition to the new Constitution continues.—When he left Boston, his last words were—*I will throw the state into Confusion*—It is true, these were *great swelling words*; but he may do a great deal of mischief.—Can not you contrive a Letter that will do him good?—For I do not believe Thompson to be a man of a bad heart—Should you tell him that the Consti—with the proposed *amendments*, which will certainly take place, will operate less injuriously than many suppose—that other amendments if found necessary will certainly take place—that you admire the submissive conduct of the minority &c. &c.—(richly interlarding the whole with Republicanism)—something of this kind might be serviceable—Yours—Dictator

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

2. Silas Lee.

3. Sagadahock was the early name for a large part of Maine that had been granted to the Duke of York by his brother Charles II in 1664.

4. In 1777 Vermont declared its independence from New York and sought admission into the Union. Throughout the 1780s the issue of Vermont independence remained controversial and unresolved.

Editors' Note

A Columbian Patriot: Observations on the Constitution Boston, February

In late February a nineteen-page pamphlet—signed “A Columbian Patriot” and entitled *Observations on the New Constitution, and on the Federal and State Conventions*—was published in Boston, probably by Antifederalist printer Edward Eveleth Powars of the *American Herald*. On the title page appeared the epigraph “*Sic transit gloria Americana*” (so passes away the glory of America). Although sometimes attributed to Elbridge Gerry, the pamphlet was written by Mercy Warren, the wife of Antifederalist leader James Warren. No part of the pamphlet was reprinted in a Massachusetts newspaper, although, in March, it was reprinted in toto in two Philadelphia Antifederalist newspapers—the *Independent Gazetteer* and *Freeman's Journal*. In late March or early April “A Columbian Patriot” was reprinted as a twenty-two-page pamphlet by Thomas Greenleaf of the Antifederalist *New York Journal*, and 1,700 copies were distributed throughout New York state by the New York City Antifederal Committee. In June and July 1788 copies of the New York edition of the pamphlet were advertised for sale in the North Carolina *Wilmington Centinel*, and as late as March 1789, Greenleaf offered the pamphlet for sale in his newspaper.

In an essay studded with historical, classical, literary, and biblical allusions, “A Columbian Patriot” criticized the Constitutional Convention, the supporters of the Constitution, and the Massachusetts Convention, but the focus of the essay was a list of eighteen objections to

the Constitution. Before enumerating these objections, "A Columbian Patriot" labeled the "complicated system of government" created by the Constitution as an "*aristocratic tyranny*" that violated the sacred principles for which the American Revolution was fought and for which so many patriots shed their blood. Time and again, "A Columbian Patriot" reminded readers of the meaning of the fight for American independence. Supporters of the Constitution were accused of employing "all the arts of insinuation, and influence, to betray the people of the United States."

"A Columbian Patriot" began the enumeration of objections with the failure to provide for annual elections. Other objections included the lack of protection for the rights of conscience and the liberty of the press; the extensive original and appellate jurisdiction of the federal judiciary; the blending of executive and legislative powers; the abolition of trial by jury in civil cases; the creation of a standing army at the expense of state militias, the true "bulwark of defence"; the monopolistic tax powers of Congress, which deprived states of their ability to raise revenues; the great expense of maintaining the new federal government; the lack of provision for rotation in office; the inadequate representation in the House of Representatives; the power of Congress over elections; the failure to elect the President by direct popular vote; the long terms of senators; the lack of a bill of rights; the establishment of a single legislature to rule over a large territory, which would result in a consolidated government, thereby annihilating the state governments; the creation of a new system of government by the Constitutional Convention in violation of its instructions; the provision that only nine states were needed to ratify the Constitution; and the failure to permit Congress and the state legislatures to comment on the Constitution.

In the concluding section, "A Columbian Patriot" criticized the Massachusetts Convention for rushing through the ratification process and for "artfully" introducing recommendatory amendments. Americans were warned that it would be a mistake to depend on the promise of future amendments to protect their rights and liberties. The delegates to the Constitutional Convention were scored for acting in secret and once again for violating their instructions. "A Columbian Patriot" issued a call for a new general convention that would, without annihilating the state governments, increase the strength of Congress but not grant it onerous powers of taxation. After criticizing the sometimes selfish motives of the six states that had ratified the Constitution, "A Columbian Patriot" was optimistic that future state conventions, especially those in Maryland, New York, and Virginia, would reject the Constitution. Placing faith in the leadership in these state conventions, "A

Columbian Patriot” hoped that “America may yet produce characters who have genius and capacity sufficient to form the manners and correct the morals of the people, and virtue enough to lead their country to freedom.”

Federalist attacks on the pamphlet were few but sharp. Rufus King called it “a pitiful performance” (to John Alsop, 2 March, Ford, *Pamphlets*, 2), while a writer in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 19 March, described the pamphlet as “malicious” (RCS:Mass., 1725).

For the text and a fuller discussion of the authorship and circulation of “A Columbian Patriot,” see CC:581.

The Massachusetts Reprinting of the Last Letter of John Adams’s Defence of the Constitutions, 3-13 March

On 23 January 1788 John Adams informed Cotton Tufts that he was sending him the third and last volume of his recently published *Defence of the Constitutions* (RCS:Mass., 778-79). Volume III was the only volume of the *Defence* in which Adams referred to the newly proposed Constitution, the first two volumes having appeared before the Constitutional Convention adjourned. Volumes I and II of the *Defence* circulated widely and selections from the first were reprinted. (See CC:16 and *American Herald*, 31 December 1787 [Mfm:Mass.])

The *Defence* was written in the form of letters to Adams’s son-in-law William Stephens Smith, secretary of the American legation in London. On 1 January 1788, before the publication of Volume III, Smith wrote to Rufus King that “It may give you some satisfaction to know our friend Mr. Adams’s opinion of the Constitution now under consideration, I send you a Copy of part of his last letter to me, which is to close the 3d. Vol: of his work—you may peruse it, shew it to foederal men, (whom heaven preserve) or publish it as you think best” (King, *King*, I, 310-11). On 20 February King, who had returned to New York City a week earlier after serving as a delegate to the Massachusetts Convention, received Smith’s letter and enclosure. The same day King wrote to Theophilus Parsons, who had also been a delegate to the Massachusetts Convention, stating that he had received an extract of Adams’s concluding letter to his *Defence*. Since the extract was too long to copy, King sent Parsons a copy only of the last two paragraphs of Adams’s letter. King told Parsons, “Col. Smith observes in his letter that Mr. Adams wished no concealment of his Opinion on this subject; and I think its publicity may be useful. I am without a Frank; if the Doctor’s Opinion is not worth the postage you value it much less than I do” (*ibid.*, 321).

In his letter to William Stephens Smith, dated 26 December 1787, John Adams praised the Northwest Ordinance (1787) and the Constitution. He encouraged the ratification of the Constitution, which was, “if not the greatest exertion of human understanding, the greatest single effort of national deliberation that the world has ever seen.” The Constitution, declared Adams, was not perfect, but it could be amended. (For Adams’s criticisms of the Constitution, see Adams to Thomas Jefferson, 10 November, and 6 December 1787, and to Cotton Tufts, 23 January 1788; and Abigail Adams Smith to John Quincy

Adams, 10 February [RCS:Mass., 212, 389–90, 778–79, 885–86]. See also John Adams to Tufts, 12 February [Mfm:Mass.]

On 23 February the *New York Journal* printed the complete text of Adams's letter to Smith under a heading that described it as an extract of the letter. A lengthy and flattering statement by "A Customer" (Rufus King), which also described it as an extract of a letter, preceded the text of the letter. On 4 March the *Massachusetts Gazette* printed the complete text of Adams's letter, and the next day the *Massachusetts Centinel* reprinted "A Customer's" statement and the complete letter from the *New York Journal*, under the heading "Mr. ADAMS' opinion of the Federal Constitution." The last five paragraphs of Adams's letter appeared in the *Boston Gazette*, 3 March; *Salem Mercury*, 4 March; *Essex Journal*, 12 March; and *Cumberland Gazette*, 13 March. On 9 May the *Massachusetts Gazette* reprinted the last two paragraphs from the Charleston, S.C., *City Gazette* of 8 April—both omitted the first sentence in the penultimate paragraph. For the circulation of the letter outside of Massachusetts, see CC:557.

When John Quincy Adams saw the letter in a newspaper on 5 March, he wrote in his diary that it spoke "very favourably of the System proposed by the federal Convention . . . I did not expect it, and am glad to find I was mistaken, since, it appears probable, the plan will be adopted. . . ." (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 371. Both sets of ellipses were inserted by Adams.)

For brief foreign accounts praising Adams that were published in American newspapers in February and March 1788, see CC:Vol. 4, pp. 519–21.

New York Journal, 23 February (excerpts)¹

MR. GREENLEAF, Upon a subject so interesting to the people of America, as the proposed federal constitution, the disquisitions of enlightened politicians are eagerly sought after, and the opinions of those, whose abilities and integrity have entitled them to the confidence and respect of their country, may justly be regarded as of the highest consequence.

The minister of the United States, at the court of London, has been constantly in the public employ, from the commencement of the American revolution. This gentleman was a delegate in Congress when the confederation was devised, and is said to have had no inconsiderable influence in its formation. His residence at London precluded him from any share in framing the constitution reported by the late federal convention; he cannot therefore be considered as a partizan for this system, or as its blind admirer.

Notwithstanding the uncandid attacks made by certain inferior critics upon a few expressions in the first volume of Mr. Adams' defence of the American constitutions, yet that performance has been read and approved by the sensible and candid part of the community. The second volume has been some time in America, but hitherto has passed through but few hands. Mr. Adams has continued the work, and a third volume was ready for the press in the beginning of January. The following extract from the concluding letter of the third volume, contains

Mr. Adams' opinion on the new constitution; its authenticity cannot be doubted, and the publication thereof will oblige A CUSTOMER.

Extract² of a letter from the honorable J. ADAMS to Col. SMITH, being the concluding letter of his 3d vol. on the American Constitutions, dated Grosvenor Square, December 26, 1787. . . .

"The laws of Solon and the despotism of Mahomet, have at different times, prevailed at Athens, consuls, emperors and pontiffs, have ruled at Rome, can there be desired a stronger proof that policy and education, are able to triumph over every disadvantage of climate? Mankind have been still more injured by insinuations, that a certain celestial virtue, more than human, has been necessary to preserve liberty. Happiness, whether in despotism or democracy, whether in slavery or liberty, can never be found without virtue. The best republics will be virtuous, and have been so; but we may hazard a conjecture, that the virtues have been the effect of the well ordered constitutions, rather than the cause, and perhaps it would be impossible to prove that a republic cannot exist, even among highwaymen, by setting one rogue to watch another, and the knaves themselves may in time be made honest men by the struggle.

"It is now in our power to bring this work to a conclusion, with unexpected dignity. In the course of the last summer, two authorities have appeared, greater than any that have been before quoted, in which the principles we have attempted to defend have been acknowledged. The first is an ordinance of Congress of the 13th of July, 1787, for the government of the territory of the United States, north west of the river Ohio.³ The second is the report of the convention at Philadelphia of the 17th of September, 1787. The former confederation of the United States was formed upon the model and example of all the confederacies ancient and modern, in which the federal council was only a diplomatic body. Even the Lycian which is thought to have been the best was no more. The magnitude of territory, the population[,] the wealth and commerce, and especially the rapid growth of the United States, have shewn such a government to be inadequate to their wants. And the new system, which seems admirably calculated to unite their interests and affections, and bring them to an uniformity of principles and sentiments, is equally well combined to unite their wills and forces, as a single nation; a result of accommodation cannot be supposed to reach the ideas of perfection of any one.

"But the conception of such an idea, and the deliberate union of so great and various a people, in such a plan, is, without all partiality or prejudice, if not the greatest exertion of human understanding, the greatest single effort of national deliberation that the world has ever

seen. That it may be improved, is not to be doubted, and provision is made for that purpose, in the report itself. A people who could conceive, and can adopt it, we need not fear will be able to amend it, when by experience its inconveniences and imperfections shall be seen and felt.”

1. Printed: CC:557.

2. The *New York Journal* printed the complete text of the “letter” as it appeared in the third volume of the *Defence*.

3. For the text of the Northwest Ordinance, see CDR, 168–74.

Pennsylvania Mercury, 8 March¹

A correspondent observes that the anti-federalists must be a very scattered, straggling sort of beings, for some in all *classes* are in favour of the constitution. The farmers, mechanics, merchants and seamen have all testified their warm approbation of it. He adds he is happy to ascertain the sentiments of another class of men; and if virtue and piety have any weight, their sanction must yield peculiar satisfaction to the federal patriots. Of the SEVENTEEN clergymen, who were in the Massachusetts convention, FOURTEEN voted for the adoption of the constitution.²

1. Reprinted: *Connecticut Courant*, 24 March; *Norwich Packet*, 27 March; *Newport Herald*, 3 April.

2. The Convention had eighteen clergymen, fourteen of whom voted to ratify the Constitution. For an item that was hostile to the clergy, see “A Hint,” *Providence United States Chronicle*, 20 March (RCS:Mass., 1727).

William Widgery to George Thatcher Boston, 16 March (excerpt)¹

I received yours of March 5 where in you inform me what the federalists and antifederalists say respecting the New Constitution in Stead of Sending me your opinion respecting the Matter, I am therefore in Stead of having your good Opinion on the matter, Left to form one for my Self. which I hope will not be the Case when I shall have the pleasure of reading your Next. for I confes I am as modern a federalist as you or your Brother Otis.² I can say but Little to you respecting the province of Maine, I here that Judg Rice & mr Silvester³ when they went home had but a Cule reception on account of their votes at Convention but the People in that Quarter are in general very quiet. . . .

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

2. Samuel A. Otis, like Thatcher, was in New York City representing Massachusetts in Congress.

3. Although Pownalborough voted not to accept the Constitution (RCS:Mass., 1012), the town's Convention delegates Thomas Rice and David Sylvester voted to ratify.

Jonathan Moore to Elijah Brigham
Rochester, 17 March (excerpt)¹

... I sincerely rejoice with you on ye Adoption of ye Federal Constitution—at ye Same time am greatly mortified at ye Antifederal & factious Spirit that prevails in my Native County, *Worcester*²—but hope it will soon subside; & that a general compliance with good Government will speedily take place. The Spirit of Insurgency has almost wholly subsided in these parts—and tho' we had a considerable Number Anti-federally inclined, during ye debates in Convention; yet since ye issue, they seem quietly to acquiesce—Am sorry to hear of Such opposition in some other States—but am very certain that ten (& I rather think ye whole thirteen) States will finally adopt it—When we shall congratulate each other upon ye most happy Event that ever took place in this Country—That we may speedily see that glorious & happy Day is ye earnest wish & prayer of your Affectionate Friend and Brother

1. RC, Brigham Papers, MWA. Moore (1739–1814), a graduate of Harvard College (1761), was pastor of the First Church of Rochester, Plymouth County, from 1768 until his dismissal in 1792. Brigham (1751–1816), a merchant and graduate of Dartmouth College (1778), was a Westborough selectman, 1785, 1789–95. Beginning in the 1790s, he held various legislative and judicial offices at the state and national levels.

2. Moore was born in the Worcester County town of Oxford.

Massachusetts Centinel, 19 March

Like their brethren in iniquity at the southward, the *antifederalists* of this Commonwealth, are attempting to disseminate the seeds of anarchy and confusion—these people discover a degree of *hardihood* in the prosecution of their designs, that would do honour to a good cause, but being exhibited in the most detestable of all undertakings, is indicative of the most determined villainy.—Every real friend to his country, must feel his indignation greatly excited at a recent attempt of the antifederal JUNTO to poison the publick mind, by the circulation of a malicious pamphlet,¹ which, like the locusts from the bottomless pit, hath ascended from a certain press, and are scattered over the country—This effort of a detestable faction, to traduce the late Federal and State Conventions, is however a mere piece of bombast and declamation, like the *cant*, *whinings* and *ravings* of the CENTINEL and PHILADELPHIENSIS of Pennsylvania—we trust our good friends will be on their guard against the attempts of these *desperadoes*; but, should they

unfortunately effect their purposes in any degree, the prime agents may assure themselves of being the earliest victims to the resentment of an enraged people.

1. Probably a reference to *Observations on the Constitution* by "A Columbian Patriot" (Mercy Warren) (RCS:Mass., 1719-21).

Silas Lee to George Thatcher
Biddeford, 20 March (excerpt)¹

. . . We have no News of any kind—Seperation [of Maine], & Constitution seemed to have entirely subsided—the former for the want of Scribblers—the latter from it's having been decided—Thus at present we seem to be at peace—Many who have been much opposed to the Constitution are become warm advocates for it—a circumstance that will ever afford pleasure to every Friend to good Government—In my last letter you say, if our situation, which is admitted to be very deplorable & not to be worsted, is the greatest reason to Justify its adoption, it must be thought to be very bad indeed—perhaps not—There may be many good reasons besides, I think, & yet that the greatest—yes, for the greatest—indeed, I think, that argument alone is unanswerable & sufficient, when we consider that the *worst* of Governments is *better* than none—and that our situation was such, that we must have had this, or none—The old articles of confederation were found totally inadequate to the purposes, & therefore very little or no better than nothing at all—and principally for the want of energy or power in the federal Head—the proposed Govt. remedies that evil, but as one extreme generally follows another, so it is said, that this Constitution errs on the other side—but as anarchy & confusion, nay perhaps a total dissolution of the States, would probably be the consequence of a continuance in our present situation, (than which state of confusion, nothing ought to be more avoided) & as that Constitution would probably afford immediate relief, & if prudently amended, would undoubtedly be productive of great & lasting happiness, wisdom & Self preservation would indubitably, I think, Justify it's adoption had it been ten times as bad as it is—Nay the worst in the world except our own—than which I think, it would be impossible to find a *worse* such a one—how then do you conclude, that, if our situation is the greatest reason to Justify it's adoption, that it must be thought to be very bad?

P.S. I intended to have transcribed this before I sent it but have not time—

1. RC, Chamberlain Collection, Thatcher Papers, MB.

A Hint**Providence United States Chronicle, 20 March¹**

To the EDITOR of the United States Chronicle.

You are desired to insert the following in your next Paper, by a Number of your Readers. A.

Information is received from Boston, that a Bill is pending before the General Court of Massachusetts, for taxing the Polls and Estates of the Clergy in that State; and it is said this Bill originated in Consequence of their taking so active a Part in Favour of the *intended new Constitution*, and introducing *Politics* into their Sermons, instead of adhering strictly to the Gospel.

QUERY.—Ought not the Assembly of this State take this Matter under Consideration at the next Session—as we have some amongst *us*, who preach for, and aim at nothing else but *Lucre*.

A HINT.

1. This item was reprinted in the *American Herald*, 24 March. The first paragraph only was reprinted in the *Salem Mercury*, 25 March; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 7 April; and *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 3 May.

Samuel Nasson to George Thatcher

Boston, 23 March¹

Dear Friend

I Recvd. yours and Considerd the Contents I much Supprised at your Expressions Concerning a Passage in my former letter where I Sayd. I Gloryed in beaing in the Smallest Number² I have many reasons for my Expressions first I did my duty and Discharged my Contiance and Should I be Ashamed in doing my Duty Surly No Suppose when I undertook to get a Vote to Send you to Congress I had faild then I Sould have been you know in the Smallest Number Had I reason to have been Ashamed I think Not I Cannot tell how you would have felt for me then but I Should have Gloryed in my Exertions. and I Now Glory in Acting the Minds of my Constitutants thus in Short I have told you Some of the Many reasons for my Beaing Glad that my Name Stands where it does

and I find Nothing in all the fine Arguments you Mention to make me alter my mind. However I hope I Shall Not affront you when I Observe to you that your Sentiments are those of a Lawyer.

you are Now in postn. a Wig in office is often a Tory out My Dear Sir I Shall not Attempt to Strive to alter your Mind yet I think it will go down Corese with the people but Let us leave this Disagreeable Subject

you Never inform'd me of your Health hope you not forget it in your Next which I Expe. to be Soon

No answer is given to the Governor's Address³ this Shew the Sence of the House but this was Disagreeable to me I Cannot Tell how it will Please the People I Cannot Yet Say what Sutes them Sutes me I hope allways to Liv in a Republicken Government—

Remember me to our Friend

[P.S.] You may Depend upon it that you do not Get the Truth by the papers all the Augermentall parts are left out on one Side this from the Printers I Cannot Stand to the Judgment they frame of me therefore I appeal to the People who heard

1. RC, Thatcher Papers, MeHi.

2. See Nasson to Thatcher, 8 February (RCS:Mass., 1649).

3. See RCS:Mass., 1664–67.

Nathaniel Gorham to Henry Knox
Boston, 25 March¹

Your esteemed favour on Saturday I received—I am much obliged by your communications—I wish you had been in better spirits and had been able to use stronger language respecting the new Government. we must hope for the best do give me every information you can especially if the prospect brightens—

I am informed that Mr Maddison is gone to Virginia do let me know whether he is chosen—and how it is with Col Mason²—I have had some thoughts of writing to him & to Mr Randolph giving them a state of things here & what is to be expected if the plan does not take effect.

The utmost prudence has been necessary to keep things quiet in our Legislature, any one inflamatory step woud have done infinite mischiefs. but they will be up tomorrow or next day³—The publication of the papers Mr King sent me respecting Rhode Island would have been injurious—and I am not clear that it will do any good to publish them at present—every thing that tends to irritate is by every means to be avoided⁴—

Mr Oliver Phelps & myself have made the State an offer for the Western Land⁵—vizt. £230000 in State paper—but as they expect a much larger sum we have no expectation of purchasing—The Assembly have spent two or three days in disputing how to conduct that business & have not yet come to a conclusion—

1. RC, Emmet Collection, NN. The letter has no addressee, but it was probably written to Henry Knox, with whom Gorham corresponded regularly.

2. Virginia delegate to Congress James Madison left New York City on 3 or 4 March to return home. He was elected to the Virginia Convention from Orange County on 24

March; Antifederalist George Mason was elected from Stafford County on 10 March (RCS:Va., 595-606, 613-14).

3. For controversial issues in the legislative session, see RCS:Mass., 1657-58, 1664-67.

4. See Gorham to Knox, 9 March (RCS:Mass., 1674, note 2).

5. On 1 April 1788 the legislature contracted to sell the rights to these western lands to a group led by Gorham and Phelps.

Independent Chronicle, 3 April¹

Extract of a letter from a Gentleman, in one of the Southern States, to his friend in this town, dated March 1, 1788.

“The present calm in Europe, I am well satisfied, will not be of long duration. All accounts agree that the people of Great-Britain, are much dissatisfied with the advantages France gained of them in the late contest, and that they were very much in a temper for *war*; and will it not be extremely difficult for us to remain neuter and pursue our true interest, unless we shall have a *federal government established* adequate to the regulations of our national affairs, and to controuling effectually the conduct of our own citizens.

“The adoption of the proposed constitution in Massachusetts, has been generally spoken of here, and I believe in the other States, as the decision of the great question; and the principal characters in the opposition, have expressed themselves in favour of adopting the plan in the form in which it was adopted in Massachusetts, carrying the recommended amendments, rather farther than she has done: and many of the ablest supporters of the plan have declared their readiness to meet the opposition on this ground.”

1. Reprinted: *Salem Mercury*, 8 April; *Hampshire Gazette*, 9 April (first paragraph only); *Hampshire Chronicle*, 9 April; *New Hampshire Gazette*, 9 April; *Cumberland Gazette*, 10 April; Exeter, N.H., *Freeman's Oracle*, 11 April.

Editors' Note The State Elections 7 April-29 May

Under the state Constitution, the first Monday in April (in this year, 7 April) was appointed for the elections of governor, lieutenant governor, and state senators. Since John Hancock, the incumbent, was certain to win reelection, little attention was paid to the governor's race. Because Hancock had, at the request of Federalists, proposed recommendatory amendments in the state Convention, Federalists did not run a candidate against him. Henry Jackson declared that “Governour Hancock stands firm & well. nothing but the *King of terrors* [Job 18:14] can remove him, he never was higher in the estimation of the people than

at this moment" (to Henry Knox, 30 March, Mfm:Mass.). Despite Elbridge Gerry's alleged acquiescence to Massachusetts ratification (RCS: Mass., 1695-96), Antifederalists ran him as their gubernatorial candidate. Gerry himself was a reluctant candidate. He did not consider the governorship "a desirable object," explaining that "the convulsions of the public augur no good, & happy is the individual who has least to do with them. I expect they will terminate in a civil war & ruin to the country must be the consequence." Hancock's election, Gerry believed, would not be an unfortunate circumstance (to Samuel Russell Gerry, 6 April, Mfm:Mass.).

The gubernatorial election was a landslide victory for Hancock, who received 17,842 votes (81%) of the 22,141 votes cast. Gerry got only 4,145 votes (19%). Only one of the forty-three towns carried by Gerry had voted for ratification in the state Convention. Rufus King rejoiced that "Mr. Gerry is elected to no Office" (to James Madison, 25 May, Rutland, *Madison*, XI, 57).

With the death in February of the incumbent, Thomas Cushing, the race for lieutenant governor was hotly contested. Federalists divided between Samuel Adams and Benjamin Lincoln; Antifederalists supported James Warren. Henry Jackson worried that Federalists were not united in one candidate; therefore, "it is impossible to determine which or if any one will be chosen by the People" (to Henry Knox, 6 April, Mfm:Mass. See also Jackson to Knox, 30 March, Mfm:Mass.). If the vote were split between Adams and Lincoln, it was possible that neither would obtain the necessary majority needed for election. Campaign items filled the newspapers, many of them dealing with Adams and Lincoln. Warren apparently had little chance of winning; he was too closely tied to Shaysites. Lincoln was labeled a tool of an aristocratic junto and his military background, especially his membership in the Society of the Cincinnati, was attacked. Adams was accused of being a public defaulter and of dictatorially presiding over the state Senate.

Of the 21,096 votes cast for lieutenant governor, Lincoln received 10,204 (48%), Warren, 6,157 (29%), Adams, 3,495 (17%), Gerry, 676 (3%), and other candidates, 564. According to Federalist Stephen Higginson, Lincoln failed to get a majority (or 10,549 votes) because of the "base conduct" of some of Adams's friends during the election (to Nathan Dane, 22 May, Mfm:Mass.). John Quincy Adams claimed that Warren got many insurgent and Antifederalist votes because they considered him "in a manner as their head" (Diary, 25 April, Mfm:Mass.). Since no candidate received a majority of the votes cast, under the state Constitution the election had to be decided by the state legislature (Thorpe, III, 1900, 1904).

The elections for the Senate also went well for Federalists, as they improved on the majority they held in the previous legislature. According to Theodore Sedgwick, Federalists now controlled at least two-thirds of the Senate (to Henry Van Schaack, 29 May, Mfm:Mass.). Of the forty senators chosen, twenty-four had served as Massachusetts Convention delegates. Nineteen of the twenty-four had voted for ratification. Two of the ratifiers, Caleb Strong and Dummer Sewall, respectively, replaced William Bodman and incumbent senator Samuel Thompson, two of the Convention's leading Antifederalists.

On election day, 7 April, John Quincy Adams noted in his diary that "The revolution that has taken place in sentiments within one twelve month past must be astonishing to a person unacquainted, with the weaknesses, the follies, and the vices of human nature. The very men, who at the last election declared the Commonwealth would be ruined if Mr Hancock was chosen, have now done every thing to get him in, and the other side are equally capricious. We have not yet got sufficiently settled to have stated parties; but we shall soon I have no doubt obtain the blessing" (Allen, *JQA Diary*, II, 387).

Several weeks later, on 1 May, a correspondent of the Providence *United State Chronicle* noted "That the Re-election of the present worthy Chief Magistrate of Massachusetts, his Excellency Governor HANCOCK—the Election of General LINCOLN for Lieutenant-Governor—and the Certainty of there being a Majority of the new Senators, *federal Men*, and of Course Friends to good Government,—all which is now beyond a Doubt, must give every Friend to America great Satisfaction, and excite the most pleasing Sensations.—It must convince every candid Mind, that *Antifederalism* is on the Decline; and that a Majority of that respectable State, in Numbers, as well as in Wealth, are Friends to good Government; and that they will *support* the Federal Constitution—*any Suggestions of OUR ANTI's to the contrary notwithstanding.*" (See also Henry Knox to Jeremiah Wadsworth, New York, 27 April, and Samuel A. Otis to George Thatcher, New York, 18 May, [CC:712, 749].)

In the May elections Federalists were also successful in electing members of the state House of Representatives. Theodore Sedgwick estimated that Federalists controlled at least two-thirds of the House (to Henry Van Schaack, 29 May, Mfm:Mass.). In the previous House of Representatives, according to Benjamin Lincoln, Antifederalists "could carry any vote." "There cannot be a doubt," Lincoln continued, "but if it had been with them to determine the question they would instantly have rejected the constitution with triumph—In the present house it has I am confident a great majority in its favor, much greater than it

had in the convention" (to George Washington, 3 June, Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 310).

Because no one had received a majority of the votes cast for lieutenant governor on 7 April, that election was, according to the state constitution, shifted to the newly elected legislature. On 28 May the Senate elected Samuel Phillips, Jr., as its president and the House elected Theodore Sedgwick as its speaker. Both ardent Federalists, these men replaced Samuel Adams and James Warren, respectively. Warren had not been reelected to the House from Milton. Adams was reelected a senator, but on 29 May the legislature appointed him to a seat on the Council. On the same day the House nominated Lincoln and Warren as candidates for the lieutenant governorship, and the Senate, by a vote of 20 to 8, elected Lincoln. Theodore Foster of Providence, a native of Massachusetts, congratulated his brother "on the Federal and happy Appearance of Polliticks in our Native State," while Henry Van Schaack told his brother that "Indeed federalism has gained so amazingly that the Constitution is not even opposed in private conversation" (Foster to Dwight Foster, 2 June; and Van Schaack to Peter Van Schaack, 21 June, both Mfm:Mass. See also Nathaniel Gorham to George Washington, 5 July, Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 372.).

Consider Arms, Malachi Maynard, and Samuel Field: Dissent to the Massachusetts Convention and Commentaries upon this Dissent, Hampshire Gazette, 9 April–4 June

On 6 February three Hampshire County delegates to the Massachusetts Convention—Samuel Field of Deerfield and Consider Arms and Malachi Maynard of Conway—voted against ratification. Unlike some Antifederalists, the three men persisted in their opposition to the Constitution, and on 9 and 16 April they published their reasons of dissent in the *Hampshire Gazette*, one of the county's two newspapers. No newspaper reprinted their dissent. "Philanthrop" responded to the dissent in the *Gazette* on 23 April, and, in turn, "Philanthrop" was answered by "Phileleutheros" in the *Gazette* on 21 May and 4 June (see below).

The three dissenters had been controversial figures for several years. During the Revolution, Field and Arms were Loyalists, while Maynard was a patriot. After the suppression of Shays's Rebellion, Arms and Maynard were among the 790 insurgents who subscribed the oath of allegiance to Massachusetts.

Samuel Field (1743–1800), a graduate of Yale College (1762), was variously a divinity student, lawyer, merchant, farmer, and poet. A Sandemanian, Field believed that it was his Christian duty to be obedient to the king. Consequently, he opposed the Revolution but remained neutral during the fighting. Field represented Deerfield in the House of Representatives, 1773–74, 1791–92; he was a town selectman, 1782, 1791; moderator, 1783–84; and clerk, 1791. Consider Arms (1736–1792), a farmer and large landholder, was Conway town

clerk and treasurer, 1767-75; selectman, 1767, 1774; assessor, 1767, 1770-74; and representative, 1788-89. Although elected to the Massachusetts First Provincial Congress in 1774, Arms did not attend. Malachi Maynard (1746-1824), a farmer, was Conway town assessor, 1781-82, 1784, 1786-87, 1792, 1794-99, 1803; selectman, 1782-83, 1797-99; treasurer, 1784-96, 1800-1811, 1816; and representative, 1799-1801.

Consider Arms, Malachi Maynard, and Samuel Field: Dissent to the Massachusetts Convention, Hampshire Gazette, 9, 16 April

MR. PRINTER, We the Subscribers being of the number, who did not assent to the ratification of the Federal Constitution, under consideration in the late State Convention, held at Boston, to which we were called by the suffrages of the corporations to which we respectively belong—beg leave, through the channel of your paper, to lay before the public in general, and our constituents in particular, the reasons of our dissent, and the principles which governed us in our decision of this important question.

Fully convinced, ever since the late revolution, of the necessity of a firm, energetic government, we should have rejoiced in an opportunity to have given our assent to such an one; and should in the present case, most cordially have done it, could we at the same time [have] been happy to have seen the liberties of the people and the rights of mankind properly guarded and secured. We conceive that the very notion of government carries along with it the idea of justice and equity, and that the whole design of instituting government in the world, was to preserve men's properties from rapine, and their bodies from violence and bloodshed.

These propositions being established, we conceive must of necessity produce the following consequence, viz. That every constitution or system, which does not quadrate with this original design, is not government, but in fact a subversion of it.

Having premised thus much, we proceed to mention some things in this constitution, to which we object, and to enter into an enquiry, whether, and how far they coincide with those simple and original notions of government beforementioned.

In the first place—as direct taxes are to be apportioned according to the numbers in each state, and as Massachusetts has none in it but what are declared freemen, so the whole, blacks as well as whites, must be numbered; this must therefore operate against us, as two fifths of the slaves in the southern states are to be left out of the numeration; consequently, three Massachusetts infants will increase the tax equal to five sturdy, full grown negroes of theirs, who work every day in the

week for their masters, saving the Sabbath, upon which they are allowed to get something for their own support. We can see no justice in this way of apportioning taxes; neither can we see any good reason why this was consented to on the part of our delegates.

We suppose it next to impossible that every individual in this vast continental union, should have his wish with regard to every single article, composing a frame of government; and therefore, although we think it more agreeable to the principles of republicanism, that elections should be annual; yet as the elections in our own state government are so, we did not view it so dangerous to the liberties of the people, that we should have rejected the constitution merely on account of the biennial elections of the representatives, had we been sure that the people have any security, even of this; but this we could [not] find. For although it is said, that "the House of Representatives shall be chosen every second year, by the people of the several states," &c. and that "the times, places and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives, shall be prescribed in each state by the legislature thereof;" yet all this is wholly superseded by a subsequent provision, which empowers Congress at any time to enact a law, whereby such regulations may be altered, except as to the places of chusing senators. Here we conceive the people may be very materially injured, and in time reduced to a state of as abject vassallage, as any people were under the controul of the most mercenary despot, that ever *tarnished* the pages of history. The depravity of human nature, illustrated by examples from history, will warrant us to say, it may be possible, if not probable, that the Congress may be composed of men, who will wish to burthen and oppress the people. In such case, will not their inventions be fruitful enough to devise occasions for postponing the elections? And if they can do this once, they can twice—if they can twice they can thrice, so by degrees render themselves absolute and perpetual. Or, if they choose, they have another expedient; they can alter the place of holding elections. They can say, whatever the legislature of this state may order to the contrary, that all the elections of our representatives shall be made at Mechias, or at Williamstown; consequently, nine-tenths of the people will never vote. And if this should be thought a measure favourable to their re-election, or the election of some tool for their mercenary purposes, we doubt not it will be thus ordered. But says the advocates for the constitution, "it is not likely this will ever happen; we are not to expect our rulers will ever proceed to a wanton exercise of the powers given them." But what reason have we more than past ages, to expect that we shall be blessed with impeccable rulers? we think not any. Although it has been said that every generation grows wiser and wiser, yet we have no reason to think they

grow better and better. And therefore the probability lies upon the dark side. Does not the experience of past ages teach, that men have generally exercised all the powers they had given them, and even have usurped upon them, in order to accomplish their own sinister and avaricious designs, whenever they thought they could do it with impunity? This we presume will not be denied. And it appeared to us that the arguments made use of by the favourers of the constitution, in the late Convention at Boston, proceeded upon the plan of righteousness in those who are to rule over us, by virtue of this new form of government. But these arguments, we confess, could have no weight with us, whilst we judged them to be founded altogether upon a slippery *perhaps*.

We are sensible, that in order to the due administration of government, it is necessary that certain powers should be delegated to the rulers, from the people. At the same time we think they ought carefully to guard against giving so much as will enable those rulers, by that means, at once, or even in process of time, to render themselves absolute and despotic. This we think is the case with the form of government lately submitted to our consideration. We could not, therefore, acting uprightly, consulting our own good and the good of our constituents, give our assent unto it. We could not then, we still cannot see, that because people are many times guilty of crimes, and deserving of punishment, that it from thence follows the authority ought to have power to punish them when they are not guilty, or to punish the innocent with the guilty without discrimination, which amounts to the same thing. But this we think in fact to be the case as to this federal constitution. For the Congress, whether they have provocation or not, can at any time order the elections in any or all the states, to be conducted in such manner as wholly to defeat and render entirely nugatory the intention of those elections, and convert that which was considered and intended to be the palladium of the liberties of the people—the grand bulwark against any invasion upon them, into a formidable engine, by which to overthrow them all, and thus involve them in the depth of misery and distress. But it was pled by some of the ablest advocates of the constitution, that if Congress should exercise such powers to the prejudice of the people (and they did not deny but they could if they should be disposed) they (the people) would not suffer it. They would have recourse to the *ultima ratio* the *dernier resort* of the oppressed—the *sword*.

But it appeared to us a piece of *superlative incongruity* indeed! that the people, whilst in the full and indefeasible possession of their liberties and privileges, should be so very profuse, so very liberal in the disposal of them, as consequently to place themselves in a predicament

miserable to an extreme—so wretched indeed, that they may at once be reduced to the sad alternative of yielding themselves vassals into the hands of a venal and corrupt administration, whose only wish may be to aggrandize themselves and families—to wallow in luxury and every species of discipation, and riot upon the spoils of the community; or take up the sword and involve their country in all the horrors of a civil war—the consequence of which, we think, we may venture to augur will more firmly rivet their shackles, and end in the entailment of vassallage to their posterity. We think this by no means can fall within the description of government beforementioned: Neither can we think these suggestions merely chimerical, or that they proceed from an over heated enthusiasm in favour of republicanism; neither yet from an ill-placed detestation of aristocracy; but from the apparent danger the people are in by establishing this constitution. When we take a forward view of the proposed Congress, seated in the federal city, ten miles square, fortified and replenished with all kinds of military stores, and every implement—with a navy at command on one side, and a land army on the other. We say, when we view them, thus possessed of the sword in one hand and the purse-strings of the people in the other, we can see no security left for them in the enjoyment of their liberties, but what may proceed from the bare possibility, that this supreme authority of the nation may be possessed of virtue and integrity sufficient to influence them in the administration of equal justice and equity among those whom they shall govern. But why should we voluntarily choose to trust our all upon so precarious a tenure as this? We confess it gives us pain to anticipate the future scene: a scene presenting to view miseries so complicated and extreme, that it may be part of the charms of eloquence to extenuate, or the power of art to remove.¹

[16 April] But we pass on to another thing, which (aside from every other consideration) was, and still is an insuperable objection in the way of our assent. This we find in the 9th section under the head of restrictions upon Congress, viz. “The migration or importation of such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit, shall not be prohibited by the Congress, prior to the year one thousand eight hundred and eight,” &c. It was not controverted in the Convention, but owned that this provision was made purely that the southern states might not be deprived of their profits arising from that most *nefarious trade* of enslaving the Africans. The hon. Mr. King himself, who was an assistant in forming this constitution, in discoursing upon the slave trade, in the late Convention at Boston, was pleased to design it by this epithet, *nefarious*, which carries with it the idea of something peculiarly wicked and abominable:² and indeed we think it deserving of this and every odious epithet which our language affords, descriptive

of the iniquity of it. This being the case, we were naturally led to enquire why we should establish a constitution, which gives licence to a measure of this sort—How is it possible we could do it consistent with our ideas of government? consistent with the principles and documents we endeavour to inculcate upon others? It is a standing law in the kingdom of Heaven, “Do unto others as ye would have others do unto you.”³ This is the royal law—this we often hear inculcated upon others. But had we given our affirmative voice in this case, could we have claimed to ourselves that consistent line of conduct, which marks the path of every honest man? Should we not rather have been guilty of a contumelious repugnancy, to what we profess to believe is equitable and just? Let us for once bring the matter home to ourselves, and summons up our own feelings upon the occasion, and hear the simple sober verdict of our own hearts, were we in the place of those unhappy Africans—this is the test, the proper *touch-stone* by which to try the matter before us. Where is the man, who under the influence of sober dispassionate reasoning, and not void of natural affection, can lay his hand upon his heart and say, I am willing my sons and my daughters should be torn from me and doomed to perpetual slavery? We presume that man is not to be found amongst us: And yet we think the consequence is fairly drawn, that this is what every man ought to be able to say, who voted for this constitution. But we dare say this will never be the case here, so long as the country has power to repel force by force. Notwithstanding this we will practise this upon those who are destitute of the power of repulsion: from whence we conclude it is not the tincture of a skin, or any disparity of features that are necessarily connected with slavery, and possibly may therefore fall to the lot of some who voted it, to have the same measure measured unto them which they have measured unto others. If we could once make it our own case, we should soon discover what distress & anxiety, what poignant feelings it would produce in our own breasts, to have our infants torn from the bosoms of their tender mothers—indeed our children of all ages, from infancy to manhood, arrested from us by a banditti of lawless ruffians, in defiance of all the laws of humanity, and carried to a country far distant, without any hopes of their return—attended likewise with the cutting reflection, that they were likely to undergo all those indignities, those miseries, which are the usual concomitants of slavery. Indeed when we consider the depredations committed in Africa, the cruelties exercised towards the poor captivated inhabitants of that country on their passage to this—crowded by droves into the holds of ships, suffering what might naturally be expected would result from scanty provisions, and inelastic infectious air, and after their arrival, drove like brutes from market to market, *branded* on their naked *bodies* with *hot*

irons, with the initial letters of their masters names—fed upon the entrails of beasts like swine in the slaughter-yard of a butcher; and many other barbarities, of which we have documents well authenticated: then put to the hardest of labour, and to perform the vilest of drudges—their master (or rather *usurpers*) by far less kind and benevolent to them, than to their horses and their hounds. We say, when we consider these things (the recollection of which gives us pain) conscience applauds the decision we have made, and we feel that satisfaction which arises from acting agreeable to its dictates. When we hear those barbarities pled for—When we see them voted for, (as in the late Convention at Boston) when we see them practised by those who denominate themselves Christians, we are presented with something truly *heterogeneous*—something *monstrous* indeed! Can we suppose this line of conduct keeps pace with the rule of right? Do such practices coincide with the plain and simple ideas of government beforementioned? By no means. We could wish it might be kept in mind, that the very notion of government is to protect men in the enjoyment of those privileges to which they have a natural, therefore an indefeasible right; and not to be made an engine of rapine, robbery and murder. This is but establishing inequity, by law founded on usurpation. Establishing this constitution is, in our opinion[,] establishing the most ignominious kind of theft, man-stealing, and so heinous and aggravated was this crime considered, by ONE who cannot err, that under the Jewish theocracy it was punished with death.⁴ Indeed what can shew men scarcely more hardened, than being guilty of this crime? for there is *nothing else* they will stick at in order to perpetrate this.

The question therefore—Why should we vote for the establishment of this system? recoils upon us armed with treple force—force which sets at defiance, the whole power of sophistry, employed for the defence of those, who by a “cursed thirst for gold,”⁵ are prompted on to actions, which cast an indelible stain upon the character of the human species—actions at which certain quadrupeds, were they possessed of Organs for the purpose, would discover a BLUSH.

But we were told by an honourable gentleman who was one of the framers of this Constitution, that the two souther[n]most states, absolutely refused to confederate at all, except they might be gratified in this article.⁶ What then? Was this an argument sufficient to induce us to give energy to this article, thus fraught with iniquity? By no means. But we were informed by that gentleman, further that those two states pled, that they had lost much of their property during the late war. Their slaves being either taken from them by the British troops, or they themselves taking the liberty of absconding from them, and therefore

they must import more, in order to make up their losses. To this we say they lost no property, because they never had any in them, however much money they might have paid for them. For we look upon it, every man is the sole proprietor of his own liberty, and no one but himself hath a right to convey it unless by some crime adequate to the punishment, it should be made forfeit, and so by that means becomes the property of government: But this is by no means the case in the present instance. And we cannot suppose a vendee, can acquire property in any thing, which at the time of purchase, he knew the vendor had no right to convey. This is an acknowledgment, we are constrained to make as a tribute due to justice and equity. But suppose they had lost real property; so have we; and indeed where is the man, but will tell us he has been a great looser by means of the war? And shall we from thence argue that we have a right to make inroads upon another nation, pilfer and rob them, in order to compensate ourselves for the losses we have sustained by means of a war, in which they had been utterly neutral? Truly upon this plan of reasoning it is lawful thus to do, and had we voted the constitution as it stands, we must have given countenance to conduct equally criminal, and more so, if possible. Such arguments as the above seem to be calculated and designed for idiotcy. We however acknowledge, we think them rather an affront, even upon that.

The hon. Gentleman above named, was asked the question—What would be the consequence, suppose one or two states, upon any principle, should refuse confederating? His answer was—“The consequence is plain and easy—they would be compelled to it; not by force of arms; but all commerce with them would be interdicted; their property would be seized in every port they should enter, and by law made forfeit: and this line of conduct would soon reduce them to order.” This method of procedure perhaps no one would be disposed to reprehend; and if eleven, or even nine states were agreed, could they not, ought they not to take this method, rather than to make a compact with them, by which they give countenance, nay even bind themselves (as the case may be) to aid and assist them in spor[t]ing with the liberties of others, and accumulating to themselves fortunes, by making thousands of their fellow creatures miserable. To animadvert upon the British manœuvres at that time, would not fall within the compass of our present design. But that the Africans had a right to depart, we must assert, and are able to prove it from the highest authority perhaps that this Commonwealth does or ever did afford. In a printed pamphlet, published in Boston in the year 1772, said to be the report of a Committee, and unanimously voted by said town, and ordered to be sent to the several towns in the state for their consideration. In said pamphlet we find the following

axiom, which we will quote verbatim,—page 2d—“All men have a right to remain in a state of nature as long as they please, and in case of intolerable oppression, civil or religious, to leave the society they belong to, and enter into another.”⁷ If it can by any kind of reasoning be made to appear, that this authority is not pertinently adduced in the case before us, then we think it can by the same reasoning be investigated, that black is white and white is black—that oppression and freedom are exactly similar, and benevolence and malignity synonymous terms.

The advocates for the constitution seemed to suppose, that this restriction being laid upon Congress only for a term of time, is the “fair dawning of liberty.” That “it was a glorious acquisition towards the final abolition of slavery.”⁸ But how much more glorious would the acquisition have been, was such abolition to take place the first moment the constitution should be established. If we had said that after the expiration of a certain term the practice should cease, it would have appeared with a better grace; but this is not the case, for even after that, it is wholly optional with the Congress, whether they abolish it or not. And by that time we presume the enslaving the Africans will be accounted by far less an inconsiderable affair than it is at present: therefore conclude from good reasons, that the “*nefarious practice*” will be continued and increased as the inhabitants of the country shall be found to increase.

This practice of enslaving mankind is in direct opposition to a fundamental maxim of truth, on which our state constitution is founded, viz. “All men are born free and equal.”⁹ This is our motto. We have said it—we cannot go back. Indeed no man can justify himself in enslaving another, unless he can produce a commission under the broad seal of Heaven, purporting a licence therefor from him who created all men, and can therefore dispose of them at his pleasure.

We would not be thought to detract from the character of any person, but to us it is somewhat nearly paradoxical, that some of our leading characters in the law department (especially in the western counties) after having (to their honour be it spoken) exerted themselves to promote, and finally to effect the emancipation of slaves, should now turn directly about, and exhibit to the world principles diametrically opposite thereto: that they should now appear such strenuous advocates for the establishment of that diabolical trade of importing the Africans.¹⁰ But said some, it is not we who do it—and compared it to entering into an alliance with another nation, for some particular purpose; but we think this by no means a parallel. We are one nation, forming a constitution for the whole, and suppose the states are under obligation, whenever this constitution shall be established, reciprocally

to aid each other in defence and support of every thing to which they are entitled thereby, right or wrong. Perhaps we may never be called upon to take up arms for the defence of the southern states, in prosecuting this abominable traffick.

It is true at present there is not much danger to be apprehended, and for this plain reason are those innocent Africans (as to us) pitched upon to drag out their lives in misery and chains. Such is their local situation—their unpolished manners—their inexperience in the art of war, that those invaders of the rights of mankind know they can, at present, perpetrate those enormities with impunity. But let us suppose for once, a thing which is by no means impossible, viz. that those Africans should rise superior to all their local and other disadvantages, and attempt to avenge themselves for the wrongs done them? Or suppose some potent nation should interfere in their behalf, as France in the cause of America, must we not rise and resist them? Would not the Congress immediately call forth the whole force of the country, if needed, to oppose them, and so attempt more closely to rivet their manacles upon them, and in that way perpetuate the miseries of those unhappy people? This we think the natural consequence which will flow from the establishment of this constitution, and that it is not a forced, but a very liberal construction of it. It was said that “the adoption of this Constitution, would be ominous of much good, and betoken the smiles of Heaven upon the country.” But we view the matter in a very different light; we think this lurch for unjust gains, this lust for slavery, portentous of much evil in America, for the cry of innocent blood, which hath been shed in carrying on this execrable commerce, hath undoubtedly reached to the Heavens, to which that cry is always directed, and will draw down upon them vengeance adequate to the enormity of the crime. To what other cause, than a full conviction, of the moral evil in this practice, together with some fearful forebodings of punishment therefor arising in the minds of the Congress in the year 1774, can it be imputed, that drew from them at that time, (at least an implied) confession of guilt, and a solemn, explicit promise of reformation? This is a fact, but lest it should be disputed, we think it most safe for ourselves to lay before our readers, an extract from a certain pamphlet, entitled “Extracts from the votes and proceedings of the American Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, on the 5th of September, 1774, &c.” In the 22d page of this same pamphlet, we find the following paragraph, viz. “Second. That we will neither import, nor purchase any slave imported, after the first day of December next; after which time we will wholly discontinue the slave-trade, and will neither be concerned in it ourselves, nor will we hire our vessels nor

sell our commodities or manufactures to those who are concerned in it.”¹¹ The inconsistency of opposing slavery, which they thought designed for themselves, and by clandestine means, procuring others to enslave at the same time—it is very natural to suppose would stare them in the face, and at all times guard them against breaking their resolution. Hence it appears to us unaccountable strange, that any person who signed the above resolve, should sign the federal constitution. For do they not hold up to view principles diametrically opposite? Can we suppose that what was morally evil in the year 1774, has become in the year 1788, morally good? Or shall we change evil into good and good into evil, as often as we find it will serve a turn? We cannot but say the conduct of those who associated in the year 1774 in the manner above, and now appear advocates for this new constitution, is highly inconsistent, although we find such conduct has the celebrated names of a *Washington* and an *Adams* to grace it. And this may serve as a reason why we could not be wrought upon by another argument, which was made use of in the Convention in favour of the constitution, viz. *the weight of names*—a solid argument with some people who belonged to the Convention, and would have induced them to comply with measures of almost any kind. It was urged that the gentlemen who composed the federal Convention, were men of the greatest abilities, integrity and erudition, and had been the greatest contenders for freedom. We suppose it to be true, and that they have exemplified it, by the manner, in which they have earnestly dogmatized for liberty—But notwithstanding we could not view this argument, as advancing any where towards infallibility—because long before we entered upon the business of the Convention, we were by some means or other possessed with a notion (and we think from good authority) that “*great men are not always wise.*”¹² And to be sure the weight of a name adduced to give efficacy to a measure where liberty is in dispute, cannot be so likely to have its intended effect, when the person designed by that name, at the same time he is brandishing his sword, in the behalf of freedom for himself—is likewise tyrannizing over two or three hundred miserable Africans, as free born as himself.

In fine we view this constitution as a curious piece of political mechanism, fabricated in such manner as may finally despoil the people of all their privileges; and we are fully satisfied, that had the same system been offered to the people in the time of the contest with Great-Britain, the person offering the same would not have met the approbation of those who now appear the most strenuous advocates for it. We cannot slip this opportunity of manifesting our disgust at the unfair methods which were taken in order to obtain a vote in this state, which perhaps

was the means of producing the *small* majority of *nineteen*, out of nearly three hundred and sixty members. What those methods were is well known. It is past dispute that the opposers of the constitution were, in sundry instances, treated in a manner utterly inconsistent with that respect which is due to every freeborn citizen of the commonwealth, especially when acting in the capacity of a representative.

Notwithstanding what has been said, we would not have it understood, that we mean to be disturbers of the peace, should the states receive the constitution; but on the contrary, declare it our intention, as we think it our duty, to be subject to "the powers that be,"¹³ wherever our lot may be cast.

CONSIDER ARMS, }
MALICHI MAYNARD, } Conway.
SAMUEL FIELD, Deerfield.

Philanthrop

Hampshire Gazette, 23 April

Mr. BUTLER, In your two last papers, I observed the reasons assigned by Messrs. *Field, Arms* and *Maynard*, for giving their dissent to the federal Constitution. I am at a loss to conjecture what motives occasioned their publication; the question referred to the Convention was of great national concern, upon which honest minds might entertain different sentiments, and as the greater number of delegates from this county, divided with the abovementioned gentlemen, they could have no need of personal vindication. Their objections have adorned the news papers for several months past, and often received answers, which to many persons appeared satisfactory; they can therefore have no claim to novelty, unless from the spirited manner in which they are illustrated. The gentlemen had an opportunity of stating them in the Convention, with all the colouring they could wish, and no doubt they improved it—They declare that should the states receive the constitution, they mean not to be disturbers of the peace, and I should therefore hope they did not wish to deserve that character before the opinion of the other states could be known. But they say, that unfair methods were taken to obtain a vote in this state, which perhaps was the means of producing a majority in favour of the constitution.—This indeed is like the language of persons disputing a vote, and if designed for that purpose, their views respecting the public peace are obvious. I never before heard a suggestion that unfair methods were practised, and doubt whether friends to peace would be very forward to spread such insinuations. But whatever were the gentlemen's motives, their observations may deserve some animadversion.

They object that direct taxes are to be apportioned according to the number in each state—two fifths of the slaves in the southern states being left out of the numeration. The gentlemen well know that the rule of apportioning taxes agreed to in the confederation, was found by experience to be wholly impracticable. Congress therefore, several years since, recommended to the several states to substitute in its place the rule proposed in the new Constitution; eleven of the states, of which number this was one, agreed to this alteration;¹⁴ and unless the gentlemen can devise a better rule, than Congress or the people of this state have been able, after long reflection, to discover, they have no great reason to complain. But they say that three Massachusetts infants will increase the tax equal to five sturdy full grown negroes. A man of candour would not have supposed all the inhabitants of Massachusetts to be infants, or that all the negroes in the southern states were sturdy and full grown. However, there is no principle more fully established, than that taxation and representation ought to be in proportion. If then the southern states must pay as much for their negroes, as the northern states for their white persons, they would be intitled to the same rule of representation in Congress; to this proportion, no doubt the southern states would agree, but the gentlemen must be convinced that the northern never would.

They observe, that the people have no security of biennial elections, as Congress may alter the time, place and manner of holding elections; but surely the gentlemen will not pretend, that because Congress may alter the time for holding elections, that therefore they may alter the time for which the persons elected shall serve. They further say, that Congress may direct all the elections to be made at Machias or Williamstown—so may the General Court remove themselves to Machias, and direct all the causes arising in the state to be tried by courts of law at that place. But will prudent men therefore endeavour to alarm the people with [---] [---]nsions, that such ridiculous measures [---] [---] to take place—these can be no da[n]gers? [---] [---]r, so long as Congress or the General Court have common sense.

The gentlemen [---] [---] that by the new constitution the people will give too great powers; that Congress will possess the sword and the purse-strings; but every government which ever existed among men, has possessed them, and without them, government would be unable to answer the purposes of its institution, and protect the citizens. The people have long since given up these powers, either to Congress, or the government of this state, and the new Constitution only proposes a different distribution of them.

There is another objection which the gentlemen declare is insuperable, that Congress may not prohibit the importation of slaves prior to the year 1808; and that the states will be obliged to aid each other in defence and support of every thing, to which they are intitled by the constitution; but are we not already under the most solemn engagements to aid each other in defence and support of every thing, to which we are respectively intitled by the confederation; and by the confederation Congress would never have the power to prohibit the slave trade, the several states retained the right of doing as they pleased in that respect.

The idea that by civil connections, we become partakers of each others sins, I believe is of late date. While this country was connected with Great Britain, we heard nothing from the gentlemen to prove, that the connections ought to be broken because that nation promoted the slave-trade, more than any other people under Heaven. Before the late war, several of the colonies wished to abolish that trade, and passed laws for the purpose, which were negatived by the king; but I presume the gentlemen never urged that as an argument to prove, that we were absolved from our allegiance;¹⁵ if the principle is just, we cannot again be connected with Great Britain for the reasons abovementioned; nor with France, for they have adopted the same policy. Although the European nations, being replenished with white inhabitants, forbid the importation and slavery of negroes at home, yet all of them which have colonies or islands in America, encourage the slave trade. Nor can we be connected even with Connecticut or New-York, for the laws of those states justify slavery; our hand must therefore be against every man, and every man's hand against us.

A few years since, slavery was countenanced by the laws of this state, and many persons imported and held negroes in servitude: but were other persons therefore guilty, who had no concern in the practice, and ever expressed their disapprobation of it. If at that time a man in the state owned a negro, or was guilty of any other *nefarious* practice, and this doctrine of imputed guilt in civil society is just, the gentlemen were bound in conscience to drive the man out of the state, or leave it themselves.

From the printed debates in the Convention it appears, that the advocates for the constitution declared themselves as averse to slavery, as those who opposed it.¹⁶ Notwithstanding which, the gentlemen suggest that the late Convention at Boston voted for the barbarities exercised upon the negroes: and that establishing the constitution, is establishing the most ignominious kind of theft. A very small regard to decency,

would have prevented these and several other gross and unmanly reflections, on the major part of the assembly, which is acknowledged to have been the fullest representation of the people ever known in the state. Should the gentlemen write further on the subject, I hope they will do it with less acrimony; and if their Christian charity, of which they obtain the credit of a full share, compels them to bless the negroes, I hope it will restrain them from cursing the Convention.

Phileleutheros

Hampshire Gazette, 21 May

Quid miseros toties in aperta Pericula Cives, prosius. VIRGIL.¹⁷

I have somewhat to say in regard to a piece under the signature of *Philanthrop*, inserted in the *Hampshire Gazette* of April 23, intended as an answer to the three gentlemen, who have lately published their reasons of dissent from the Federal Constitution—Herein I shall study brevity.

It would seem *Philanthrop* had been for some time in hard labour, and for all that appears to the contrary, his travail is likely to continue; for it seems he has not yet brought forth; and from his complaints, there is no prospect of a speedy delivery; and therefore, according to the common course of things, his dissolution must soon ensue, unless some skilful operator should step in and facilitate the birth. But to drop the metaphor—*Philanthrop* seems to be perplexed, not being able to spy out the cause of the publication of those three gentlemen. And it would seem, he has been as hard put to it to obviate their objections, as to investigate their designs. It matters not, that I know of, to *Philanthrop*, what their intention was. It is evident (if we take his own words for it) that he is by no means assured they had a bad one; for says he, "I am at a loss to conjecture what motives occasioned their publication." Therefore one would think that candour, he recommends to the gentlemen, would have induced him to suppose they had nothing very atrocious in view. In considering this piece, I shall (setting a side sophistry) do pretty much as *Philanthrop* has done, in animadverting upon the objections. I shall not confine myself to order—I think he did not—and if *it should so happen*, I find any thing I cannot confute, I shall follow his example and say nothing about it.

He says, "he hopes if charity obliges them to bless the negroes, it will not lead them to curse the Convention"—this is evidently intended as a sarcasm upon the gentlemen, for vindicating the injured rights of the Africans. Why is it thus? Is it because their colour is not so fashionable in this country as in Africa? Or that their features are not supposed

to be so beautifully arranged as those of the Americans, and therefore not to be treated with that humanity which it is generally thought belongs to white people? Or does Philanthrop suppose, with some scoffers at sacred history, that those Africans did not proceed from the loins of the same parent with himself, and so on that score to be treated like brutes? He seems to charge them with cursing the Convention, only because they said that body voted for those barbarities which are exercised towards the Africans. Does this amount to a curse? can rehearsing a plain matter of fact, concerning any man or body of men, by good logic, be construed into a curse? Did not the Convention vote, that the Congress should not have it in their power to prohibit the slave-trade until the year eighteen hundred and eight? Were they not sensible, therefore, that this trade would be carried on, with all those barbarities annexed to it? Did they not very generally confess that it was a most wicked piece of business? Where then is the great crime in saying such barbarities were voted for? If it is so, let Philanthrop point out the criminality of it, and no doubt he will obtain credence. If he make a charge he ought certainly to adduce some proof to support it. He must be possessed of some entirely new constructed spy-glass, else he never could have spied out curses where there were none. As little ground had he to dream, from any which dropped from the gentlemen, that they had a desire to return back to Great-Britain, as he had to tax them with cursing the Convention. Two constitutions were offered to the people of Massachusetts before one could obtain.¹⁸ Must we infer from thence, that those who opposed the first, did it with a view of becoming subject to Great-Britain! Let him answer, if he please.

I wish, seeing Philanthrop thought fit to take the matter up, that he had made use of less false reasoning—I will give an instance of it. He says, “While under Great-Britain, we heard nothing from the gentlemen, because that nation more than any under heaven, carried on that trade:” and “that whenever a neighbour had imported a slave, their duty was either to drive him out of the country or to quit it themselves.” It would not, one would think, require a degree of discernment far beyond mediocrity, to discover the falacy of this argument. Will the gentleman pretend there is no difference between a man’s being born under a government, in the framing of which, consequently he could have no hand, and in making one himself? If a man in a state of nature assists in forming a constitution, which gives countenance to iniquity and all kinds of cruelty, does he not by his own act incur guilt to his conscience? But if he is born under such a government, where is the guilt? Neither hath he any right to take upon himself the office of an

executioner, and so undertake to punish those who are guilty, as Philanthrop would suppose—all he can have any right to is to remonstrate and exhort. He indeed may share in the calamities which may fall upon the community in consequence thereof; but he has this consolation, that those calamities are not derived through his means, and therefore he cannot share in the guilt.

When a man is called to establish a frame of government, it ought to be such an one as his conscience will justify, or he must give his voice against it. I must say the whole Philanthrop has said on this subject is falacious, from the foundation to the top-stone. His first position seems calculated to deceive the people, whether designedly or not, I do not say—the purport of which is evidently this, that by civil connections people cannot become partakers of each others sins. What is the import of “civil connections?” Let them import what they will, it is evident Philanthrop would have us think, that in establishing this constitution, we have no more connection in the wickedness which the southern states may commit, with our hearty and free consent and engagements to support them in, than we should be with any one nation under heaven in their inequities, provided we had connected with them for the sake of their trade, &c. But these are not parallel—I wish Philanthrop had ingenuity enough to confess it. It is idle for him to pretend, that establishing this constitution is no more than barely establishing certain civil connections with the southern states; was this the case I would agree with him. I am sensible America may enter into a treaty and connect with Spain for certain purposes, and still not become partakers in the iniquity of the inquisition. But if America and Spain were about to form themselves into one politic national body, and America should in that case pledge to Spain their lives and fortunes for the support of the inquisition, (^(a)cousin german, to the slave-trade) I should certainly suppose, upon good grounds, they would become partakers of the sin, connected with the inquisition. But lest I should be too lengthy, I shall wave what I have to say further upon Philanthrop’s piece, until another opportunity, only adding my wish, that if he writes again, his sentiments may better agree with his signature.

(a) *Rather twin brother.*

Phileleutheros

Hampshire Gazette, 4 June

Quid miseros toties in aperta pericula cives prosicis? VIRGIL.¹⁹

I have but a word to say at this time to Philanthrop—It would seem by his discourse that he would not be thought a friend to the cruelties

exercised in carrying on the Slave-Trade—but yet rather than lose his darling constitution, he would have that trade carried on—Here I am reminded of some conversation to which I was lately a witness. A gentleman lately conversing upon this matter said he disliked [the?] Slave-Trade, but he would not have the Constitution set aside on that account—he was asked the question whether, if he had a son a slave in Georgia, he would not overset the Constitution if he could? his reply was “Indeed I would”—This I doubt not is the case with Philanthrop, and every other advocate of the Constitution—I could wish him to reconcile this with humanity—perhaps Philanthrop wishes to reap the benefits arising from the Slave-Trade and let the southern States bear the iniquity—I once heard of a certain man who sent a horse to market by his neighbour—the horse was sold and the returns made, which were so much more than the owner expected or thought he was worth, he had doubt upon his mind whether he ought to receive the whole proceeds—he called a council of neighbours to determine the matter—the result upon the whole was, seeing the horse was sold and the pay made, he who sent him to market should keep the amount for which he was sold—and he who sold him, should bear all the sin—this is the only way I can conceive of, for Philanthrop to get out—and a pretty miserable *get out* too, if I rightly judge of the matter—If we cannot connect with the southern states without giving countenance to blood and carnage, and all kinds of fraud and injustice, I say let them go—Often do we see unhappy convicts led forth to execution for only taking the property of another—The Congress by the new Constitution are to make laws for the punishment of piracy and murder upon the high seas—But all this seems only to respect white people—the Africans may be pirated, hacked and tortured, and all with impunity. The killing a negroe in the southern states is no more accounted of, than the killing a dog—this is a fact.

“Is there not? [”] sure there is, “some chosen curse,
 “Some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven,
 “Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the men,”
 Who sport with lives and drain out human blood.²⁰

1. At this point, the dissent is followed by the signatures of the three men and this statement: “*To be concluded in our next.*”

2. Rufus King’s remarks on the “*nefarious*” nature of the slave trade in the Massachusetts Convention have not been preserved.

3. Matthew 7:12 and Luke 6:31.

4. Exodus 21:16.

5. Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 3, line 57: “To what, accursed lust for gold, do you not drive the hearts of men?”

6. No such remarks were recorded in the printed debates for any of the three Constitutional Convention delegates (Nathaniel Gorham, Rufus King, and Caleb Strong).

7. This pamphlet, probably written by Samuel Adams, was published in Boston by both Edes and Gill and T. and J. Fleet. It was entitled *The Votes and Proceedings of the Freeholders and Other Inhabitants of the Town of Boston, in Town Meeting Assembled, According to Law . . .* (Evans 12332). The quoted material is from the first part of the pamphlet: "a State of the *Rights* of the Colonists and of this Province in particular." The Boston town meeting approved the pamphlet, which was based upon a report of a committee of correspondence, and ordered 600 copies distributed throughout Massachusetts.

8. See Convention Debates, 25 January, P.M., and 26 January (RCS:Mass., 1354, 1356, 1358).

9. Article I of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights (1780) states: "All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential, and unalienable rights; among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties; that of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property; in fine, that of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness" (RCS:Mass., 440).

10. The reference is probably to Massachusetts Convention delegates Theodore Sedgwick of Stockbridge and Caleb Strong of Northampton and Easthampton. In 1781 Sedgwick represented and won the freedom of Elizabeth Freeman, a slave known as "Mumbet." Two years later he was a member of a committee of the state House of Representatives that was asked to draw up a bill declaring that slavery had never been legal in Massachusetts. The bill passed the House, but failed in the Senate. Between 1781 and 1783, Strong was involved in two of three cases regarding Quok Walker, a runaway slave hired by another man. Walker's master pursued, caught, and beat him badly. As a result of these cases, Walker was declared free and received damages for the beating. Chief Justice William Cushing, one of the judges in the third case (and also a Massachusetts Convention delegate), in which Strong took no part, declared in his charge to the jury that, under Article I of the state Declaration of Rights (note 9 above), slavery was unconstitutional.

11. This paragraph was part of the Articles of Association adopted by the First Continental Congress on 20 October 1774 (JCC, I, 75-80). The pamphlet (described by the three dissenters) was printed in Philadelphia and then reprinted in many other American towns and cities in 1774 (Evans 13713-36). Two Boston printers published the pamphlet.

12. Job 32:9.

13. Romans 13:1. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."

14. For a discussion of the population amendment (1783) to the Articles of Confederation for altering the manner in which federal expenses were apportioned among the states, see RCS:Mass., 1243, note 5, and 1258, note 3. New Hampshire and Rhode Island were the two states that did not ratify this amendment.

15. In his draft of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson condemned George III for vetoing various colonial acts prohibiting the African slave trade. According to Jefferson, this passage was deleted from the Declaration "in complaisance to South Carolina & Georgia," which wanted to continue the slave trade. The Northern States, asserted Jefferson, accepted the deletion because "they had been pretty considerable carriers" in this trade (CC:Vol. 2, p. 503).

16. See note 8 (above).

17. Actually "*Quid miseris totiens in aperta pericula cives proicis.*" From Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 11, line 360: "Why have you so often driven your luckless countrymen to open dangers."

18. See RCS:Mass., xxv-xxvii.

19. See note 17 (above).

20. Joseph Addison, *Cato. A Tragedy* (1713), Act I, scene 1.

Elbridge Gerry Responds to Maryland "Landholder" X American Herald, 18 April

This essay is the concluding salvo in a long, intertwined newspaper debate among several former Constitutional Convention delegates. In late November and December 1787, Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut began the debate in several numbers of his widely reprinted "Landholder" series. Ellsworth criticized both Elbridge Gerry's actions in the Convention and his objections to the Constitution (CC:295, 316, 371). Writing anonymously, Gerry responded in the *Massachusetts Centinel* on 5 January 1788 (RCS:Mass., 622-23), and Maryland delegate Luther Martin defended Gerry in the *Maryland Journal* on 18 January (CC:460). On 29 February a Maryland "Landholder," possibly Maryland delegate Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, replied to Martin in the *Maryland Journal* (CC:580), and Martin answered in that same newspaper on 7, 18, and 21 March (CC:604, 626, 636). The *Massachusetts Centinel*, 5 April, reprinted the Maryland "Landholder," and on 18 April Gerry responded anonymously in the *American Herald*.

Gerry's 18 April reply, printed at the request of "A Friend and Customer," was reprinted in the *New York Journal*, 30 April; *Hampshire Gazette*, 7 May; and *Salem Mercury*, 20 May. The printer of the *New York Journal* noted that "As the *Connecticut Landholder's* publications are dispersed through the state, it will be useful for the sake of truth to publish" Gerry's reply, while the printer of the *Salem Mercury* wrote that he inserted the reply at the request of a friend and a number of readers.

Unless otherwise noted, Gerry's quotations are taken from the Maryland "Landholder" (CC:580).

TO THE PUBLIC.

An elegant writer, under the signature of "A LANDHOLDER," having, in a series of publications, with a modesty and delicacy *peculiar to himself*, undertaken to instruct members of legislatures, executives, and conventions, in their duty respecting the new constitution, is, in stating facts, *unfortunate*, in being repeatedly *detected in errors*; but his *perseverance therein* does honor "to his magnanimity," and reminds me of Doctor Sangerado (in Gil Blas) who being advised to *alter his practice*, as it was founded on false principles and destructive to his patients, firmly determined to pursue it, *because he had written a book in support of it*.¹ Had our learned author *the modern Sangerado*, confined himself to *facts* and to *reasoning* on the Constitution, he might have continued to write without interruption *from its opposers*, 'till by *instructing others*, he had obtained that instruction which *he* seems to need, or a temporary relief from that incurable malady, the *cacoethes scribendi*;² but his frequent

misrepresentations having exposed him to suspicions that as a disciple of Mandeville,³ he is an advocate for vice, or, that to correct his curiosity, some humourist has palmed on him a spurious history of the proceedings of the federal convention, and exhibited his credulity as a subject of ridicule, it is proper to set him right in facts, which, in almost every instance, he has mis[s]tated.

In a late address to the honorable Luther Martin, Esq. the Landholder has asserted, that Mr. Gerry "uniformly opposed Mr. Martin's principles;" but this is a circumstance *wholly unknown* to Mr. Gerry, until he was informed of it by the *Connecticut Landholder*; indeed Mr. Gerry, from his first acquaintance with Mr. Martin, has "uniformly" had a friendship for him.

This writer has also asserted, "that the day Mr. Martin took his seat in convention, without requesting information, or to be let into the reasons of the adoption of what he might not approve, he opened against them in a speech which held during two days."—But the facts are, *that* Mr. Martin had been a considerable time in convention before he spoke; *that* when he entered into the debates, he appeared not to need "information," as he was fully possessed of the subject; and *that* his speech, if published, would do him great honor.

Another assertion of this famous writer, is, that Mr. Gerry in "a sarcastical reply, admired the strength of Mr. Martin's lungs, and his profound knowledge in the first principles of government;" that "this reply" "left him a prey to the most humiliating reflections; but these did not teach him to bound his future speeches by the lines of moderation; for the very next day he exhibited, without a blush, another specimen of eternal volubility."—This is so *remote* from *truth*, that no such reply was made by Mr. Gerry to Mr. Martin, or to any member of the convention; on the contrary, Mr. Martin, on the first day he spoke, about the time of adjournment, signified to the convention that the heat of the season⁴ and his indisposition prevented his proceeding, and the house adjourned without further debate, or a reply to Mr. Martin from any member whatever.

Again, the Landholder has asserted that Mr. Martin voted "an appeal should lay to the supreme judiciary of the United States for the correction of all errors both in *law* and *fact*," and "agreed to the clause that declares *nine States to be sufficient to put the government in motion*;" and in a note says, "Mr. Gerry agreed with Mr. Martin on these questions." Whether there is any truth in these assertions as they relate to Mr. Martin, he can best determine, but as they respect Mr. Gerry, *they reverse the facts*; for he not only voted against the first proposition (which is not stated by the Landholder, with the accuracy requisite for a *writer*

on government) but contended for jury trials in civil cases, and declared his opinion, that a federal judiciary with the powers abovementioned, would be as oppressive and dangerous, as the establishment of a Star-Chamber.⁵—And as to the clause that “declares nine States to be sufficient to put the government in motion,” Mr. Gerry was so much opposed to it, as to vote against it, in the first instance, and afterwards to move for a reconsideration of it.⁶

The Landholder having in a former publication asserted “that Mr. Gerry introduced a motion, respecting the redemption of old continental money,” and the publick having been informed by a paragraph in the Massachusetts Centinel, No. 32 of vol. 8, as well as by the honorable Mr. Martin, that neither Mr. Gerry, or any other member had introduced such a proposition,⁷ the Landholder now says, that “out of 126 days, Mr. Martin attended only 66,” and then enquires “Whether it is to be presumed, that Mr. Martin could have been minutely informed, of all that happened in convention, and *committees of convention*, during the sixty days of his absence?” and “Why is it that we do not see Mr. M’Henry’s verification of his assertion, who was of the *committee* for considering a provision for the debts of the Union?” But if these enquiries *were intended for subterfuges*, unfortunately for the Landholder, they will not avail him: for, had Mr. Martin not been present at the debates on this subject, the fact is, that Mr. Gerry was not on a committee with Mr. M’Henry,⁸ or with any other person, for considering a provision for the debts of the union, or any provision that related to the subject of old continental money; neither did he make any proposition, in convention, committee, or on any occasion, to any member of convention or other person, respecting the redemption of such money; and the assertions of the Landholder to the contrary, are altogether destitute of the shadow of truth.

The Landholder, addressing Mr. Martin, further says, “Your reply to my second charge against Mr. Gerry, may be soon dismissed: compare his letter to the legislature of his state, with your defence, and you will find, that you have put into his mouth, *objections*⁹ different from any thing it contains, so that if your representation be *true*, his must be *false*.” The *objections* referred to, are those mentioned by Mr. Martin, as being made by Mr. Gerry, against the supreme power of Congress over the militia. Mr. Gerry, in his letter to the legislature, states as an objection, “That some of the powers of the federal legislature are ambiguous and *others*, (meaning the unlimited power of Congress, to keep up a standing army in time of peace, and their entire controul of the militia) are *indefinite* and *dangerous*.”¹⁰ Against both these did Mr. Gerry warmly contend, and why his representations must be *false*, if Mr. Martin’s are

true, which *particularized* what Mr. Gerry's stated *generally*, can only be discovered by such a *profound* reasoner, as the *Connecticut Landholder*.

The vanity of this writer, in supposing that *his* charges would be the subject of constitutional investigation, can only be equalled by his *impertinence*, in interfering with the politics of other States, or by his *ignorance*, in supposing a state convention could take cognizance of such *matters as he calls charges*, and that Mr. Gerry required a *formal defence*, or the *assistance* of his *colleagues*, to defeat the unprovoked and libellous attacks of the *Landholder*, or of any other *unprincipled reviler*.¹¹

The Landholder says, "That Mr. Martin thought *the deputy attorney general of the United States, for the state of Maryland*, destined for a different character, and that inspired him with the hope, that he might derive from a desperate opposition, what he saw no prospect of gaining by a contrary conduct: but the Landholder ventures to predict, that though Mr. Martin was to double his efforts, he would fail in his object." By *this*, we may form some estimate of the *patriotism* of the Landholder, for, whilst he so readily resolves Mr. Martin's conduct into a *manœuvre for office*, he gives too much reason to suppose, that *he himself has no idea of any other motive in conducting politicks*. But how can the Landholder ascertain, that "Mr. Martin thought" the office mentioned "destined for a different character?" Was the Landholder *present* at the *destination*?" if so, it was natural for him, knowing there was a *combination* against Mr. Martin, (however remote this gentleman was from discovering it) to suppose his *accidental* opposition to the *complotters*, proceeded from a *discovery of the plot*.—Surely, the Landholder must have some reason for his conjecture respecting the motives of Mr. Martin's conduct, or be subject to the charge of publishing calumny, *knowing it to be such*. If then, this *great Statesman* was in a secret, which has been long impenetrable, he is now entitled to the honor of giving the public the most important information they have received, concerning, the *origin* of the new constitution: and having candidly informed them *who is not*, he ought to inform *who is to fill that office, and all others* of the new federal government.—It may then, in some measure be ascertained, what individuals have supported the constitution on *principles of patriotism*, and who under this *guise* have been only *squabbling for office*. Perhaps we shall find, that the *Landholder* is to have the *contract* for supplying the *standing army* under the new government, and that many others, who have recurred to *abuse* on this occasion, have *some such happy prospects*: indeed the Landholder puts it beyond doubt, *if we can believe him*, that it was determined in the *privy council* of the federal convention, that however Mr. Martin might advocate the new constitution, *he should not have the office mentioned*: for if this was not the case,

how can the Landholder so roundly assert, that Mr. Martin could have “*no prospect by a contrary conduct of gaining the office, and so remarkably sanguine is the Landholder, that the members of the privy council would be senators of the new Congress, in which case the elections, would undoubtedly be made according to the conventional list of nominations, as that he ventures to predict, tho’ Mr. Martin was to double his efforts, he would fail in his object.*” Thus, whilst *this blazing star of federalism* is taking great pains to hold up Mr. Gerry and Mr. Mason, as having held private meetings, “to aggrandize Old Massachusetts, and the ancient Dominion,” he has confessed enough to shew that *his private meetings were solely to aggrandize himself.*

1. Gerry refers to Alain René Le Sage’s (1668–1747) picaresque novel *Histoire de Gil Blas de Santillane* (4 vols., Paris, 1715–1735).

2. Latin: “An itch for writing” or “scribbler’s itch.”

3. Gerry refers to Bernard Mandeville’s (1670?–1733) two-part satire, *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, a work that was produced over a period of about twenty-four years (1705–1729). Speaking paradoxically, Mandeville asserted that private vices were public benefits and that some form of gross selfishness was embedded in all manner of virtue.

4. Martin made this speech on 27–28 June 1787. According to Connecticut delegate William Samuel Johnson, the 27th was hot (Farrand, III, 552).

5. For the Court of Star Chamber in England, see RCS:Mass., 883, note 3.

6. On 31 August 1787 Massachusetts voted “yes” on the question of “nine.” Gerry’s individual vote was not recorded. In the debate on the article that was concerned with the submission of the Constitution to state conventions, Gerry “dwelt on the impropriety of destroying the existing Confederation, without the unanimous Consent of the parties to it,” and he moved to postpone the discussion of this article. His motion was defeated 8 states to 3. Massachusetts voted against postponement (Farrand, II, 477, 478, 479. For the text of the two articles [XXI and XXII] under consideration, see CDR, 269.).

7. See “Landholder” VIII, *Connecticut Courant*, 24 December 1787, note 3; *Massachusetts Centinel*, 5 January 1788; and *Maryland Journal*, 18 January (CC:371; RCS:Mass., 622–23; and CC:460).

8. On 18 August 1787 the Convention appointed a grand committee “to consider the necessity and expediency of the debts of the several States being assumed by the United States.” James McHenry represented Maryland and Rufus King, not Gerry, represented Massachusetts (Farrand, II, 322, 328).

9. The italics are Gerry’s.

10. For Gerry’s 18 October 1787 letter, which was published in the *Massachusetts Centinel* on 3 November, see RCS:Mass., 94–100. In this quoted passage (RCS:Mass., 98), neither the text in parentheses nor the italics appear in either the original letter sent to the state legislature or the letter as first printed in the *Centinel*.

On 18 August 1787 Gerry “thought an army dangerous in time of peace & could never consent to a power to keep up an indefinite number.” A motion by Luther Martin and Gerry to restrict the size of a peacetime army was defeated. On the same day, Gerry attacked the provision giving Congress the power to regulate and discipline the state militias. “If it be agreed to by the Convention,” Gerry declared, “the plan will have as black a mark as was set on Cain. He had no such confidence in the Genl. Govt. as some Gentlemen possessed.” On 23 August he stated that to place the militia under command

of the federal government "would be regarded as a system of Despotism." And on 5 September Gerry opposed the two-year appropriation of money for the army (Farrand, II, 329, 330, 332, 385, 509).

11. The personal attacks upon him weighed heavily on Gerry as an excerpt from one of his letters to James Warren demonstrates. Gerry noted that "The vigilant enemies of free government have been long in the execution of their plan to hunt down all who remain attached to revolution principles; they have attacked us in detail and have deprived you, Mr. S. Adams and myself in a great measure of that public confidence to which a faithful attachment to the public interest entitles us, and they are now aiming to throw Mr. Hancock out of the saddle, who, with all his foibles, is yet attached to the whig cause. There seems to be a disposition in the dominant party to establish a nobility of opinion, under whose control in a short time, will be placed the government of the union and the states, and whose insufferable arrogance marks out for degradation all who will not submit to their authority. It is beginning to be fashionable to consider the opponents of the constitution as embodying themselves with the lower classes of the people, and that one forfeits all title to the respect of a gentleman, unless he is one of the privileged order. Is this, my friend, to be the operation of the free government, which all our labours in the revolution have tended to produce?" (James T. Austin, *The Life of Elbridge Gerry, With Contemporary Letters to the Close of the American Revolution* [2 vols., Boston, 1828-1829], II, 85-86. Austin neglected to include the date of the letter.). Warren responded to Gerry's letter on 1 February 1789. This response quotes a portion of Gerry's letter which Warren dates as 22 January 1789 (see Harvey Gardiner, ed., *A Study in Dissent: The Warren-Gerry Correspondence 1776-1792* [Carbondale, Ill., 1968], 212).

Massachusetts Centinel, 7 May

If the enemies to the FEDERAL SYSTEM would take one half the trouble to inform themselves of the real state of *facts*, and of the *arguments* respecting the Constitution that they do to misrepresent and deceive the people, it is presumed that so far as they are men of principle and honesty, their opposition would cease—for it has been demonstrated, that the circumstances of our country require a *new* and *efficient* plan of federal government similar to that proposed; the arguments which have been adduced in support of it are conclusive and unanswerable; while *every objection* that the *fears*, the *wit*, and the *roguery* of its enemies could conjure up, has been fully and entirely answered, by that incomparable writer, PUBLIUS, the author of the FEDERALIST.

Nathan Dane to Samuel Adams

New York, 10 May (excerpt)¹

Yesterday were sent to me inclosed—the inclosed pamphlet and printed letter, with a request to convey them to you, which I do myself the honor to transmit accordingly²—So far as my information extends the sentiments expressed by this writer, very generally meet the approbation of those who aim at Just and uncorrupt Government on republican principles—nor do I perceive any thing in this publication in the

least inconsistent with the determination of the Massa. Convention—a determination, in my opinion, by far the wisest & best that has been made on the Subject—for tho the situation of the Country made it prudent to adopt the Constitution, and put it into operation; yet, clear I am, that we ought not to relax a moment in our attention and vigilance for further guarding and checking the exercise of powers given by the Constitution, and for securing the liberties of America, and an honest administration of Government on known and certain principles—My fears and apprehensions do not arise altogether from a consideration of the faults in the new Constitution; but, in a considerable measure, from a full persuasion that we have many men, and able ones too, in this Country who have a disposition to make a bad use of any government; and who, if not well checked and restrained by the forms of the Government, will, so far as they can have influence produce a wicked and corrupt administration—and you may, Sir, be assured that the Zealous advocates for the adoption of this Constitution, and who are pretty numerous, artful and active, do not intend that any amendments shall be adopted, even after the Constitution shall be put into operation, if they can any way prevent it—at least they will oppose all amendments which, I believe, the republican and honest part of the Community will contend for³—however, I think the *true Federalists*, or true friends of a genuine federal republic, are extending their influence and connections very considerably; and tho a large proportion of them considering our situation agree to adopt the system as presented, they are determined with candor and firmness, to endeavour to establish in these States governments on principles of freedom and equality—whether the friends of honest measures—or the friends of influence and corruption will succeed time only can determine—Sure I am, the former will have the support and advice of your Self and many others who have Steered the political Ship through the late Storm. . . .

1. RC, Adams Papers, NN. Printed: CC:738.

2. Possibly a reference to a New York Antifederalist pamphlet signed by “A Plebeian” (perhaps Melancton Smith), which was first offered for sale in New York City on 17 April (CC:689). This pamphlet contained a four-page postscript attacking Federalist pamphleteer “A Citizen of New-York” (John Jay, CC:683). Dane’s enclosure might also have been “Federal Farmer’s” *Additional Letters*, 2 May (CC:723), which the Antifederalist New York Federal Republican Committee began sending to Antifederalists in other states in mid-May (CC:750).

3. For more on Dane’s belief that amendments were needed, see Dane to Melancton Smith, 3 July (CC:797).

Hampshire Gazette, 14 May¹

*In soil unpromising,
The choicest plants may grow.*

*Fools, rogues and knaves contemn,
But call no man so.*

Belchertown, April 22, 1788.

Whereas some transactions in this town have been so represented in the neighbouring towns, that the inhabitants are stigmatized by many as being generally opposed to the federal constitution, and to good order and government;—justice to ourselves, and regard to the reputation of the town and to the common welfare, induces us to declare that we acquiesce in the ratification of the federal constitution—that we highly prize and cheerfully submit to constitutional order and government; and we trust we shall make it evident to the world, that we are good citizens of the Commonwealth and of the United States.

(The above was signed by a large number of respectable inhabitants of said town.)

1. On 24 May the *Massachusetts Centinel* reprinted (with slight variations) a portion of this item in a report on the progress of the ratification of the Constitution (immediately below).

Massachusetts Centinel, 24 May¹

The CONSTITUTION.

The following calculation, at first view, will give our readers the number of the people in America who have ratified the Constitution for the United States.

	No. of taxable inhabitants.	No. of del. in Conven.	Nays.	Prop. of an- tified. inhab.
New-Jersey,	130,000	39	00	
Delaware,	37,000	22	00	
Georgia,	90,000	33	00 ²	
Pennsylvania,	360,000	69	23	120,000
Connecticut,	202,000	168	40	48,095
Massachusetts,	360,000	355	168	170,366
Maryland,	<u>218,000</u>	74	11	<u>36,333</u>
	1,397,000			374,794

Hence it appears that *more* than FIVE-SEVENTHS of THE PEOPLE of seven States are in favour of the Constitution—an astonishingly large proportion this—when it is considered what has hitherto been the division in other nations, on questions of government—A majority of *one* only, placed the House of Hanover on the throne of Great-Britain.

As it appears by the above calculation, that nearly one half of the people of this State *were* not in favour of the new Constitution, previous

to its adoption, it may be agreeable to our brethren, the federal citizens of the United States, to be informed, that *now* above four-fifths of the inhabitants of this *large* State, are the firm friends of it. We do not give this information on conjecture, but from undubitable facts and circumstances—some of which we will particularize.—The town of *Hopkinton*, almost to a man were *once* against it; but a few days since Capt. *Dench*, their delegate in Convention, declared publicly in this town, *that there were not ten men in that town, who would not now spend the last drop of their blood in its support.*³ The delegate of the town of *Belchertown*, also voted against the Constitution—but a large number of the inhabitants of that town have published in the last Northampton paper, a declaration, “*that they acquiesce in the ratification of the federal Constitution, and that they highly prize, and will cheerfully submit to constitutional order and government;*”—and this they do, they say, from, “*regard for the reputation of the town.*”⁴ The towns of *Worcester*, *Petersham*, *Sutton*, and a great many others we can mention, which elected antifederal members to Convention, have chosen staunch federalists for Representatives. In short the election of a federal Senate, and every circumstance, conspire to demonstrate, that above four-fifths of the citizens of Massachusetts are friends to the new Constitution.

1. This item was reprinted in the *Cumberland Gazette*, 5 June. The *Salem Mercury*, 27 May, reprinted the final paragraph in its entirety, while the *American Herald*, 26 May; *Newport Herald*, 29 May; and *Maryland Journal*, 17 June, reprinted only the portion of the last paragraph respecting Hopkinton and Belchertown.

2. The New Jersey Convention voted 38 to 0 in favor of ratification, the Delaware Convention 30 to 0, and the Georgia Convention 26 to 0.

3. On 31 December 1787 Hopkinton instructed its Convention delegate Gilbert Dench, but the town minutes do not indicate how he was instructed (RCS:Mass., 971). Dench voted against ratification.

4. In the state Convention, Justus Dwight of Belchertown voted against ratification after being instructed by the town on 17 December 1787 to use his own judgment (RCS:Mass., 902–3). For the full text of the declaration of “a large number” of Belchertown’s inhabitants, see *Hampshire Gazette*, 14 May (immediately above).

Independent Chronicle, 12 June¹

We hear from Attleborough, that a considerable number of the respectable inhabitants assembled on Wednesday last [4 June], P. M. at the house of Lieut. Josiah Pidge of that town, and after some friendly and social conversation, the following toasts were drank, viz.

1. The new Federal Constitution.
2. The American Congress.
3. The Governor and Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
4. Those States which have already adopted the Federal Constitution.

5. Agriculture, Manufactures, Arts and Sciences.

6. May American Husbandmen ever retain that spirit of freedom and Independence, which is the Guardian of their liberties.

7. May a just sense of our common interest and common danger, ever unite the Farmer, Merchant and Mechanick.

8. May the enemies of Public Justice, never find a place in the Councils of America.

9. May the Excellencies of the Federal Constitution, be exhibited to the world in its wise, just, and mild Administration.

10. Perpetual infamy, shame and confusion be to all those who seek to dissolve the federal union.

11. May the United States never fail of having a President who shall be possessed of the spirit and temper of a Washington.

12. May example in our rulers ever keep pace with authority.

13. May Justice, Liberty, and Peace, be the perpetual birth-right of each American.

It is with pleasure we can inform our readers, that the real Friends of Government and good order are daily increasing in Attleboro' and like the House of David, wax stronger and stronger, while the Antifederalist and the restless ca[i]tiffs grow weaker, and their influence smaller.² Witness their proceedings at their last annual March and May Town Meeting, when they dismiss'd their Antifederal Officers, and elected those who had been tried, and shewn themselves firm friends to the Constitution.³

1. Reprinted: *New York Morning Post*, 19 June; *Pennsylvania Packet*, 20 June; *Pennsylvania Journal*, 21 June (through twelfth toast only); *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 25 June; *Providence United States Chronicle*, 3 July; and *Virginia Centinel*, 16 July. The last paragraph alone was reprinted in the *Newport Herald*, 19 June.

2. 2 Samuel 3:1. "Now there was long war between the house of Saul and the house of David: but David waxed stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker."

3. For example, after a three-year absence, Elisha May, who voted to ratify the Constitution in the Massachusetts Convention, was elected to the state House of Representatives, replacing suspected Antifederalist William Stanley. For Stanley, see May to David Daggett, 19 October 1787 (RCS:Mass., 108n).

Massachusetts Centinel, 14 June¹

ADVERTISEMENT EXTRA.

On the 4th day of July next, will be sold, *for the benefit of the Antifederalists*, the Old ARTICLES of CONFEDERATION. That no one may have cause to plead ignorance of their condition, to have an excuse for *returning* them, the intended purchasers are informed, that they

have been found much the worse for the wear—and that having been *patched up in a hurry*, to answer a purpose *during the war*, they are defective in every part—However, sold they must be—and as a little encouragement to buyers, the purchaser will have the State of RHODE-ISLAND thrown into the bargain.

UNION & FEDERALISM, Auctioniers.

June 14, 1788.

N. B. It was intended to have also given into the bargain the TENDER LAW of Massachusetts—But it died a few nights since²—and has left but very few *relics*—worth acceptance.

1. Reprinted in the *Berkshire Chronicle*, 26 June, and in eleven out-of-state newspapers by 24 July: R.I. (1), Conn. (1), N.Y. (3), N.J. (2), Pa. (1), Md. (1), Va. (1), S.C. (1).

2. The reference is to the refusal of the Massachusetts legislature (a few days earlier) to renew the law suspending suits for debts (sometimes referred to as the tender law).

An Antifederalist

Massachusetts Centinel, 18 June

Mr. RUSSELL, In looking over your Centinel of last Saturday, I observed an "*Advertisement extra.*" directed to the antifederalists,¹ as they are called. I have long wished to see this foolish distinction, which operates only as a bone of contention, or root of bitterness, obliterated and forgotten.

In a free republican government, where, as the worthy Dr. Price justly observes, "*The people are not subjects, but confederates; and the rulers are not masters, but servants,*"² it appears to me, that when any question with respect to government, is a matter of publick, or political disquisition, that each free-born citizen ought to come forward, with that freedom of speech, with that plainness, openness and candour, which is (I had almost said) peculiar to republicans; and project their schemes, offer their plans, or propose their systems, alterations, additions, or amendments, or whatever they think proper, so long as the great question is in agitation; but whenever it has been fully discussed, candidly heard and debated, and finally determined upon, by a MAJORITY OF THE PEOPLE, every disputant upon the subject whether an objector or a projector, ought to dispossess himself of all prepossession in favour of his own particular system, and freely and cheerfully subscribe to the grand *ultimatum*, the *vox populi*: and upon this principle, and no other, can we ever be a free, a happy, and an independent people, under any government whatever. Were we even to have a perfect system ushered into the world from the thunders of Mount Sinai, so long as we are ranging among ourselves and bickering at one another, we shall forever remain a contemptible and an unhappy people.

Let us now examine the mighty difference between what is vulgarly called a federalist and an antifederalist. Is it like the difference between a whig and a tory—the one striving to establish British, and the other a republican government? Certainly not. I take it we are all aiming at one and the same thing; and the only difference seems to be this, the one was for swallowing down the new Constitution as it was: The other was for trying at least, to make it a little better; and the difference in opinion with respect to the expediency or in expediency of making the attempt, seems to constitute the essential difference between them. What a mighty bubble—sufficient to split the nation into parties, fill the world full of yeas and nays, and form prejudices which will be the work of an age to remove.

I think it is allowed by all parties that the antifederalists when they found themselves in the minority conducted with a great deal of moderation and candour, as they almost unanimously agreed to return home and endeavour to satisfy and unite the people, in order to give fair play to the new Constitution; and for that purpose even suppressed the publication of their objections to it, drawn up by way of protest. And I think it was conceded to be the opinion of those in the majority, that had *they* have been in the minority, they should not have exhibited the magnanimity, which the then minority did upon the occasion. The truth as I conceive, is, that we are all aiming at one and the same object; and are now nearly united in the means of obtaining that object: Why then should we encourage, or give countenance to any thing which does not tend to enlighten or unite us, but rather to prejudice and divide us? For my own part, I freely confess, that I have had my doubts and fears respecting the new Constitution; and I still have those doubts and fears; and am not in the least disconcerted at being called an antifederalist; nor are my own personal feelings in the least injured at any little puns, or squibs, which are very often flung out against them as such; though at the same time, I am fully convinced that any thing of the kind which seems calculated to prejudice the mind, serves only to keep up a party spirit, and has a very unhappy effect upon the great body of the people. I therefore most ardently hope, that we shall in future, for the grand and laudable purpose of uniting the interests and affections of the people, carefully avoid every thing which looks like *party*; and all cheerfully unite in the great object of making a fair experiment of the NEW CONSTITUTION!

(With deference to the opinion of our correspondent, we humbly conceive that his sentiments and his signature do not agree.—An antifederalist is an enemy to a federal government.—A person may be an anti-constitutionalist,

and yet be a federalist.—The lashes hinted at, are given to those who are lovers of anarchy and confusion—who are really antifederalists—not those who have “doubts and fears” respecting the Constitution.)

1. See *Massachusetts Centinel*, 14 June (immediately above).

2. Borrowing from Montesquieu's discussion of the republican form of government in *Spirit of Laws*, Richard Price noted “That the members of a civil community are *confederates*, not *subjects*; and their rulers, *servants*, not *masters*” (*Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution, and the Means of Making It a Benefit to the World* [Boston 1784], 7 [Evans 18739]. *Observations* was first printed in England in 1784.).

New York Journal, 26 June¹

Extract of a letter from Boston, June 17.

“There seems to be a general infatuation here among the *magi*; the vulgar have caught it, so that there is no reasoning with them on the subject, though of the greatest importance. Ask any of them, *high* or *low*, whether they have any ill apprehensions from the adoption of the new system, they answer, without hesitation, *yes*; but they say, Congress will *certainly* make the proposed alterations. Ministers, lawyers, and merchants, made a large proportion of our convention, so that it is no great wonder that the people *at large* are so many of them *deluded*; yet, I believe, could the voice of the people in general be taken, a very large majority would be found in opposition to the proposed plan. Of this I am convinced from the frequent conversations I have had with farmers, &c.”

1. Reprinted: *Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 1 July.

Editors' Note

A Native of Boston: Thoughts Upon the Political Situation of the United States, Worcester, 14 August

On 14 August the *Independent Chronicle* announced “*This Day PUBLISHED*” a “*New Political Publication!*” The pamphlet was entitled *Thoughts Upon the Political Situation of the United States of America, in Which that of Massachusetts Is More Particularly Considered. With Some Observations on the Constitution for a Federal Government. Addressed to the People of the Union* (Evans 21173). The pamphlet was printed in Worcester by Isaiah Thomas of the *Massachusetts Spy*, which newspaper also announced its publication on 14 August. The pamphlet's main text runs to 190 pages and is followed by a nineteen-page appendix. A brief prefatory remark to the appendix reads: “*Which will probably be read by those only, who are perfectly at leisure, and not fatigued with the foregoing.*” The title page identifies the author as “A Native of Boston,” but at the end of the main

text appears the signature "Civis." The title page also includes an epigraph from the fourth epistle (1734) of Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*:

"Truths would you teach, or save a sinking Land—
All shun, none aid you, and few understand."

The advertisements in the *Independent Chronicle* and *Massachusetts Spy* indicated that *Political Situation* was to be sold for four shillings and six pence per copy by Isaiah Thomas and by Benjamin Guild of the "Boston Book Store." At one time or another, *Political Situation* was also available in Salem, Springfield (four shillings and six pence), New York City (six shillings), Trenton, Philadelphia (five shillings and seven and a half pence), Wilmington, Baltimore, Richmond, and Norfolk. An advertisement in the *New York Packet*, 19 August, noted that the pamphlet was "printed on fine paper, and a beautiful new type, octavo size," while William Prichard of Philadelphia, who sold the pamphlet from his "Bookstore and Circulating Library," described it as a "valuable production" (*Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer*, 24 October).

Political Situation was written by Jonathan Jackson (1743–1810)—a native of Boston, a Harvard College graduate (1761), and a member of the so-called "Essex Junto." (For this junto, see RCS:Mass., 1798, note 11.) Before, during, and after the Revolution, Jackson was a merchant in Newburyport and Boston. From 1778 to 1788, he was in mercantile partnership in Boston with Stephen Higginson, also a member of the "Essex Junto." Jackson sat in the state constitutional convention, 1779–80, and in the Confederation Congress, 1782. After dissolving his partnership with Higginson in April 1788, he returned to Newburyport, where he resided when his pamphlet appeared. In January 1789 Jackson was defeated as a candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives, but later that year, President George Washington appointed him U.S. Marshal for the District of Massachusetts, a position he held until 1791. Jackson was inspector of the revenue for the Northern District of the U.S., 1791–97; supervisor of excise offices for the same district, 1797–1802; and treasurer of Massachusetts, 1802–5.

After "several months" of writing, Jackson completed the pamphlet in mid-June and on 21 June forwarded the last pages to Isaiah Thomas, stating that "the sooner you can complete the impression the more agreeable it will be to Sir your obedt Servt" (Mfm:Mass.). Jackson went to Worcester on perhaps two occasions to help Thomas with the pamphlet's publication and distribution (Jackson to Thomas, 10 July, Mfm:Mass.).

Soon after publishing *Political Situation* in early August, Thomas shipped "a large box" of the pamphlets to Benjamin Guild in Boston.

He also forwarded copies to Springfield, where they were advertised in the *Hampshire Chronicle* on 20 August, and to New York City, where they were advertised in Samuel Loudon's *New York Packet* several times between 19 August and 10 October. Loudon, who also operated a bookstore and circulating library, was chosen by Jackson himself to be his New York City agent.

On 5 September Jackson told Thomas that "A Republican" in the *Boston Gazette* had pointed out certain faults in *Political Situation*, making Jackson "impatient" to transmit copies of the pamphlet to Philadelphia "before any prejudication is made upon the performance—for my great dependance for sale is there & at N York" (Mfm:Mass. See also "A Republican," *Boston Gazette*, 1 September, DHFFE, I, 453–54.). Later that month Jackson informed Thomas that "but very few" of the pamphlets had been sold in Boston, and he began "to suspect" his "Truths" would not "readily sell" in that town. He told Thomas that he had "packed about 100 books" for William Prichard, a prominent Philadelphia bookseller, in hopes of selling them there. He also thought that it might be a good idea to send some pamphlets to Rhode Island (22 September, Mfm:Mass.). Prichard advertised the pamphlet in the Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer* on 24 and 25 October, informing his readers that copies could also be obtained from these newspaper publishers: Isaac Collins in Trenton; Frederick Craig in Wilmington; Mary K. Goddard in Baltimore; Augustine Davis in Richmond; and John M'Lean in Norfolk. Despite this wide distribution, a disappointed Jackson wrote Thomas on 30 December that he now knew "that half the number of Pamphlets would have answered my use—I have not realised a single dollar from one of them yet." He also regretted that he had not collected more money so that he could reimburse Thomas (Mfm:Mass.).

Jackson also sent single copies of the pamphlet to various acquaintances. Even though the pamphlet did not sell well, he noted that "I at least gratified myself in attentions I wished to pay to several gentlemen" (to Thomas, 5 September, Mfm:Mass.). He inscribed one such copy thusly: "Should anything in it designate the author, he requests not to be mentioned till some public opinion is made up the propriety of his observations, and of the time of their appearance; as he wishes if he meets the publick attention, it may be passed upon with impartiality, and without any regard to him" (Thomas E. Kirby and His Assistants, *Illustrated Catalogue of Colonial and Revolutionary Books, Broad-sides and Other Important Americana From Various Collections to be Sold . . . February 26th, 1917 . . .* [New York, 1917], Item 55).

Speculation about the authorship of *Political Situation* centered on Jackson. On 30 September Benjamin Lincoln of Hingham sent George

Washington a copy of a pamphlet "lately" published in the state that was probably *Political Situation*. Lincoln noted that the pamphlet "was ushered into light with all that cover of secrecy which often attends that of an illegitimate child. The father however has shared the fate which is too common in such cases his likeness being so strongly impressed upon his of[f]spring that all our shrewd observers think they can point him out, and many blame him for his attempts to keep behind the curtain—The eagle-eyed folks say that it is a fine child that it has an fine open and manly countenance that it has evident marks of originality of thought, strength of mind, firmness of nerves, and an independency of soul, and will come forward with peculiar advantages to the world—Whether these observations are just or not, your Excellency, from your great knowledge in physiognomy, will on examination, be able to determine" (Mfm:Mass. "A Native of Boston" praised Washington twice, once recommending that only he could be the first President under the new Constitution.).

On 30 October Peter Thacher, pastor of Boston's Brattle Street Congregational Church, informed Jackson that he had "just read, with very great pleasure, a pamphlet which is universally ascribed to you, entitled 'Thoughts on the political situation of the united States of America.'" Thacher added that he was "convinced, from mature observation, that the sentiments advanced in this pamphlet are founded in truth and justice, and that principles of this kind alone can secure to us the freedom which we have so dearly purchased" (Mfm:Mass.). Some newspaper writers also identified Jackson as "A Native of Boston." (See, for example, the *Boston Gazette*, 15 December; *Herald of Freedom*, 20 January 1789; and "An Elector of Essex," *Essex Journal*, 28 January, DHFFE, I, 597, 629, 633.)

Although Jonathan Jackson greatly admired the new Constitution, he believed it could be improved by some major structural changes. "A Native of Boston" outlined the principal defects of the government under the Articles of Confederation and the need for a strong and efficient central government, but his most compelling and provocative thoughts were concerned with the nature of government. Among the political writers upon whom he relied heavily were John Adams, Jean Louis De Lolme, David Hume, and Baron Turgot. He also quoted or cited Sir Francis Bacon, Edmund Burke, Jonathan Swift, and James Otis. Alexander Pope was his favorite poet.

"A Native of Boston" opposed representation in the state legislatures or in Congress based on territory, preferring instead that representation be proportionate to population. Disapproving of large or numerous representative assemblies, he insisted that legislatures should be

small, their members should be adequately paid, and their terms of office should be three or four years. He opposed rotation in office and frequent elections. A sixty-member Congress composed of twenty senators and forty representatives was sufficient. The representatives would be "the guardians of the people's liberties," while the senators would be "the receptacle of that natural aristocracy, which . . . will ever arise in all societies of men." A powerful single executive would be "responsible *in the dernier resort* for the execution" of the laws; he would have an absolute veto; and he alone would have the power to appoint officers. Large republics, "A Native of Boston" argued, were better governed than small ones. To protect against instability and anarchy, he favored a small standing army and a strong militia.

Ordinary people, "A Native of Boston" insisted, were too often unfit either to choose or to serve as legislators; he rejected the notion "that the voice of the people is the voice of God." The best men—the lawyers, "*the gentle folks*," and the natural aristocracy of education and talent—were alone fit to govern. To make certain that such men held office, he proposed an elaborate system of indirect election. A constable was to "be appointed for every hundred freeholders," who were to be broken up "into wards of ten families." Each ward would elect one of its members. These ten men would, in turn, elect one of their number to a convention representing a larger geographical area. After a series of conventions, the officers of government would finally be elected.

"A Native of Boston" freely admitted that his proposed plan of government "goes farther in checks—in establishments—in restrictions upon the people, and towards an union of the whole" than the Constitution proposed by the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Yet he had not expected that convention to "have the courage to propose so good a government as they have." He supported the Constitution but had reservations about certain provisions. He thought that the House of Representatives should be smaller. All representation, he believed, should be based on population. The President should have the sole power to appoint government officers. "A Native of Boston" proposed a single twenty-year term for any President under forty years of age and that any nominee for that office must have already taken "a leisurely tour through all the states." Although "A Native of Boston" feared that the contest for the presidency would produce divisiveness and faction, he concluded "this constitution is so much more perfect than any plan of government which has been before offered to any people, and was in their power to adopt, that—groaning so long as we have been for the want of a good government—we should be mad men not to accept

it. In my opinion, it promises more political happiness than any institution with which mankind have ever yet been blessed."

Jackson's pamphlet became a principal issue in the election for the U.S. House of Representatives in the Essex District of Massachusetts (i.e., Essex County), where Jackson himself was a candidate. A newspaper writer attacked Jackson for being a partner of merchant Stephen Higginson, a man "distinguished for his *contemptible opinion of the people*." "Has not this same J," continued this writer, "drank deep of the political sentiments of 'S.H.'? . . . Is he not the author of an infamous pamphlet lately published, wherein the ax is laid at the root of the tree, to *deprive the people of all their liberties*?" ("Middlesex Essex," *Herald of Freedom*, 20 January 1789, DHFFE, I, 629).

"A Federalist" countered that "Mr. Jackson is revered and beloved wherever he is known. Amiable in the private and honest and upright in the public walks of life, his abilities are inferior to few among us, and his patriotism and love of his country indubitably established on a firm foundation" (*Herald of Freedom*, 23 January, DHFFE, I, 630). "A Federal Elector" noted that Jackson was "esteemed" and possessed "many private and public virtues"; while "An Elector of Essex" referred to *Political Situation* as "a work of which no genius among us need blush to be reputed the author," who deserved a seat in Congress because the pamphlet possessed evidence of an "enlarged acquaintance with matters of state, impartial views of the interest of this country, and warm attachment to its glory and happiness" (*Salem Mercury*, 27 January 1789; and *Essex Journal*, 28 January, DHFFE, I, 631, 633).

Outside Massachusetts, "A Native of Boston" attracted little attention, although *Political Situation* was reviewed at length in the September and October issues of the *New York American Magazine*. The reviewer, possibly editor Noah Webster, pointed to several inconsistencies, but complimented "A Native of Boston" for uttering these unpopular truths: "that the best way to fill offices with great and good men is to pay them well"; "that *there are but few profound politicians and true patriots in a country*"; and "That there are in all societies some men, who are superior to their fellow citizens in abilities and respectability." These superior persons constituted "the *natural aristocracy*" that John Adams had mentioned in his *Defence of the Constitutions* (CC:16). The reviewer maintained that both Adams and "A Native of Boston" were correct about a "*natural aristocracy*" and that Adams "has been abused for the opinion, by a sett of scribbling demagogues, who have, either ignorantly or wilfully misrepresented his meaning."

In the second part of the review, the reviewer paid particular attention to "A Native of Boston's" electoral plan. He maintained that the

author made "some very *just*, and some perhaps rather *whimsical* remarks, and at length advances a new, singular & unpopular doctrine, that the *people at large are not fit to choose their own representatives*. He therefore proposes a plan for sublimating the good sense and information of the people. His idea is, that large collections of people are turbulent, tumultuous, led by clamorous demagogues and therefore not capable of that cool deliberation that is required in choosing legislators. To prevent these evils, he would offer the following plan of elections; beginning with *ten men* of the smallest information and capacities, who, he thinks, may be trusted *together* for a single object." At this point, the reviewer quoted several pages from *Political Situation*, in an obvious attempt to hang "A Native of Boston" with "his own words." After quoting large parts of the electoral plan, the reviewer concluded with this paragraph: "The stile of this writer is harsh and disjointed, so that at first reading a paragraph, it is often difficult to understand his meaning. Amidst many trite remarks, and some very chimerical plans for reforming government, we find however many new and just observations; and those who can submit to travel a rough road in pursuing our author, will sometimes rise upon an eminence and find themselves relieved by the prospect of rich well-cultivated fields and pleasant landscapes." (For the complete text of this two-part review, see Mfm:Mass. For another lengthy analysis of the pamphlet and Jackson's response to it, see William Eustis to Jackson, 6 December 1788, and Jackson to Eustis, December, DHFFE, I, 587-97.)

Commentaries on John Hancock's Amendments

Unlike the reminiscences of the Massachusetts Convention printed above (RCS:Mass., 1593-1600), the four commentaries printed here (with the exception of Stephen Higginson's "Laco" essays) were not written by either Convention delegates or observers but by persons who had obtained their knowledge secondhand many years later, albeit from Convention delegates or observers, from the personal papers of these individuals, and from the Convention's published records. Two of the commentaries were written by Francis Baylies, the son of William Baylies, a Massachusetts Convention delegate from Dighton, while a third was written by Theophilus Parsons, Jr., the son of one of Newburyport's Convention delegates. For the most part, the commentaries center on Governor John Hancock's role in the Massachusetts Convention, especially with respect to his proposal of recommendatory amendments to the Constitution that would accompany the state's ratification of the Constitution.

The Writings of Laco, Boston, 1789 (excerpts)

Between 18 February and 25 March 1789, nine essays signed "Laco" were published in the *Massachusetts Centinel*. "Laco" was Boston merchant Stephen Higginson. As an arch conservative and elitist, Higginson was a bitter political enemy of John Hancock and these essays were in large measure designed to prevent Hancock's reelection as governor. Higginson was particularly disturbed by Governor Hancock's leniency toward Shaysites and for Hancock's refusal to appoint Higginson's good friend, Lieutenant Governor Benjamin Lincoln, to the profitable post of governor of Castle Island in Boston Harbor, a sinecure long held by lieutenant governors.

Soon after these nine essays appeared in the *Centinel*, they were reprinted as a pamphlet, probably by Benjamin Russell of the *Massachusetts Centinel*. The thirty-nine-page pamphlet, which included an essay not printed in the *Centinel*, was entitled *The Writings of Laco, as Published in the Massachusetts Centinel, in the Months of February and March, 1789—With the Addition of No. VII, Which Was Omitted* (Boston, 1789) (Evans 21886). On the title page appeared a three-line epigraph from the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights: "The Liberty of the Press is essential to the security of Freedom in a State, it ought not, therefore, to be restrained in this Commonwealth." (The essays were reprinted in New York in 1857 under the title *Ten Chapters in the Life of John Hancock*.)

The excerpts from the two essays printed here have been transcribed from the 1789 pamphlet edition (pp. 24–26, 27–28). The first essay, "Number VII," first appeared in the *Massachusetts Centinel* on 7 March 1789. The second, mistakenly also numbered VII, never appeared in the *Centinel*. These excerpts are concerned mostly with Hancock's role in the Massachusetts Convention and with his motivation, when, on 31 January, he proposed recommendatory amendments to the Constitution. (For a fuller discussion of Hancock's role in the Convention, see RCS:Mass., 1116–21, 1122. For a vigorous defense of Hancock against "Laco's" harsh criticism, see "Agricola," *Herald of Freedom*, 17, 20 March 1789 [Mfm:Mass.]. Even Federalist Henry Jackson believed that Hancock was being "severely and unjustly attacked" by "Laco" (to Henry Knox, 22 March 1789 [DHFFE, IV, 205].).

Stephen Higginson (1743–1828), a wealthy Boston merchant, insurance underwriter, and a member of the "Essex Junto," accumulated his wealth as a privateer during the American Revolution. (For the "Essex Junto," see RCS:Mass., 1798, note 11.) A native of Salem, Higginson moved to Boston in 1778 and formed a mercantile partnership with Jonathan Jackson, another member of the junto, that lasted until April 1788. Higginson served in the Massachusetts House of Representatives, 1781–82; in the Confederation Congress, 1783; and on the board of directors of the Massachusetts Bank, 1784–86. Appointed a delegate to the Annapolis Convention in 1786, he declined the appointment. He advised Governor James Bowdoin when the latter was suppressing Shays's Rebellion. In the fall of 1787 Higginson, a supporter of the Constitution, was on three Boston nomination lists for election as a delegate to the Massachusetts ratifying convention, but he was not elected.

NUMBER VII.

. . . And the course of his [i.e., John Hancock's] conduct from his reassuming the [governor's] chair, to the meeting of our State Convention, for considering and adopting the new form of government for the Union, was nothing more than a renewed exhibition of the same levities, and a uniform preference of his own private interest, to that of the public.

A scene now opens upon us, very interesting and important:—The objects which then presented for our consideration, were so novel, and of such magnitude, as deservedly engrossed the feelings and the attention of every man. No one could remain mute and indifferent, while the question as to the New Constitution was pending; and every one, who felt no other bias than a regard to the safety and happiness of our country must necessarily create, was most anxiously solicitous for its adoption. But the popular demagogues, and those were very much embarrassed in their affairs, united to oppose it with all their might; and they laboured incessantly, night and day, to alarm the simple and credulous, by insinuating, that, however specious its appearance, and that of its advocates, tyranny and vassalage would result from its principles. The former of those descriptions were conscious, that a stable and efficient government, would deprive them of all future importance, or support from the publick; and the latter of them knew, that nothing but weakness and convulsions in government could screen them from payment of their debts. How far Mr. H. was influenced by either, or both of those motives, it is not easy to determine; but no one, who recollects his general habits, who knows his situation and views, and was acquainted with the open conversation and conduct of his cabinet counsellors, can have a doubt of his being opposed to it. We all know, that Mr. Quondam, and Mr. Changeling, as well as the *once venerable old Patriot*,¹ who, by a notable defection, has lately thrown himself into the arms of Mr. H. in violation of every principle; and for the paltry privilege of sharing in his smiles, has, at the eve of life, cast an indelible stain over his former reputation—it is well known, I say, that these men do not dare to speak in publick, a language opposite to that of their patron; and it is equally notorious, that they were open in their opposition to the Constitution—They even went so far as to vilify its compilers, that they might thence draw an argument to support their suggestions, of its containing the seeds of latent tyranny and oppression. They endeavoured by every possible mean in their power, to create a popular clamour against the Constitution; but they failed in their attempt; and Mr. H. and his friends were obliged, upon their own principles, to grow more cautious in their opposition. The good sense of

the *Mechanicks of Boston*, had produced some manly and spirited resolutions,² which effectually checked Mr. H. and his followers in their opposition to the Constitution; and eventually occasioned *four* votes in its favour, which otherwise would have been most certainly against it. Had those resolutions not made their appearance, Mr. H. and three others of our Delegates would have been in the negative;³ but it was thought necessary by them, after they had appeared, to vote in favour of it. Having settled this point, the next thing was to do it with a good grace, and to profit as much by it as they could; and Mr. H. accordingly intimated to the advocates for the adoption, that he would appear in its favour, if they would make it worth his while. This intimation was given through a common friend, who assured the friends of the Constitution, that nothing more would be required on the part of Mr. H. than a promise to support him in the chair at the next election. This promise, though a bitter pill, was agreed to be given; for such was the state of things, that they were very much afraid to decide upon the question, whilst he was opposed to it. The famous conciliatory proposition of Mr. H. as it was called, was then prepared by the advocates, and adopted by him; but the truth is, he never was consulted about it, nor knew its contents, before it was handed to him to bring forward in Convention. At the appointed time, Mr. H. with all the parade of an Arbitrator of States, came out with the motion, not only in the words, but the very original paper that was given him; and, with a confidence astonishing to all who were in the secret, he called it his own, and said it was the result of his own reflections on the subject, in the short intervals of ease which he had enjoyed, during a most painful disorder. In this pompous and farcical manner did he make that famous proposition, upon which he and his adherents have arrogated so much; but neither he nor they have any other merit in the case, than an attempt to deceive both parties, can fairly entitle them. For, at the very time he was buoying up the hopes of the advocates, he was assuring the opposers of the Constitution, by his emissaries, that he was really averse to it; and upon the strictest scrutiny we cannot find, that any one vote was gained by his being ostensibly in favour of it. The votes of the Old Patriot, and Mr. Changeling, and Mr. Joyce, jun.⁴ we know were determined in its favour, by the resolutions of the *Mechanicks*; but the votes of many others, who used implicitly to follow Mr. H. were in the negative, which were counted upon by the friends of the Constitution, as being certain on their side. This is a strong confirmation that Mr. H. was then playing a game, which these people well understood; and indeed they, some of them, explicitly declared it at the time. His subsequent conduct, in regard to amendments, is a clear proof also, that

by appearing in its favour in Convention, he did not mean to support it; and that he was not serious when he declared his proposition to be only conciliatory, and not to remedy any defects existing in his mind in the constitution as reported, which he explicitly declared at the time was the case.

I feel a reluctance at exposing to the world this transaction, on various accounts; but when a man demands of us so much homage, and assumes to himself so much merit, for an action, which, when rightly understood, must certainly render him very contemptible, I think the publick should know how far they are indebted to him in the instance referred to. Has Mr. H. proved himself *open* and *undisguised* in this instance, as he assured the Court in his message?⁵ Let him have the credit of it.—But if he has been guilty of repeated duplicity—if he has endeavoured to deceive both parties for his own private advantage, may he then meet the disapprobation he deserves.

NUMBER VII. [i.e., VIII]

. . . But of all the instances of indulging to a foolish vanity, and an undue passion for flattery and ostentation, those which Mr. H. has often exhibited, have been the most excessive; and particularly the one which I mentioned in my last number, I mean his celebrated proposition in our State convention. Who, that had not lost all sense of decency and modesty, could have so publicly declared, what many who heard him could not believe? Who, that had not blunted his feelings, by gratefully receiving the most servile flattery, would have arrogated the merit of an action, or proposition, which many who heard him, knew to be the projection of another.

But that opportunity of increasing his borrowed reputation was too inviting to be omitted; and the feather then offered him was of so enchanting a hue, that he could not resist the desire of wearing it; though he might have known from the circumstances of the case, that it would soon fall from his crest. So entirely enslaved is he, by his vanity and caprice, that he, in the instance referred to, for the purpose of extending his popularity and securing his post, appeared to be in favour of the constitution, in direct opposition to his own most deliberate resolutions, and against the most earnest remonstrances of the old Patriot, Mr. Quondam, and Mr. Changeling. For though two of them voted for it, to please their constituents, it was generally known, that they were secretly opposed to it, and privately assisted those members, who were openly against it. We cannot soon forget the old Patriot's attempt to loose the question, by an insidious motion by way of amendment;⁶ nor the celebrated speech of a conceited eastern opposer,⁷

which was said to have been seen in the writing of Mr. Changeling. Nor can we believe, that the open opposition of Mr. Quondam would have been so conspicuous, or the secret attempts of the two others, to defeat the views of their patron, have been pursued, had his support to the question been more than ostensible—their uniform absolute devotedness to his will, renders it incredible. . . .

1. James Sullivan, Dr. Charles Jarvis, and Samuel Adams, respectively, with the latter two being delegates to the Massachusetts Convention. Sullivan, a former justice of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court, was one of Hancock's closest and most trusted advisers. In his sixth essay, "Laco" refers to "A quondam and unworthy member of an honourable bench." In the same essay, "Laco" says that "So zealous was the Changeling in exciting insurrections, that, when engaged in a harrangue, he would not even shorten it, though he were told, that his patients were dying by the dozen." A prominent physician and a noted orator, Jarvis was a political follower of both Hancock and Samuel Adams.

2. The tradesmen of Boston met on 7 January, two days before the meeting of the Massachusetts Convention, and adopted several resolutions strongly supporting the Constitution. It was believed that the tradesmen took such action to pressure Samuel Adams, among others, into supporting the Constitution. For this meeting and the text of its resolutions, see RCS:Mass., 629–35.

3. These "four votes" in favor of the Constitution were cast by Samuel Adams, John Hancock, Charles Jarvis, and John Winthrop, Jr., all of whom had had reservations about the Constitution or who had been perceived as being its opponents. (See RCS:Mass., 1598.)

4. "Mr. Joyce, jun." was John Winthrop, Jr. This alias was used at least as far back as the American Revolution.

5. The reference is to Governor Hancock's address of 27 February opening a new session of the Massachusetts General Court. (See RCS:Mass., 1667–69.)

6. The reference is to Samuel Adams's motion on 5 February calling for additional recommendatory amendments that Adams himself withdrew because they alarmed both Federalists and Antifederalists. Some Antifederalists, however, renewed the motion which was put to a vote and defeated. (See RCS:Mass., 1452–54.)

7. The reference is probably to a 1 February speech made by Antifederalist Samuel Nasson, a Sanford, Maine, delegate. (See RCS:Mass., 1396–1400.)

Francis Baylies to John H. Clifford Taunton, 19 April 1842¹

I hasten to reply to your communication. All the knowledge which I have of the subject to which you allude I derived from my father,² who, as well as Dr. West,³ was a member of the Convention of Massachusetts which ratified the Federal Constitution, and during the sitting of the Convention they lived together.

According to his account, no two persons presented stronger contrasts than Gov. Hancock and Dr. West. The one polite, graceful, and superficial,—the other rough, awkward, and profound; and yet no person exercised more influence over the Governor than the New Bedford minister. Descended from a race of clergymen, the Governor held

the clergy in high respect.⁴ He was a classmate of West, and appreciated his high qualities. The Constitution had no warmer friend or more zealous advocate than Dr. West; but the opposition was violent, and the prospect of its ratification at one time nearly hopeless. In the crisis, the Governor, who was President of the Convention, was seized with his constitutional disorder—the gout—and, withdrawing from the chair, took to his bed. Appearances in the Convention became more alarming, and the more knowing ones, amongst the advocates of the Constitution, came to the conclusion that to save it, the influence of Hancock, openly exerted, was absolutely necessary. If he could be induced to appear in the Convention, there was no doubt that his vote would be given for the Constitution, as he was a delegate from Boston, and the people of that town were almost unanimous in its favor; but the difficulty was to get him there. It was well known that he had many doubts and, perhaps, some *conscientious* scruples. And it was supposed that he was not over-fond of being overlaid by a new creation in the shape of a President! As Governor of Massachusetts he had no superior in rank and consideration, but a *Sun* might arise to put out the light of the planets. There was little doubt that, with the exception of the people of Boston, a majority of the people of the State, at that time, were opposed to the Constitution. Some were so uncharitable as to insinuate that the gout came at a convenient season to save the Governor from the dilemma of either displeasing his immediate constituents or of perilling his popularity with the people of the State. The friends of the Constitution, however, were convinced of the necessity of *getting him out*. After a conference among a few of the members, Dr. West was selected for this service, which he readily undertook, and repaired to the Governor's mansion; and after a long condolence on the subject of his bodily complaints, he expressed his deep regret that this affliction should have come upon him at a moment when his presence in the Convention seemed almost indispensable to save the country from the horrors of anarchy. He enlarged upon his vast influence,—his many acts of patriotism, his coming forth in former days at critical periods to give new energy to the slumbering patriotism of his countrymen,—and on the prodigious effect of his name. Heaven, he said, had given him another glorious opportunity, by saving his country, to win bright imperishable honour to himself; the whole people would follow his footsteps with blessings, and future ages would hail him as the greatest of public benefactors. He suggested the expediency of proposing the conciliatory plan of recommendations^(a) (I think), probably, however, from the previous suggestions of others. But I am very certain my father said that Dr. West was the first who proposed the plan to

Hancock. The Governor, who knew that West had no scheme on foot for impairing his popularity, and that he was, and always had been, his sincere and disinterested friend, listened to his suggestions, and made up his mind to appear again in the Convention. Wrapped in his flannels he took the chair, addressed the Convention, proposed the *conciliatory plan*, and the result is known. There is little doubt that Hancock turned the scale in this State in favor of the Constitution, and, in my mind, there is little doubt that Dr. West induced him to do it. I have often heard my father converse on this subject, and once at much length with the Hon. Walter Spooner, of New Bedford,⁵ who was a colleague of Dr. West in the Convention (I think.) I am very certain that this relation is substantially as I heard it.⁶

During the session of the Convention, Dr. West spent many of his evenings abroad. He generally returned with his pockets filled with fine handkerchiefs, silk stockings, silk gloves, small pieces of cambric, and many other articles which could be slipped without attracting attention into the pocket. His distress on discovering them was ludicrous, for, aware of his absence of mind, he supposed that he might have taken these articles unconsciously and without the consent of the owners; but his fellow-boarders generally contrived to pacify him, and to convince him that they were designed as presents: which was the truth.

I well remember the effect which the oddity of his manners produced, but I was too young to appreciate the force and originality of his conversation. *Separate* from metaphysics and theology, he was a great man; and his great and universal knowledge, notwithstanding his eccentricity and roughness, rendered his conversation agreeable always, and sometimes delightful. He was a good practical physician, botanist, and chymist, but he was credulous and apt to believe when others doubted; and he possessed in a remarkable degree that frequent concomitant of greatness—simplicity. I have thrown these things together very hastily, but perhaps your friend can pick out something which may aid his purposes.

(a) That is, to adopt the Constitution with the recommendation of the restrictive amendments, that were adopted at the first session of Congress.

1. Printed: William James Potter, *The First Congregational Society in New Bedford, Massachusetts: Its History as Illustrative of Ecclesiastical Evolution* (New Bedford, 1899), 117–19. Although this letter was addressed to John H. Clifford, it was intended for the use of the Reverend John H. Morison, colleague pastor of the First Congregational Society, who was preparing a lecture on the Reverend Samuel West, a close friend of John Hancock's. Francis Baylies (1783–1852), a lawyer, historian, biographer, and diplomat, was the son of William Baylies of Dighton, who voted to ratify the Constitution in the Massachusetts

Convention. (See also note 2.) Francis Baylies served in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1821–27, and was the only New Englander to vote against John Quincy Adams when the presidential election of 1824 was thrown into the House. His most substantial publication was *An Historical Memoir of the Colony of New Plymouth . . .* (Boston, 1830). John H. Clifford (1809–1876), a New Bedford lawyer and a graduate of Brown University (1827), was the governor of Massachusetts, 1853–54.

2. William Baylies, a graduate of Harvard College (1760) and a physician, represented Dighton in the House of Representatives, 1774–76. He was justice of the Court of Common Pleas for Bristol County, 1781–96, and register of probate for that county, 1784–1812.

3. The Reverend Samuel West represented New Bedford in the Massachusetts Convention, where he voted to ratify the Constitution. West and Hancock were 1754 graduates of Harvard College.

4. Hancock's father and grandfather, both also named John, were clergymen. (See also RCS:Mass., 1788, note 16.) His grandmother's father, Thomas Clarke of Chelmsford, was a clergyman, too. Hancock attended the Brattle Street Congregational Church, and for about twenty years its late pastor, Samuel Cooper (d. 1783), a leader of the revolutionary movement against Great Britain, was a close friend and political adviser.

5. Spooner, a New Bedford farmer, voted to ratify the Constitution in the Massachusetts Convention. He was a member of the House of Representatives, 1761–70 (Dartmouth); the colonial and state Council, 1770–87; the state constitutional convention, 1779–80; and the state Senate, 1790–93. Spooner was also chief justice of the Court of Common Pleas of Bristol County, 1781–96.

6. At this point, William James Potter added: "Mr. Spooner was the other delegate from New Bedford."

Francis Baylies: Eulogy on the Hon. Benjamin Russell Boston, 10 March 1845 (excerpts)¹

. . . During the period while the Constitution was under discussion, the exertions of Major Russell were indefatigable. Young, ardent, enthusiastic, he operated with great effect amongst that class of people to which he belonged—the mechanics of Boston. Upon them he was constantly inculcating his sentiments, and endeavoring to persuade them that a stronger government was absolutely essential to their interests, which were most completely involved in the interests of the merchants and men of property. They listened to him, for his arguments were sound. They believed him, for they saw he was in earnest; and before the Constitution was promulgated, nearly the whole body of mechanics in Boston had become Federalists.

The Constitution came forth, and then there was something tangible for consideration and discussion. Such an instrument could not fail to present much disputable matter, and its merits and demerits were most amply discussed and explained in the newspapers, and even our best informed statesmen may gain some new light by reading the Centinel for the year 1787.

The Constitution had been reported to Congress, and was by them transmitted to the several States, and Conventions called in each. It was ratified unanimously, by the Convention of Delaware, on the 7th day of December, 1787; by a large majority of the Convention of Pennsylvania, on the 12th day of the same December; by the Convention of New Jersey, unanimously, on the 18th day of the same month; by the Convention of Virginia [i.e., Georgia], unanimously, on the 2d day of January, 1788, and by a large majority of the Convention of Connecticut, on the 9th day of January, 1788. On the same day (January 9th,) the Convention of Massachusetts assembled. John Hancock was elected President, and William Cushing, Vice President. Hitherto the Constitution had been well received. It had been adopted in three States unanimously, and in two by very large majorities; but it had now reached a State in which there was a fierce, numerous, and formidable opposition. The eyes of the whole nation were now turned to the Convention of Massachusetts. If they rejected the Constitution, the last hope was gone, and the cry soon would have been, "Every man to your tents, O Israel."² It is an unquestionable truth, that not only the Governor, and a majority of both branches of the Legislature, but of the people, and the Convention itself, were opposed to the adoption of the Constitution when the Convention assembled. The people of the counties of Suffolk, Essex, Plymouth and Barnstable, being commercial and sea-faring, were its advocates. The District of Maine was nearly divided, and in the other counties the majorities against the Constitution were large, decided, obstinate and apparently inveterate.

The deep rooted attachment, and the unbounded confidence which the Bostonians had always reposed in John Hancock and Samuel Adams, were abiding feelings, and although their sentiments respecting the Constitution, were known to be equivocal, and suspected to be averse, yet they would not discard them, and they were elected amongst the twelve delegates from the town. The ancient name of Winthrop, was still venerated by the people, and John Winthrop, whose views respecting the Constitution were similar to those of Hancock and Adams, was also a delegate from Boston. The sentiments of Dr. Stillman, another delegate, were not declared, and Dr. Jarvis, another delegate, had doubts.

No sooner had the organization of the Convention been completed and the mode of proceeding determined, than an ominous vote was passed. A committee was chosen to wait on Mr. Gerry, (who, in the Convention at Philadelphia had been one of the most decided opponents of the Constitution,) to request him to take a seat in the Convention, to answer questions; which was an indirect mode of obtaining

for Mr. Gerry, the privilege of mingling in the debates, and giving the weight of his name, talents and influence, to the Antifederalists.³

A few days were sufficient to show, that although there was a prodigious preponderance of talent in the Convention in favor of the Constitution, yet that the weight of numbers was decidedly against it. Laboring under severe indisposition, Governor Hancock did not take the chair.

It was now a period of the most intense anxiety. It was thought throughout the States, that the rejection of the Constitution by Massachusetts, would be the precursor, not only of an entire dissolution of the Union, but of an universal anarchy. In the midst of the general dependency, the Boston merchants never despaired, but they were few. The Boston mechanics never despaired, and they were many.

Notwithstanding the odds, the merchants and mechanics were determined to fight the battle out, and their energy and resolution were equal to the crisis. They well knew that a strong manifestation of opinion on their part, would be respected, and all means not inconsistent with morality and honor, were used to effect their great object. Some were won by argument, some by persuasion; perhaps some by family influences, and a most generous hospitality; some by flattery and craft; and some perhaps by soothing their self-love.^(a)

During the anxious crisis, Major Russell was found in every place in which he could be useful. In the Convention reporting the debates; in the streets conversing with the country delegates; or catching an idea from Parsons, Gore, Cabot, or Dawes, urging and entreating them to stand firm. No man did more to bring about an efficient union amongst them than Benjamin Russell, and it is believed that there was not a mechanic in Boston, of any name or note, with the single exception of Adam Colson,⁴ who did not ultimately become a supporter of the Constitution. Before their energetic action, the pride of Hancock, the obstinacy of Samuel Adams, and the hardness of John Winthrop, began to give way, and there were reasonable hopes that if Hancock could be brought out, with some propositions which should contain a salvo for the scruples of some and the pride of others; in short, if some of the opponents of the Constitution could be furnished with an excuse, they might be induced to support it.

The idea of recommending amendments, was then started, and a plan was devised for ratifying the Constitution unconditionally, and recommending the adoption of the amendments as a part of it. On this scheme, Samuel Adams and Dr. Jarvis were consulted and agreed to support it. The amendments were draughted by Theophilus Parsons, and laid before Hancock. The public attention was now concentrated

on this distinguished individual, into whose hands was thrown the fate of an Empire and the happiness of millions.

To swerve a man like Hancock, who had presided over the deliberations of the Continental Congress, from his predetermined opinions on the subject of civil government, by argument or persuasion, was not only a difficult, but an ungracious task. Nevertheless, at this perilous crisis, one man was found whose strong sense of duty overcame the scruples of delicacy, and at the hazard of forfeiting a friendship which had been one of the principal solaces of his life—he undertook it.

The Rev. Dr. Samuel West, a delegate from New Bedford, had been the classmate of Hancock, and perhaps there was no person, certainly none in the Convention, for whom he cherished more regard, or to whom he would more readily listen. In Boston, his house was the home of the country clergyman, who never left it without solid tokens of his friendship. Yet there could not be greater contrasts than those presented by the Governor and the Minister. The one was rich, the other poor,—the one lived in a style of magnificence and hospitality congenial to his taste, and corresponding to his wealth in the town,—the other in a humble and obscure manner in the country,—the one, according to Brissot,⁵ the Girondist, disdained the sciences—the other was a profound scholar and devoted to them,—the manners of the one were polished, courtly and accommodating—of the other rough, uncultivated and uncompromising. Yet the statesman admired the bold and masculine temper, the vigorous understanding and prodigious learning of the friend of his youth, and he venerated his unaffected piety. He knew that he was no intriguer, that he had no selfish purposes to accomplish, and that his friendship was disinterested, and although enveloped in flannels and tormented with the gout, he received his visit with great cordiality.

With all his simplicity, Dr. West was a keen observer of character and a person of great sagacity. None better understood the temper of Hancock, or could manage his occasional caprices and waywardness with more address. He commiserated his afflictions, which he lamented the more, inasmuch as it prevented him from doing a great deed for his country.

“Yes,” said the reverend man, “it is on you, and you alone, Governor Hancock, that the fate of this nation depends. You must come forth to save it, even if you are borne in mens’ arms—even at the sacrifice of your life. Without your influence in its favor, the Constitution will be lost, and if it should result in that, we are a ruined people. For your own honor, complete the glorious work which you commenced by signing, as President of Congress, the Declaration of Independence. All good men and true patriots entreat your aid. Can you refuse it? If

through your influence, this Constitution is preserved, your name will be immortal, and will be blessed by unborn millions."

Colonel Azor Orne, a delegate from Marblehead, and a friend and companion of Hancock, spared no effort to induce him to come out. "I can do nothing," said Hancock; "I am sick and feeble—I have no influence." (It was the Governor's habit to depreciate himself.) "Sir," said Orne, "you are not aware of the extent of your influence. Your sickness, instead of impairing, will strengthen it. Even the baize which swathes your limbs, will produce an impression. If you cannot speak, you will gather many around you like birds, by a whistle."

The solicitations of Dr. West and Colonel Orne, as well as those of several others, were well timed, for a strong impression had already been made on the mind of Hancock by the proceedings of the mechanics—always his firm friends and supporters,^(b) and he had ascertained that the clergy, for whom he cherished great respect, were nearly unanimous in favor of the Constitution.^(c)

Pressed on all sides as Hancock was, and finding that his most sincere and zealous friends were decided advocates of the Constitution, he yielded. Wrapped in flannels, unable to walk, he was borne from his coach by his servants into the Convention, and assumed the chair.

On the 30th of January, 1788, he explained his views to the Convention. He did not condemn the provisions, but the omissions of the Constitution. And to supply these defects, he made sundry propositions and declared himself in favor of ratifying the Constitution unconditionally, and of recommending the propositions which he had submitted, as amendments.⁶

Samuel Adams then rose, and after speaking with great candor, distinctly avowed that he was in favor of this scheme, and moved the consideration of the propositions.

The debate was continued through Saturday, the 2d day of February, and finally, by an unanimous vote, the Amendments were committed to a committee of twentyfive.⁷

"Time presses," said Mr Sedgwick, one of the committee, "we must sit on Sunday." "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath," said the Rev. Dr. Hemmenway,⁸ "I have no scruples;" and the committee did sit on Sunday.

On Monday, February 4, the debate was opened by the Rev. Thomas Thacher, of Dedham. He had doubted, but his doubts were dispelled, and his speech was serious, impressive, and in some parts very eloquent. In concluding, the Reverend gentleman alluded to the insinuations made against the supporters of the Constitution, as seeking either pecuniary or political advantages. "I am a poor man, I have the feelings of a poor man," said he, "if there are honors and emoluments in this

proposed Constitution, I shall by my profession and circumstances in life, be forever excluded from them. My only wish is, that the people, in their day, may know the things which belong to their peace."

As soon as Mr. Thacher had concluded, the committee reported the Amendments with slight alterations; but seven of the committee, in committee, voted against the Report,—one was absent and one declined voting. Nine of this committee finally voted against the Constitution.

As soon as the report had been read in the Convention, Major Lusk expressed his dissent. The Constitution, he said, permitted slavery. No religious test was required. He shuddered to think that "Roman Catholics, Papists and Pagans," might hold office, and that Popery and the Inquisition might be established in America. The omission of a religious test, which so much alarmed Major Lusk, had reconciled the Rev. Mr. Backus, an eminent Baptist Minister from Middleborough, to the Constitution, and he addressed the Convention at length in its favor. "The imposing of religious tests," said he, "hath been the greatest engine of tyranny in the world. I abhor the wicked practice of slavery as much as any one, and I rejoice that this Constitution opens the door for its abolition, by prohibiting the slave trade after a certain period, and by permitting the States to free themselves from it."

Dr. Jarvis followed with an energetic speech in favor of the Constitution and the Amendments. The Convention then adjourned, and on the next morning, February 5th, Mr. Ames again rose. It was now perceived by all that the tide was on the flood, and the excitement was intense. The enemies of the Constitution had taken the alarm, and the hopes of its friends were brightening. The crisis was peculiarly adapted to the metaphorical scripture-like eloquence of Ames. He argued with great power in favor of the general provisions of the Constitution.

Mr Barrell, of York, immediately proclaimed his conversion—Dr Taylor quibbled—Mr Parsons demonstrated—Gilbert Dench, fearful of the issue, moved an adjournment of the Convention to a future day. The motion being negatived by a large majority, they adjourned to the next day.

On the next day, February 6, Dr. Stillman, who stood at the head of the Baptist priesthood in Massachusetts, and who as yet was wholly uncommitted, in a speech, solid, solemn, animated and eloquent, free from all cavils and doubts, delivered his conscientious convictions. "Whatever my previous opinion was," said he, "I now stand on firmer ground than ever respecting the proposed Constitution. I am ready to vote for it without any Amendments."

The Rev. Charles Turner, of Scituate,⁹ who had been steady in his opposition, then rose, and in a most solemn and priestly manner, seized upon the Amendments to make known and to justify his change of opinion. "I have been averse to the reception of this Constitution, while it was considered merely in its original form," said he, "but as the Convention agreed to recommend Amendments, I acknowledge my mind is reconciled. If we cannot get something better than the Confederation, we are an undone people."

Dr. Spring, of Watertown,¹⁰ who to this moment had cherished hopes that the Constitution would be rejected, throwing up his hands in utter despair, exclaimed—"Help, Lord, for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men."¹¹

Captain Southworth would not give up, but Mr Symmes, of Andover, the champion of the cause, yielded to the current, and concluded a speech in support of the Constitution, with a declaration that he stood acquitted to his own conscience—he hoped to his constituents, and he knew he was acquitted before God. The debate was then closed by Governor Hancock. His speech was courteous and conciliatory. "The question now before you," said he, in concluding, "is such as no nation on earth, without the limits of America, has ever had the privilege of deciding upon. As the Supreme Ruler of the Universe has seen fit to bestow upon us this glorious opportunity, let us decide upon it—appealing to him for the rectitude of our intentions—and in humble confidence that he will yet continue to bless and save our country."

The question was then taken, and on the 6th day of February, 1788, the Constitution was ratified by a majority of 19—the yeas being 187, the nays 168. Several of its most inveterate opponents then declared their adhesion, and the Convention adjourned to the next day. The news of the ratification of the Constitution ran with the rapidity of lightning through Boston and the surrounding towns, and when the members of the Convention proceeded to their respective lodgings, the streets were thronged with people. Those who had voted for the Constitution were received with cheers and acclamations. The people pressed forward to take them by the hand. The ice which had encrusted many a heart was melted, and some wept tears of joy.

It was a general saturnalia; the Governor and the beggar rejoiced together.^(d)

On the next day, February 7th, the Convention reassembled at the Old South. More adhesions were given in. They then adjourned to the Old State House. The Sheriff of Suffolk made solemn proclamation of the ratification of the Constitution, and the Convention adjourned *sine die*.

A feast for the members of the Convention was provided in the Senate Chamber by the citizens of Boston. They feasted high, and no warning appeared on the walls. Celebrations, processions and convivial meetings followed, not only in Boston, but throughout the country.^(e)

The political philosophy; the deep investigations of the science of government; the sound sense and splendid eloquence displayed in the Convention of Massachusetts, would have been lost to the world had it not been for the indefatigable industry of Major Russell. There were no stenographers and reporters by profession at that time in Boston. He reported and published all the debates. There are full reports of the debates, in the Conventions of Virginia and New York, and of the first Convention of North Carolina; but it is easy to perceive the reporters' style in the whole. Doubtless the arguments, and some strong and striking expressions, are correctly given; but the peculiarities of the different speakers cannot be traced in any reports excepting those of Major Russell, who has stamped each speech with the speakers own marks.

Massachusetts was the sixth State which ratified the Constitution. Still it was very doubtful whether it would become the supreme law of the land. It was necessary that the assent of nine States at least, should be obtained. In Rhode Island and North Carolina, the prospect was hopeless. In Maryland, the opposition was led by Luther Martin and Samuel Chase, two of the most distinguished citizens of that State. Yet it was ratified on the 28th [26th] of April, 1788, and in South Carolina, after a severe struggle, on the 23d day of May. On the 25th [21st] of June, New Hampshire followed the example of Massachusetts, and ratified the Constitution, recommending amendments. This accession completed the Union and saved the Constitution. But without the accession of Virginia and New York, this great work would have been imperfect. In both States, the parties were nearly divided, and in the Convention of Virginia, the weight of talent and character was with the Antifederalists. The ratification, however, obtained on the 26th [25th] day of June, and in New York on the 26th day of July, by a majority of five votes.

“Tantæ molis erat Romanam condere gentem.”^{(f)12} . . .

(a) Mr. Dunbar, of Stoughton, it is said, was much influenced by his kinsman, the late Dr. Danforth.¹³

Theophilus Parsons undertook to overcome the scruples of the Rev. Mr. Perley, of Maine. “I cannot support a Constitution which does not acknowledge the existence and moral government of the Supreme Being,” said the minister.

"A truth, which all admit, requires no formal acknowledgment: the acknowledgment might create a suspicion that some did doubt," said the lawyer. "The Jews, after sinning and punishment, solemnly acknowledged the Lord," said the Minister. "That was because they had denied him and worshipped idols, but we solemnly acknowledge, and publicly worship him at stated times," said the Lawyer. "I suppose," continued Mr. Parsons, "that in the course of your ministerial labors, you have preached from texts in every book of the Old Testament." "Yes," said Mr. Perley, "I probably have." "You have preached from texts in the Book of Esther?" "Doubtless I have," said Mr. Perley. "Do you know, that in the Book of Esther," said Mr. Parsons, "there is not a single allusion to the Supreme Being?" "It is not possible," said Mr. Perley. "Look!" said Mr. Parsons. The search was made. "You are right," said Mr. Perley. "Now, Sir," continued Mr. Parsons, "if in one of the canonical books, which are of paramount authority for the religious and moral government of man, there is no acknowledgment of the Supreme Being, why should such an acknowledgment be indispensable in a Constitution—an instrument which is merely the work of man? If the inspired writers did not deem such an acknowledgment necessary, why should we pretend to be more wise and more devout than the Prophets?" "My scruples are removed," said the Minister.

(b) Amongst the most intimate friends and associates of John Hancock, were Col. Thomas Dawes and Nathaniel Balch.¹⁴ "When I visited the Governor," says Brissot, "I found him in the greatest familiarity with a hatter!"¹⁵ The hatter was Balch,—a man not only of a fine majestic appearance, but of exquisite humor, delightful social qualities, unwearied benevolence and sterling integrity. Colonel Dawes, long at the head of the mechanic interest, was a person of great sagacity, an adroit politician and an accomplished gentleman. That the mechanics exercised an efficient influence at this crisis, is a fact which cannot be controverted. One of the delegates to the Convention once said to the writer, "Dr. West, no doubt, had much influence with Hancock, but it was the Boston mechanics who frightened not only him, but Samuel Adams and John Winthrop, into the support of the Constitution."

(c) The grandfather and father of John Hancock, were country clergymen,—the first of Lexington, the last of Braintree, now Quincy.¹⁶

(d) At this joyous moment even the inveteracy of Adam Colson gave way. When his boarders, (all of whom were in the majority,) approached, he ran into the street without his hat—seized his wig—swung it around his head and huzzaed for the Constitution. During the whole night, parties of young men were traversing the streets, and in the wild exuberance of their joy, singing songs of triumph. Colson's windows were threatened, but his boarders saved them. The house was spared and the boarders cheered.

Dr. West returned from an evening party with his huge pockets literally crammed with silk stockings, fine handkerchiefs, pieces of cambric, &c. The good man was uneasy lest in his absent moments he might, unconsciously, have pocketed them, and was anxious to restore them. His friends quieted his scruples. "Those articles, doctor," said they, "came honestly into your pockets. *Take the goods the gods provide ye.*"¹⁷

(e) Mr. Wales, the delegate from Dorchester, got up a procession in which machinery was introduced. "Old Testament times have returned," said Holder Slocum.¹⁸ "As I passed through Dorchester I met Tubal Cain, instructor of every artificer in brass and iron."

(f) The writer is aware that the narrative of the progress of the States towards the establishment of the Federal Constitution, does not, strictly speaking, appertain to the biography of Major Russell, but he was induced to take this course in consequence of the suggestions of gentlemen whose opinions he was bound to respect. In his sphere, Major Russell performed an important part in bringing about the result, and it was thought by those gentlemen to whose opinions the writer deferred, that there would be nothing incongruous in such a course, and that the connection of Major Russell with the great affairs of the times, was sufficient to warrant it, especially in all that related to the proceedings of Massachusetts; and it was further said, that there were many interesting facts connected with the ratification of the Constitution by the Convention of Massachusetts, which were fast hastening to that oblivion in which the deeds of men are concealed, and unless arrested and brought to light

would be forever lost. The writer was well acquainted with several of the delegates to the Convention, and has often heard many of the anecdotes which he has related from their own lips. He had also the benefit of a long and interesting conversation with the Hon. JOHN DAVIS, late Judge of the District Court of Massachusetts,¹⁹ and, for a time, during the administration of Washington, Comptroller of the Treasury, who is the only survivor of that Convention, standing, as it were, alone on the isthmus which connects the infancy and the manhood of the American Republic—speaking of things which he knew and saw, upon which time has already cast deep shadows. Long may he live to delight his friends by his virtues, and instruct them by his wisdom.

1. Printed: Francis Baylies, *Eulogy on the Hon. Benjamin Russell, Delivered Before the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Massachusetts, March 10, 1845* (Boston, 1845), 35–47, 63–65. This eulogy by Baylies, himself a Mason, was printed at the office of the *Freemasons' Magazine* shortly after Baylies delivered it. Russell, the former editor of the *Massachusetts Centinel* (the *Columbian Centinel* after 1790), had died on 4 January 1845.

2. 2 Samuel 20:1.

3. See “Elbridge Gerry and the Massachusetts Convention,” 12–22 January 1788 (RCS:Mass., 1175–81).

4. For other mechanics who possibly opposed the Constitution, see RCS:Mass., 935, note 6.

5. The reference is to J. P. Brissot de Warville (1754–93), who visited the United States in 1788 and who published an account of his travels entitled *Nouveau Voyage dans les États-Unis de L'Amérique Septentrionale, Fait en 1788* (3 vols., Paris, 1791). An English translation was published in London in 1792 and this translation was reprinted in New York and Dublin the same year and in Boston in 1797. The leader of the Girondin Party during the French Revolution, Brissot was executed in 1793.

6. Hancock first attended the Convention on 30 January, but he did not propose recommendatory amendments until the afternoon of the next day.

7. See “Report of the Committee of Twenty-Five,” 3–4 February (RCS:Mass., 1410–15).

8. The Reverend Moses Hemmenway—a Harvard College graduate (1755), a delegate from Wells, Maine, and a member of the Committee of Twenty-Five—voted to ratify the Constitution. He was pastor of the First Congregational Church of Wells from 1759 until his death in 1811. Hemmenway received the degree of doctor of divinity from Harvard in 1785 and from Dartmouth College in 1792.

9. Turner had given up his pastorate of the First Congregational Church of Duxbury in 1775 and had returned to Scituate, his native town. While there, he preached occasionally.

10. The incident involving delegate Dr. Marshall Spring of Watertown does not appear in the published Convention debates. It was described in a brief item in the *Massachusetts Centinel* on 8 March. (For the text of this item and the public reaction to it, see RCS:Mass., 1488, note 2.)

11. Psalms 12:1.

12. Latin: “So vast a struggle it was to found the Roman nation” (Virgil, *The Aeneid*, Book 1, line 33).

13. Possibly Samuel Danforth, a Harvard College graduate (1758), a former Loyalist, and a wealthy Boston physician. Elijah Dunbar and his fellow Stoughton delegate Jedidiah Southworth were instructed by their town to use their judgment when voting on ratification of the Constitution. Dunbar apparently was an opponent of the Constitution, but he changed his mind and voted to ratify it. (Southworth voted against ratification.) In open debate, Antifederalist Samuel Thompson attacked Dunbar for changing his mind, wrongly accusing him of having violated his instructions. (See RCS:Mass., 1043-44, 1373n, 1558, 1560n, 1576.)

14. According to one of Hancock's biographers, Boston hatter Nathaniel Balch was Hancock's favorite companion. (See also note 15.) Balch and Hancock's wife were at the governor's bedside when he died in 1793 (William M. Fowler, Jr., *The Baron of Beacon Hill: A Biography of John Hancock* [Boston, 1980]), 254, 279). In December 1787 Balch was named on one of the nomination tickets for delegates to the Massachusetts Convention, being described as "a *mechanick*" (RCS:Mass., 925). Colonel Thomas Dawes, Sr., a wealthy mason and architect and the father of Boston delegate Thomas Dawes, was named on six nomination tickets (RCS:Mass., 918, 920, 921, 924, 925).

15. In his published travels, Brissot noted that he had supper at Hancock's home "in the company of a hatter who seemed to be an intimate friend." According to an editor and translator of Brissot's travels, the copy of the book that Brissot gave to Harvard College has a handwritten note stating that the hatter was a Mr. Balch. (See J. P. Brissot de Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America*, ed. Durand Echeverria [Cambridge, Mass., 1964], 105, 105n.)

16. Hancock's grandfather John, a graduate of Harvard College (1689), was minister of the Congregational church in the North Precinct of Cambridge (later Lexington), from 1698 to 1752. Hancock's father John, a Harvard College graduate (1719), was minister of the Congregational church in the North Parish of Braintree (later Quincy), from 1726 to 1744.

17. Titus Maccius Plautus, *Rudens* [*The Rope*], Act IV, scene 7, line 3.

18. Holder Slocum, a Dartmouth farmer, voted against ratification of the Constitution in the Massachusetts Convention. He sat in the state House of Representatives, 1776-77, 1791-1801 (and later), and the state Senate, 1787-90.

19. John Davis, a Plymouth lawyer and Harvard College graduate (1781), voted to ratify the Constitution in the Massachusetts Convention. He sat in the state House of Representatives, 1792-95, and the state Senate, 1795. In the latter year, Davis was appointed comptroller of the U.S. Treasury. He was U.S. attorney for the District of Massachusetts, 1796-1801, and U.S. judge for that district, 1801-41.

Theophilus Parsons, Jr.: Memoir of Theophilus Parsons, Sr. Boston, 1859 (excerpts)¹

. . . And now for the means by which Hancock and Samuel Adams, on whom so much depended, who were hostile to each other, and were both opposed to the Constitution, were induced to agree in its support; and enough of the adverse majority brought over to save the Constitution, and with it, perhaps, the State and the nation.

The Convention met, as has been said, January 9th, 1788. From the first hour the prospect darkened with every day. The hopes of those who desired the acceptance of the Constitution grew continually more

feeble, until, on the 31st of January,² Hancock came in and took his place as President, having excused himself from previous attendance on the score of incapacitating illness.

After some members had spoken, my father moved "that this Convention do now assent to and ratify this Constitution." Two or three members spoke to the general question, and then "his Excellency the President rose, and observed. . . ." [See Convention Debates, 31 January, A.M., RCS:Mass., 1379, for Hancock's remarks.]

The Convention then adjourned to the afternoon; and when it met, "his Excellency the President observed. . . ." [See Convention Debates, 31 January, P.M., RCS:Mass., 1383-84, for Hancock's remarks.]

The proposition was as follows. . . . [See Convention Journal, 31 January, P.M., RCS:Mass., 1381-82, for Hancock's proposition.]

These amendments are often called, in the histories of the times, the "Conciliatory Resolutions," and they were eminently so. It was their purpose, and it was their effect, to reconcile conflicting opinions, and to procure the adoption of the Constitution. Samuel Adams at once arose, declared himself satisfied with the Constitution with these amendments, and seconded them. They were referred to a committee, and reported with little change;³ and after some discussion, in which one or two of the opponents of the Constitution spoke of the amendments as reconciling them to it,—as Mr. Turner of Scituate and Mr. Symmes of Andover,⁴—the Constitution was adopted, by one hundred and eighty-seven yeas, against one hundred and sixty-eight nays; or by a majority of only nineteen out of three hundred and fifty-five votes. At once, however, many of its leading opponents hastened to declare that it had been fairly adopted, that they accepted it in good faith, and would go home and do their utmost to reconcile the people to it, and induce a general recognition of it as the law of the land. In Boston the rejoicing was universal. There was a great procession,⁵ with much burning of gunpowder, many dinners, speeches, songs, and other demonstrations of great joy.

I have said that these "Conciliatory Resolutions" saved the Constitution; and I say so, because everybody said so then, and nobody has since denied this, so far as I know. Some stanzas in a ballad made on the occasion, and sung to "Yankee Doodle," expressed the common opinion:

Then 'Squire Hancock, like a man
 Who dearly loves the nation,
 By a concil'atory plan,
 Prevented much vexation. . . .

[For the entire song, see "A Yankee," *Pennsylvania Mercury*, 21 February 1788, Mfm:Mass.; and CC:552.]⁶

I have dwelt on these amendments, because my father wrote them, and every word of them. It was also said, very commonly, that Hancock read them from the manuscript in my father's handwriting; but Mr. Quincy, in a letter to me, published a few pages farther on, does not think this probable.

I should not state so positively that my father was the author of these amendments, if my belief of it rested only on a family tradition, however clear and constant that might be; or even because I remember hearing of the following incident as long ago as I remember anything. He then lived in Newburyport, and when in Boston resided with his brother William, in Summer Street.⁷ On the Saturday after the amendments were offered by Hancock, my uncle made a "conciliatory" dinner. Some who had been hostile were there, as well as some of the faithful. My father was not present, having gone to Newburyport to pass his Sunday at home. A member who had been satisfied by these amendments, when the conversation fell upon them, took a copy from his pocket, and began to read it, with vast praise of Hancock as the saviour of his country. A young niece of my aunt was in the room. She was one of those bright, observing, and outspoken children—those *enfants terribles*—who do a good deal of mischief without intending it; but it is difficult for me to describe her in this way, for I knew her only as a feeble and sickly, and, as I then thought, aged woman. While the reading was going on, she plucked at my uncle's coat until he turned to her with, "Well, what is it, my dear?" "Why, Uncle, is not that the paper that Uncle Theoph was reading to Mr. Cabot last Wednesday night?" Those who were in the secret joined in making it out a jest or a blunder, and it passed by. But again and again in after years would my uncle laugh at his niece about her "letting the cat out of the bag."

Colonel Joseph May, the administrator of Mr. Hancock, found the original draft, in my father's handwriting, among Mr. Hancock's papers.⁸ "Laco," a writer in the newspapers of much celebrity in those days, was generally supposed to be Mr. Stephen Higginson, who was certainly as honest a man as ever lived, and one of my father's especial friends. After some account of the proceedings of the Convention, he goes on, in one of his essays, thus:

"The famous conciliatory proposition of Mr. Hancock, as it was called, was then prepared by the advocates (of the Constitution), and adopted by him; but the truth is, he never was consulted about it, nor knew its contents, before it was handed to him to bring forward in Convention. At the appointed time, Mr. Hancock, with all the parade of an arbiter of states, came out with the motion, not only in the words,

but with the very original paper that was given to him; and with a confidence astonishing to all who were in the secret, he called it his own, and said it was the result of his own reflections on the subject in the short intervals of ease which he had enjoyed during a most painful disorder. In this pompous and farcical manner did he make that famous proposition, upon which he and his adherents have arrogated so much."⁹

Mr. Higginson was hardly justified in the blame he cast on Mr. Hancock, unless he, or whoever else was Laco, was an eyewitness, and described what he saw. If the printed debates can be relied on, there was no "pomp," &c. in the manner in which he introduced the resolution; and there seems to be a careful and constant forbearance from all personal claim to their paternity. He speaks of them to the Convention as "your proposals," and "the amendments proposed," &c.; but avoids every expression which would seem to claim them as his own; speaking, as it appears to me, with an obvious, if not a studied ambiguity.

It has often been said to me, in reference to this matter, "Your father then saved the country"; and the same sentiment has been expressed in many ways. But my father was only one of many who co-operated to this good result. Washington, in a letter from which I have already quoted, in which he speaks with great joy of the adoption of the Constitution in this State, bears emphatic testimony to "the good sense, sound reasoning, moderation, and temper," without which "nothing else could have carried the question." In truth, the ablest men of the country labored together.¹⁰

It was said then, and has been repeated again and again, that a bargain was made with Hancock that he should have and keep all the credit of preparing, as well as offering, these resolutions, and of saving the Constitution by them, and that the "Federalists" would join his friends in making him Governor, and giving him what further political distinction, in the State or the Union, he might desire. I have never seen any evidence of such a bargain, and believe it to have been wholly unnecessary. Hancock knew perfectly well that it was just as much the interest of the preparers of those resolutions as it was his own to keep the secret, for some years at least; and he knew, too, that if he took this position, and thus secured the adoption of the Constitution, it would not be possible to prevent his being chosen Governor, or from becoming the most popular man in the State. With his own party he was powerful, and they formed a strong, if not the strongest party; and the Federalists could not oppose him, if they would.

More than this: it should be said, I think, in justice to Hancock (of whom I am not an admirer), that it is certainly possible that, learning from day to day what was going on in the Convention, he might think

some step of this kind would be wise and acceptable, and on his own account desire it. It was said that he delayed all interference until the friends of the Constitution succeeded in giving him the opinion that it *might* be adopted without his aid, and that he was thereby prevailed upon to take a position from which it would be inferred that it was carried only through his influence. I cannot say how this was.

The resolutions probably originated with the "Essex Junto."¹¹ My father wrote these resolutions, or amendments, or propositions,—for they have been called, both then and since, by all these names. But it would be impossible now, and perhaps would have been difficult then, to apportion to each one of those who assisted, in one way or another, his exact share of advice or suggestion.

There is evidence enough that a plan of this kind was for some time in agitation. Madison, in a letter to Washington already quoted from, says, "With all this ability in support of the Constitution, I am pretty well satisfied we shall lose the question, *unless we can take off some of the opposition by amendments.*"¹² By this time, probably, the plan was determined on; and it is so obvious an expedient, that it must have been in the minds of some from the beginning of the Convention, or even before it.

The resolutions were referred to a committee, as I have stated. It consisted of twenty-five members. My father was the third named on this committee. In this connection, the letter of General Knox to Robert R. Livingston is quite significant. He says, "As the propositions were the production of the Federalists, after mature deliberation, there cannot be a doubt that the committee will report in favor of the propositions as they are stated."¹³ This seems to me *conclusive* on three points: one, that they had been for some time under consideration; another, that neither Hancock nor any of his party wrote them; another, that, however carefully the secret was kept, the truth was known, in substance at least, to the leading Federalists of the day, and freely spoken of by them to each other. There is other evidence that the secret had leaked out a little. Mr. Stillman, in a speech delivered February 6, after much laudation of Mr. Hancock, says: "But what has been the consequence of your Excellency's conciliatory propositions? Jealousy! jealousy, sir, that there was a snake in the grass, a secret intention to deceive! I shudder at the ungenerous suggestion; nor will I dwell a moment longer on the distressing idea." General Thompson said, "as to the amendments, he could not say amen to them, but they might be voted for by some men,—he did not say Judases." And Dr. Jarvis said, soon after, "It has been insinuated, sir, that these amendments have been artfully introduced to lead to a decision which would not otherwise be

had." But the secret was, on the whole, well kept. They had their expected influence; and the Constitution was saved. And if this were all their merit, it would be enough to win for them a place in history.

But this is not all. It is now quite certain that very few persons indeed, if any, were perfectly satisfied with the Constitution as originally adopted by the Convention at Philadelphia, and by them offered to the States. They who were most earnestly desirous that it should be accepted by the States were, perhaps, the most profoundly convinced that it had great defects. It would be an entire mistake to suppose that, because Cabot, Ames, Strong, and others, with my father, were ready to vote for it as it stood, and to do everything in their power to secure its adoption, they did not see its defects, or did not desire to supply them. The Constitution as offered was infinitely better than none; and rather than peril its adoption, they would have accepted it just as it was, and succeeded so far in exciting this feeling in the Massachusetts Convention, that a proposition to make the amendments a part of the Constitution as adopted by this State was voted down, and the Constitution was adopted as it was offered, leaving the amendments to be afterwards acted upon by the States. It must not be supposed, therefore, that my father merely reduced to writing what others desired, and he did not desire. On the contrary, no one was more solicitous than he was that some of them—I may name the first one especially—should be added to the Constitution. But his friends considered, at the time, that he had displayed the utmost skill in preparing amendments which should not only make the Constitution more acceptable to the Convention generally, and overcome the objections of opponents who were not agreed together in their opposition, and give to the Constitution a popular character which recommended it to the people and to those who sought the favor of the people,—but accomplish these objects by introducing provisions which he himself strongly desired, and which the best friends of the Constitution around him regarded as improving it very greatly. How far he deserved this praise, others can judge as well as I can, or better.

There could, at all events, be no greater mistake than that of supposing these amendments to be mere trivialities, with which a trick was played to preserve things of value. The fact is very far otherwise. The first of them has become, it is not too much to say, the very keystone of the national Constitution. It is that in which it is declared, that "all powers not expressly delegated by the aforesaid Constitution, are reserved to the several States." This provision now sets limits to all its other provisions, and is constantly invoked in the consideration of other important clauses. It was not in the original Constitution, but was

written by my father, and placed at the head of those amendments which were put by him into Hancock's hands, and in this way made the means of saving the whole. Being adopted by Massachusetts, it was proposed by Congress to the other States (under the fifth article of the original Constitution); and its value and necessity being at once perceived, it was immediately accepted by the requisite number of States, and was so incorporated into the Constitution.

The eighth amendment, securing a trial of issues of fact in certain cases by a jury, and the sixth, that no one shall be tried for a capital or infamous crime except upon indictment by a grand jury, were also adopted, and are now in force as a part of the Constitution. Besides these, the principle and the intended effect of some of the others have been secured by legislation.

It may be thought strange, that, after all possibility of mischief from the disclosure had passed away, my father did not declare his authorship, and put the fact and the evidence of it on record. So it may seem strange that he never signed the "Essex Result,"¹⁴ or caused or authorized his name to be published in any manner in connection with it. I can only say it was just so to the end of his life. It will be seen presently how much he not only did, but how much he wrote, and how much he gave to others to publish, and what masses of manuscript on various topics he left behind, some in a form ready for the press, and how sedulously and constantly he withheld his name. As far as I can find, he *never in his whole life* published anything under his own name and as his own production; unless the decisions of the Supreme Court may be so considered. In explanation of this I can only repeat what may seem incredible, that he had a positive dislike for, and disgust at, notoriety. I do not mean that he applied to the subject of fame the principle of Agar's prayer as to wealth,—“Give me neither poverty nor riches,”¹⁵—and therefore desired only a simple respectability, as the condition most favorable for character and for happiness, for this I should have thought sound and wise. But I repeat what I have already intimated, that he indulged an extreme contempt for the “*vox populi*,” which was developed at an early period of his life, and was strengthened with advancing years.

I insert here an interesting letter from President Quincy.¹⁶ It would be superfluous to say to any readers who or what Mr. Quincy was or is. I may remark, however, that his letter will be welcome evidence to those who love to believe, that unyielding tenacity of memory, and undimmed clearness of thought, may be preserved to a very advanced age.

JOSIAH QUINCY TO THEOPHILUS PARSONS

SIR: It would give me great pleasure to aid the design you communicated to me in your favor of the 21st instant, of writing the life of

your father, deserving as he is of that tribute as much as was any of his contemporaries. But I can add little to the facts contained in the records of the time, and in the memory of many of his contemporaries who yet survive. I was far too young to appreciate his talents on his first appearance in public life. My first personal acquaintance was as a student at the bar, between 1790 and 1793, in which relation I had frequent opportunities to hear and be instructed by his learning and arguments. When he moved his family to Boston, he resided in the same street (Pearl Street) with me, and as a neighbor I had occasional, and sometimes professional intercourse with him; but he was not a man to encourage frequent and desultory intercourse. He had the aspect of one whose thoughts were concentrated on topics having little sympathy with the transient occurrences of daily life. Wherever he was, he was regarded somewhat as an oracle, particularly on legal questions, and in shaping the course of political measures. In his character as a mathematician and as a classical scholar, he stood quite as high, in the popular opinion, as in that of a lawyer. In visits to him in his office, when not engaged in professional pursuits, I have found him reading some Greek author in the original, apparently for amusement or relaxation.

My earliest remembrance of him was in the Convention for the adoption of the Federal Constitution in Massachusetts, where, though he spoke little, his influence in its measures was not second to that of any of its members. Concerning the conciliatory resolutions which Hancock offered to that Convention, you say, "They were written by my father, and Hancock read them from my father's manuscript." In the first statement you are right; in the last, unquestionably in an error. Hancock was too cunning for that. I had occasion, recently, to have my attention drawn to that point. Mr. T. C. Amory, the grandson of James Sullivan, addressed a letter to me, in February last, stating that he had found Hancock's conciliatory resolutions among the papers of his grandfather; and that it was from that paper he thought himself entitled to consider James Sullivan as the author of them.¹⁷ An extract from my letter to Mr. Amory will explain my opinion on the point.

"I have no doubt, as you state, that James Sullivan, afterwards Governor of this State, *brought the amendments* Governor Hancock proposed to the Convention then in session, and which were, in fact, the conditions on which he gave his vote for the Constitution, and that those amendments were *in Sullivan's handwriting*. It is also true that Sullivan was the confidential adviser, at that time, of Governor Hancock. But the conclusion you draw from this fact, that Sullivan was the draftsman of those amendments, is repugnant to all the statements made in conversation at the time, and to all the relations which then existed among the parties which divided the Commonwealth. That *Laco* (a writer at

that time supposed to be Stephen Higginson) did, as you state, assert that Theophilus Parsons drafted those amendments, I have no doubt. Such was the assertion at the time among the advocates of the Constitution, though of course not bruited about. The advocates of the Constitution were deeply sensible of the importance of giving Hancock entire credit for those amendments, to which any understanding between Hancock and those advocates would have been fatal. Their object was to secure the vote of Hancock on any terms. Although these amendments were confidentially stated to have been drafted by Parsons, yet it was well known that he had the aid and concurrence of other leading advocates of the Constitution, although his mind was probably predominating in the conception and the terms.

“The general facts were these: both Hancock and Samuel Adams were, from the first, in heart and soul opposed to the adoption of the Federal Constitution. They anticipated that it would quench the beams of State sovereignty, in which their pride and power were concentrated. They were both the most generally popular men in Massachusetts, and, united, they supposed their opinion would be all-influential, and at the outset, perhaps, they expected to defeat it. And their opposition was not yielded, until the development of public sentiment led them to apprehend that the Constitution might be carried in spite of their opposition. To Hancock, who of all men was the most sensitive to the popular pulse, the idea that the Constitution might be carried in opposition to his opinion was dreadful. The desire of having its success, if it must be carried, attributed to his influence, coincided with his predominating passions,—love of popularity, and ambition to be thought the pivot on which great public events turned. When his mind, either by its own action or the urgency of friends, had been brought to the conviction that the Constitution might be adopted notwithstanding his negative, and he came to the conclusion that it was his best course to join the advocates of the Constitution and cast the weight of his voice in its favor, he was naturally desirous of adopting such a course as would be satisfactory to them, and that, in some form, such an understanding should be effected as would meet their views, and yet provide a safe plank by which, without loss of reputation, he might pass over from a decided opposition to an open acquiescence in the Constitution. All this was well understood at the time. That Hancock’s amendments had been deliberately weighed and prepared by leading advocates of the Constitution, of whom Parsons was one of the principal, and Judge Dana another (both in opposition politically to Governor Hancock), was circulated while these events were in progress among the friends of the Constitution, and believed unquestionably.

By what means, or through what medium, the draft of those amendments had been transmitted, is unknown to me, but of the fact I can have no doubt. Their appearing in Sullivan's handwriting, and his bringing them to the meeting-house, is quite reconcilable with the above fact. Sullivan was the known confidential adviser of Hancock. It was essential to Hancock's reputation that every appearance of any understanding with the leaders of the advocates for the Constitution should be unknown, to which end their being in the handwriting of his known adviser, and transmitted by his agency, was not only important, but in a manner essential.

"Such were the views, at the time of those events, I was led to entertain, and, in the course of a long life, I have not heard or known anything to change them. James Sullivan was a man of uncommon intellectual powers, and his influence over the mind of Hancock was well understood. Party feeling, at that day, was very violent, and it is quite impossible that there should have been harmony of action between Parsons, Dana, and Sullivan in the concoction of those amendments. The current of public opinion must have been at the time wholly at fault, if Mr. Sullivan had any agency in drafting them."

I have copied the above parts of a letter to Mr. Amory, in reply to the same point, as the best mode of stating my opinions touching the subject to which yours alludes, which touches a vein of thoughts and of memories easy to open, but difficult to cicatrize. And like old divines, after they had finished the nineteenth head of their discourse, I close with, "This must suffice for the present."

I am, respectfully, your friend and servant,

JOSIAH QUINCY.

Boston, 23 April, 1857. . . .

1. Printed: Theophilus Parsons, [Jr.], *Memoir of Theophilus Parsons* . . . (Boston, 1859; reprint ed., New York, 1970), 64-80. For an additional excerpt from this memoir, see Mfm:Mass. Theophilus Parsons, Jr. (1797-1882), a son of Theophilus Parsons and a lawyer, was a professor at the Harvard Law School, 1848-69. While writing this memoir, Parsons used the *Convention Debates* (1856). On p. 64, for example, he told his readers that several of the letters he had quoted "may be found in the recent edition of the Debates."

2. John Hancock first attended the debates on 30 January, and he did not propose recommendatory amendments until the next day.

3. See "Report of the Committee of Twenty-Five," 3-4 February (RCS:Mass., 1410-15).

4. Charles Turner and William Symmes both spoke on the afternoon of 6 February, before the vote on ratifying the Constitution.

5. The account of this procession as reported in the *Massachusetts Centinel*, 9, 13 February, was reprinted in *Convention Debates* (1856) in the section entitled "Public Sentiment of the Day" (pp. 323-29). For the text of this account, see RCS:Mass., 1614, 1618-22.

6. This song was reprinted in *Convention Debates* (1856) in the section entitled "Public Sentiment of the Day" (pp. 332-34).

7. The *Boston Directory* for 1789 lists William Parsons as a merchant and the owner of his own wharf. His residence was on South Street, but the 1796 directory has him then living on Summer Street.

8. For more on Joseph May, see James Savage to Theophilus Parsons, 4 May 1857, in the portion of the *Memoirs of Theophilus Parsons* in Mfm:Mass. See also William V. Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams* (Mfm:Mass.).

9. See "Laco" VII (RCS:Mass., 1772).

10. Parsons quotes from George Washington's letter to Henry Knox of 3 March 1788, which was printed in *Convention Debates* (1856), 412. For the text of this letter, see also Abbot, *Washington*, VI, 139-40.

11. This description was first applied to a conservative and elitist group of men of considerable property and learning from Essex County. These men, and later others from both inside and outside the county, eventually formed a leadership core of the Federalist Party in Massachusetts; in particular, they wanted to stem the growth of democracy. This group or clique included Fisher Ames, George Cabot, Tristram Dalton, Francis Dana, Benjamin Greenleaf, Stephen Higginson, Jonathan Jackson, and Theophilus Parsons.

For a good discussion of the junto, see David H. Fischer, "The Myth of the Essex Junto," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., XXI (1964), 191-235. (See also note 14.) In discussing the political thought of the junto, Fischer often quotes and paraphrases Jonathan Jackson's *Political Situation*. (For Jackson's *Political Situation*, see RCS:Mass., 1763-69.)

12. Parsons actually quotes from a 27 January letter written by Convention delegate Nathaniel Gorham to James Madison that Madison quoted in his 3 February letter to George Washington. (See *Convention Debates* [1856], 406-7. Upon Gorham's request, Madison did not identify Gorham as the writer. For Gorham's letter, see also RCS:Mass., 1552-53; and for Madison's letter, see also Rutland, *Madison*, X, 464-65.)

13. Parsons refers to Henry Knox's 10 February letter to Livingston that is printed in *Convention Debates* (1856), 410-11. For Knox's letter, see RCS:Mass., 1585-86.

14. After the state constitutional convention of 1778 proposed a constitution, the towns of Essex County met in convention to consider its provisions. The "Essex Result," probably written by Theophilus Parsons, criticized the constitution and proposed alternative provisions. In his memoir, Parsons reprinted the text of the "Essex Result," which was signed and attested only by the chairman of the Essex County convention (pp. 359-402). For the text of the "Essex Result," see also Oscar and Mary Handlin, eds., *The Popular Sources of Political Authority: Documents on the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780* (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), 324-65.

15. The words of Agur are: "Remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me" (Proverbs 30:8).

16. Josiah Quincy (1772-1864), a graduate of Harvard College (1790) and variously a congressman, state senator, state representative, and Boston mayor, was president of Harvard College, 1829-45. When only sixteen years of age, Quincy sat in the gallery to hear the debates of the Massachusetts Convention. (See Mfm:Mass., for an account of Josiah Quincy and the Massachusetts Convention that was published in his son Edmund's biography of him in 1868.)

17. The same year that Parsons's *Memoir* was published, Thomas C. Amory gave a different version of the matter concerning Hancock and amendments in his *Life of James Sullivan: With Selections from His Writings* (2 vols., Boston, 1859), I, 222-25. For excerpts from this work that include the pages cited here, see Mfm:Mass. Amory, a prolific historian, biographer, and genealogist, was a grandson of James Sullivan.

APPENDIX

Justus Dwight Journal, 7 January–9 February 1788

Antifederalist Justus Dwight, Belchertown's delegate to the Massachusetts Convention, took minutes of the Convention's debates in a thirty-two-page journal. The minutes cover the period 7 January through 9 February 1788, from the time Dwight left Belchertown until he returned. With the exception of 19 January, Dwight kept minutes for each day the Convention met. At the end of the journal, Dwight listed the amount of money he was entitled to for travel and attendance, the partial payment he received, and the balance yet due. He also itemized the expenses for the journey to Boston, listing the names of the proprietors of the taverns in which he lodged and the towns through which he travelled.

Dwight did not name some speakers, usually leaving a blank space after the title "Mr." The editors have provided the names of most of these speakers in square brackets after examining other records of debates included in the third volume of Massachusetts ratification. An underline has been inserted after "Mr" when the speaker could not be identified. The journal, which is difficult to transcribe, contains valuable accounts of speeches that appear nowhere else, including arguments that clarify other versions of speeches.

A photocopy of the manuscript of this journal has been received by the editors recently, thanks to the courtesy of the staff of the Stone House Museum, including Shirley A. Bock, Doris M. Dickinson, and Caren Cormier. The journal was stolen from the Museum in the early 1990s. In March 2001 Assistant Curator Bock contacted the editors with the most welcome news that Dwight's journal had been located. She reported that the journal was sold at auction in 1992 and that the purchaser agreed to return it to the Museum. The journal was returned in April, when Assistant Curator Dickinson photocopied it and sent it to the editors, together with permission to publish a new transcription of it. The Belchertown Historical Association owns the original manuscript.

Prior to the recovery of the manuscript, the editors obtained a transcription that was completed in December 1987 by Keith Valentine Kaplan—then a senior and Hancock Scholar at Belchertown High School and now a history teacher at Holliston High School in Holliston, Mass.—as part of a project commemorating the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution. When the editors compared this transcription with

other accounts of the debates, they discovered that it was seriously flawed. Therefore, they printed only a small portion of the transcription in the third volume of Massachusetts ratification—that portion being the minutes for 29 January because Dwight's notes were the only known accounts for that day (RCS:Mass., 1363–64, 1365). Occasionally, the editors used the Kaplan transcription in editorial notes, supplying brief summaries or quotations to supplement other accounts of the Convention's proceedings and debates. As indicated by the errata below, the use of this transcription led to several significant errors.

Monday, 7 January

I Set out from home to go to Boston to meet the Convention upon the Proposed Federal Constitution went as far as Worcester

Tuesday, 8 January

Tuesday I arived at Boston

Wednesday, 9 January, A.M. and P.M.

Meet in the Court House¹ & first Chose a Committee to receive the returns of the Selectmen or Certifycates

Chose a Secratary Mr Minot

Chose five monitors

ajour[ne]d to four oClock which time was assignd for the Choce of a President

In the afternoon Chose his Excelency John Hancock President whole 280 he had 271²

the Honbl William Cushin[g] vice President

Thursday, 10 January, A.M. and P.M.

Thursday Spent the forenoon in needless Disputs about the Instructions to a Committee to Examine the Returns of the members

in the afternoon went to Mr Thatchers meating House³ spent the afternoon in needless Disputs

Friday, 11 January, A.M. and P.M.

Friday in the forenoon mett at Mr Thatchers meeting Hous

had the Remonstrances against Several members read Chose three Committees to Consider the Legality of the Choice of Sheffield Stockbridge & Williamstown members[.] adjourned

in the afternoon meet at Mr Thatchers meeting House voted to Except [i.e., accept] of all the members that are Regularly returned by the Selectmen

the Convention got fully Satisfied that one half the Convention Could not hear in the meeting hous Concluded to have Seats made on the floor of the Court House and adjourned to meet in the Court House tomorrow morning

Saturday, 12 January

Saturday meet at the Court House Spent the forenoon in

Concluded to Except the two members that was Disputed from Taunton and the members from Sheffield Stockbridge Sheffield Great Barrington and Williams Town.

Sunday, 13 January

Sabethday went in the forenoon to the Stone Chappel⁴ in the afternoon to Mr Thatcher

Monday, 14 January, A.M. and P.M.

Monday mett at the Court house a proposal Brought by Mr Strong to have the Constitution Brought on by Parigraphs and freely & Cooley Conversed on through the whole and then taken up at Large and argued on Before a final vote[.] pased in the afirmitive

a motion made that Mr Gerra be Requested to take a Seat in the flore and to answer to any que[s]tion that the Convention Shall ask him[.] after many Disputes on the motion it was put and pased in the afirmitive

Returns of the whole number 285

number that voted [yea] 175[.] majority 65⁵

in the afternoon Proceeded to take the Constitution under Consider[at]ion by Parigraphs the Introducktion read

Mr Turner made an observation that there ought to have been made some mention of Religion

first Parigraph read Mr Gorham made a Spe[e]ch in favour of Different Branches of Government

Question ask why the small States had as many Senators as Large answer that the small States would not agree on no other terms that they are Compleat sovereign States

that the Large States will have a right according to their numbers in the House of Representitives

a motion made to have two Printers have Leave to be in the house to take minut[e]s of the Debates[.] passd in the afirmative
Section 2d

Question ask'd why the Election were not anual
answer by Mr Gorham that the State of [South] Carilona would not agree to it

Mr King objected agains[t] the members that Composed the Const[i]tution [being] asked Questions on the Constitution

Mr Parsons argues that two years is not too Long becaus they Cant get acquainted with the Bussiness in a short [period] of time

G[eneral] Brooks that the Expence of geting together so often as once a year would be great to Choos Representative & would be Inconvenient

Mr Turner that the House would not be all new if they governed well they would be Chosen year after year

Tuesday, 15 January, A.M. and P.M.

Tuesday meet at the Court House
motion to have the 4th Section read

Mr Strong that the m[a]j[o]r part of the [Constitutional] Convention to have the House Chosen but once in three years
that the people would not be acquainted in So Short a time
that great Britain is as flourishing sinc the Parliments have been Long as before⁶

Mr [Ames] that a govt by Representation is Better than by the people that we are not to Determine what time is necessary untill w[e] make Trial

that it is best to have it 2 years becaus the Extent of the Country
that the people would not know the abillities or Dispo[s]ition of the Repre[sen]t[at]ives in Less time

Mr Dench whether the Congress when Elected will not Dictate the whole Election

Govr Bodoin that they Canot Lay any taxes but what will be Laid on themselves

Becaus they are to be subject of their own Laws

Gen Heath Quotation to Montesque that more than one year Dangerous⁷

that it has been the opin[i]ons of our forefathers that an[n]ual Election are best

that those that go to Congress are supposed to know the State of the people

British Parliment often go home to know the state and minds of the people in Dificult Cases if we have receivd advantages by short Election how shall we hold it up our Children who may alter it to 3 or 7

Mr Turner that if we adopt 2 years by some means will [have?] another Stride to a much Longer time

Gen Brook Jno [John Brooks] that in former days the Britttish Parliments were Called by there Princes one year

of Late have been for 3 or 7 years

and that their Libert[ie]s are as well secured as well as any people on Earth

Gen Thompson that the Last year will Convince anyone that an[n]ual Elections are best becaus that it pleases the people⁸

King Gore that the people have not Lost their Liberty by Long Election but by faction

Mr ____ that

Wednesday, 16 January, A.M.

meet at the Court House first voted to pass to the next P[a]ragraph 2 Parigraph Mr Gorham that it necessary that Every Person should be of that age to understand his Country & for the same re[a]son should [be] an Inhabitant

Mr King on the fo[u]rth [section] that the Congress ought to have power to Compel the States to Send members

Doctr Taylor that the Congress will have it in their power to alter the manner and place of Election supose they should Carry the Election to some distant part

Mr Sedgwick that the Congress will have no desire to take the advantage of altering the place of Election & becaus they are Connected with the people

G[overnor] Bodonn that it is necessary the Congress Should have power to alter the place Becaus the states may have it in their power to Carry the Election into places Inconvenient for people & therefore

Gen Thompson that it was soon Enough to alter the places of Election when the States refused

Thursday, 17 January, A.M. and P.M.

Spent the forenoon on the Same Paragraph that we was on the day before

in the afternoon meet at Mr Bel[k]naps Meeting House in Long Lane⁹

2d Paragraph that no senator [i.e., representative] shall be appointed that shall not attain to the age of 25 years

objected that those of old age ought to be Excluded & that those Elected ought to be posed of some Estate¹⁰

answered that what would be reconed a Considerable Estate in this State would not be reconed but Little in the Southern States that thier age is Short in Comparison with ours¹¹

3 Paragraph that Representatives and direct taxes shall be appor- tioned among the several States &c &c

Mr King that Representation and Taxation ought to go hand in hand three fifth of all ~~the Inhabitants~~ Slaves added to all the white or free people

that the Present Congress recomend it as a valuation¹² cannot be obtained

Doctr Taylor that the number of Representatives too small that it is a great advantage to have the people well Represented

Friday, 18 January, A.M.

Mr Gorham that 3 Slaves in the Southern States are not Equal to 3 freemen becaus they plow with their Slaves

Mr Cooley how the taxes will be ap[p]or[t]ioned among the Individ- ual State[s]

Genl Brook [Eleazer Brooks] that it will be Left to the Legislatures of the Several States queri whether they will not gather their own taxes by their own officers

Mr Randal that the most l[e]arned men are in favour of the Cons[t]itution but Let the artillery be turned about and we may finish the matter and go home in 2 days

Dr Holton that taxation has been tried in Congress by valueation and found Impractable

that if the Constitution takes place he has no objection against the mode

but to say that Congress will not make the tax but will Let the several States make thear own taxes

but that the Congress will be obliged to do it by thier oath & that to suppose the Several State[s] to have power to Lay & Colect Continiental taxes would be to Suppose a power within a power

Mr Dawes that it is no way Likely that the Congress will want to Lay a tax on polls & Estates if they have the Impost & Excise

Mr Wedgery that on an avarage in the Southern States there will be no more than 48 Polls to a Thousand acrs but that in the northern their will be 120 to a Thousand acrs

that they will be as Likely to give a wrong account in the number of Inhabitants

Mr Strong that if the Southern Lands are so much better [than] the no[rthern,] State why are we so much thicker in this State

that the representation is Large Enough as it would be very Expensive if very Large

~~in the afternoon~~

~~Mr Gore~~

Monday, 21 January, A.M. and P.M.

a motion made by G[overnor] Bodoïn that a Certain peice put into the centinal purportng that a Large sum of money are brought into this town to bribe the members that are against the Constitution Requesting that the Convention Look into the affair Mr Phelps¹³ objected that we have no power to Consituea [i.e., Constitute] a Court of Enquirey if so Let a Committee be appointed at Large to See if the Convention are imposed on in any way

.....
Mr Gorham that it is necessary that the affair be Look[ed] into that the publick may know whether thier is such Conduct or not

Mr White that their no Law to punish if Detected

Mr Sedgwick that it is for the honnour of this Conv to Investigate the matter

Mr Wedgery whether it is any Reflection on the Convention that bribes are offered unless they are receivid

Judg Dana that we have no authority to punish
that if a Committee be Chosen to go to the printer and are insulted
it will be out in the next paper and no means to punish

Mr West that the Printer was at a Loss whether to put in the
p[a]ragraph or not but the person who offered the peice said he Could
prove it

Question whether the motion Subside pased in the negative

motion whether the Convention take up the matter pased in the
affirmative

after 12 oClock began on the Constitution
Several paragraph passed over

Mr Parsons objects against pasing in such a rapid manner
Mr Ames[,] Judge Dana Spok on the 4 Section and are full in favour
of it but mention nothing but what has been before

Mr Parsons can we suppose the Congress will be Corrupt

afternoon Several pased over
Doctr Tay[lor] moves that it be Explained how Long from time to
time is

Mr King that it must be at Each session of Congress

Mr Wedgery that the Congress may keep secret

Mr Gorham that it is uterly impossable to Carry on Publick affairs
unless secrecy in some Cases

Mr Perly that there was never a greater general than Washinton

Doctr Taylor that it was oposed that the Governour Lt Governour
should rec[e]ive their pay from G Britain

G[eneral] Porter member may be kept from Congress from want of
Suport if Left with the States

Mr Sedgwick the Legislature of this have always assessed thier own wages

~~Mr Gorham that~~

Mr King that no requisition on the states will never be answered if they have not power on Indaviduals they Can never rais any money that Several States have never paid but Little

Tuesday, 22 January, A.M. and P.M.

Judge Sumner that it is necessary to have a Government to suport the Dignity of the States & pay the debts[.] if the Impost should be Insuficient in Case of war ought not the Congress to have power to Lay taxes

Mr Gore that it is impossible to know the Exegencies of the States

Mr ____ that if they adopt the power of Laying taxes in the Congress officer will be mul[t]iplied to Levi & Colect said taxes they must be under pay & perhaps it will take the most of the taxes to pay the Colectors when it might be in the power of the States to rais & Colect the taxes in thier own way & by thier own officers

Mr Phillips that the danger is not so great in Government as in the people[.] when their is no vetue [i.e., virtue] in the people we Cant Expect any Government will be good

Mr [Dr. Samuel Willard] that the Strength of Government Lies in the unity & freedom of the people that inslaved people will never Exert themselves in suport of the Government that inslaves them brought many Instances from History

Mr Gorham that their is no danger from the Southern States becaus that all north of Penselvania are farmers Like this State & the neighbouring States

Mr [Cabot] that it ought to be in the hands of Congress to Lay & Colect taxes becaus they Could do it beter before it had been denied by a State than after

Mr [Randall] that the same disp[osition] is the same in all ages that where there is not a sufficient Check on power they will be as Likly to Stretch a power now as Ever

in the afternoon a Letter from Mr Gerry read in which he resents the treatment of Judg Dana when Mr Gerry was in the house

Judge Dana vindicates his Conduct with respect to Mr Gerry[.] leaves the house¹⁴

Mr Gore objects against Mr Gerrys information with respect to the senate

Mr Sedgwick Proposes to have the facts that Mr Gerry Sends in writing read in order to apeas the House which Seems to be in a ruffel and out of Temper

Mr Gerry State of facts read a Committee proposed much debate on the subject

a Committee proposed & much said on the subject untill the Convention apeared in a ruffle
motion made to have the motion subside

Wednesday, 23 January, A.M. and P.M.

a motion made to have the Lt Governour Council Secretary & Speaker a Seat in the house[.] a vote that the motion subside

went on the Same parragraph we Left yesterday

Mr [Peirce] that the Senate ought not to Stand any Longer then the house

Mr [Varnum] That the Congress have no power to regulate the Internal police of the States it has be[en] said that Congress might abuse power but there is no Danger

that this State has paid more than her proportion of the war & without this Claus we Can never be righted

Mr Chote that this power will make us respectable among the nations that it will be an advantages to the trade & fishery that they Can borrow money on better terms

Gen Thompson that Standing armies are always Dangerous that a well regulated militia is always Safe that is our Safty to be in debt

that it is said by some Let us adopt the Constitution and regulate it afterwards but shall we Swallow a Large bone to get a Little meat

that the nation of Great Br[i]tain Cant raise money to suport armies for more than one year

Govr Bodoin that for want of power in Congress to Colect moneys they have been obliged to Borrow money to pay Intrest & our Publick & privet property is pledged for it[.] that our trade suffers

that if there should be found defects in the Constitution they may be altered

that foreign power are watching our affairs

that if we dont Come into some Energetict Government we shall be divided among them

that the members of Congress will be subject to the Laws

Dr Taylor that the gentleman has Given himself the Liberties to take the mat[t]er at Large he hopes the plan be adopted

Mr Parsons that we are not called upon to give up our privit Libertys but to take part of the power given to our State Legislatur & grant to Congress[.] that a religous test is no security becausa a man that believes no Religeon will take any oath

that if they usurp power it will be against the Legislature of thirteen States

in the afternoon a motion made to take up the Constitution at Large

a motion made to adjourn to go to the funeral of Mr Lincoln¹⁵ pased in the Negative

a motion made to have the first motion tried tomorow mornng pased in the Negative

a motion made to adjourn to nine oC[l]ock tomorow morning pased in the afirmitive

Thursday, 24 January, A.M. and P.M.

upon raising & suporting armies

Doctr Taylor that a well regulated melitia is suffic[ie]n[t] to quell Insurections[.] that notice is Generaly known

Mr Strong that the proposed power is no greater than the Congress now have

Mr Dalton that representatives are Chosen Every two years & it is in the power of the people to Disband armies

Gen Thompson that Britain provids for armies but one year at a time

Mr Gorham that if the Legislature should desire to keep up Stand-in[g] armies yet it is not in thier power for more than two years

a motion that the vote for Considering the Constitution by Parra-graphs be reconsidered & taken up at Large

passed in the negative¹⁶

a proposal to adjourn out of town subsided

half after 12 got on Bussiness again

read the 8th Section the whole

Mr Sedgwick that it is necessary to be united that it is impossible for any but the Genaral Government to know what forces or money may be necessary

that it is no ways Likly that a power will impose burdens purely for the sake of doing hurt

.....

Mr Dawes that the Confederation has greater power to rais armies than they will under this Constitution

Mr Dench the Government seems to be a Consolidation that it will Destroy the States Governments

afternoon

Mr Dench Cabot that the Existence of the Genaral Government Depends on the States

Mr Strong that it is necessary that no State should have the Jurisdiction over the place where the Genaral Government was

Doctr Taylor why was it ten mile Square

Mr Stilman that the States might grant as Little as they pleas

Mr Dench that the supream Government may Garantue to the several States what Government they pleas as they are Supream

that if we put the whole power into the hand of a supream power they will give back as much as they pleas

Mr ____ that it is not worth while to answer the Gentle[man] that Last spoke for some say that the Congress have no power[.] if they have power to alter the time maner & place its no matter about the rest

Genl [Eleazer] Brook that the house senat & President have their Existanc from the States

Esqr Singeltary that the several States will have the same power that the towns have under the States Goverments

Mr ____ that Gaurantee is the same as Warrant and Defend

Mr King that had they Enumerated the right of the States they might have Left out some[.] if they Enumerate the Power of Congress what is Left is the States that in Laying taxes the Congress & states in Laying taxes are Co-Equal that the states Cant be soverign & Congress too that if they had guaranteed the Present State goverments they Could not alter them

Mr ____ that it

Friday, 25 January, A.M. and P.M.

that if ten mile is alowed there will be Melitia to guard the Congress & no need of a Standing army

Mr Parsons that armies alway find qu[a]rtrers

Mr Sedwick that becaus we reserve some power as the Importation of Slaves &c. there is no danger

Mr Varnum that a Republican form of govt must be from the people & not from Congress[.] that the Congress Could not ~~violate the Const~~ in the Choice of members without violating the Constitution

Mr Ames Sets forth the dangerous Situation of our present Circumstances

afternoon

a Question asked why men that was against granting Impost to Congress are now willing to Except this Constitution

Mr Dalton that he was against[t] it [i.e., the Impost of 1783] because they were one body & had no Check

Mr Ames that the Constitution is more Safe than the Confederation

Esqr Singeltary that we had a right to Chuse Every year and Call home in Case of misconduct that all money were raised by the Legislatures of Each State

9 Section

Neal Quaker made a remark on the migration of Slaves and bore his testimony against it

Saturday, 26 January

Mr Strong that it was the best terms that we Could make with[.] that a people are not accountable for Individuals

Mr Nason that it is the Highest Cruelty to take Children from their Parents and make Slaves of them

Genl Brooks that without Government we Shall be as the africans &c and a [Stronger?] argument to us to unite in government

Mr Adams that a claus in this Section implies an Establishment of the State Legislatures

Mr Sedgwick that Legislature has no right over privet property that the noble Conduct of Massachusetts has Pervaded almost over the whole States

Mr Dalton that we ought to Consider that we Canot dictate the whole in Every State that we Should not be willing to adopt anything that would distroy us

Mr King that to Set the negros free all at once would put them in a wors situation than they are now

Mr Kneal [i.e., Neal] that if seven year Bondage by the Children Israel proved Seventy years Captivity what may we Expect

Dr Jervis Can we say to those of the southern States we will not Join with them unless they abolish Slavery

Monday, 28 January, A.M. and P.M.

Mr Parsons made a Loud Speech on the Habeas Corpus act that it will not be in the power of Govrment to suspend the act only in time of war

Section 10

Mr Dawes that for want of a general govment we are obliged to have all our goods brought in British Botoms if we had government we might prohibit any goods that did not Come in american ships

Mr Dana that the Southern States sent rice in great plenty to Britain Before the war[.] that they had all the profit in the afternoon some Debates on the same section

Mr Gore¹⁷ Produces a Letter to prove that the Southern State[s] Lay duties on our Beef Butter &ce

Genl Thomson doubts the reallyty of the Letter

article 3 [i.e., 2] Section 1 read

Mr Gorham that the reason that two persons were Proposed to be voted for for President was that the Small States Said if one was a~~ll~~ only voted for they should never have none in their states

Section 2

Mr Gorham there [is] greater safty in haveing the President account-able for all treaties than to have it Lodged in a number of men that if any one of the officers should die in the Recess of the Senate it is necessary that the Presidend should fill up such places

Mr Bishop that it is not reasonable that there should be pardon before Conviction

Mr King that it is necessary that it should be so becaus there may be great numbers Led asside by Infatuation

Judge Dana that suppose an army in Rebellion whether it would be likely they would Lay down there arms unless a Promise of pardon

Mr. Bishop that the Creaturs of the President might be guil[t]y of acts of treason & be Pardoned by him & perhaps they would not by the Legislature

Mr Bishop that the President & Senate have a right to make tre[a]ties & may Engage to Provide troops & the melitia might be forced out of the Jurisdiction of the Unighed States

Gorham the President & Senate have not power to rais money & Cant pay the men

Bishop they have power to Borow money & therefore Can pay any Troops

Tuesday, 29 January, A.M. and P.M.

Mr Dalton that it Cant be suposed that Congres will oblige the melitia to go into foreign Service

Mr Nason that the melitia will be an army when Imbodied

Mr Dalton that they have no power to rais the melitia only in Inva-tions & Insurections

Mr [---] that there is no Danger

Mr Old man when we give power to make treaties we give power to fulfill if our melitia are Joined with other power they must be under their controul

Mr Parsons that the Congress have power to send their armies out of the united states & it is right they should becaus it is better to atack an Enemy out of our Country than in it ~~that the President~~ that treaties unless aproved by the Legislature will be void

Mr Gorham that it may be very necessary to march an army out of the States

Mr Wedgery that all treaties made by the President & senate shall be the supream Law of the Land & therefore need not the Legislature to Confirm it

Mr Jones that it is not to be suposed that the President will Ever do it that they are raised for a short time and always dismissed at the time they Listed for

Several Persons proved to the Contrary

article 3 Section 1

Dea[co]n Davis desire to Enquire what other Court were alluded to

Mr White wondered at the Enquirees[.] all was all[.] if a mans head was attached it would be all cut off & all power is all power

article 3 Section 2

Mr Parsons that if there was to [i.e., no] Judicial power they Could not put their Laws in force that one State Canot get redress of another unless there is Such a power

that if it was in the power of those that hold publick Securities to sue them he wishes they would for they must take property that belongs to the State and not on privit property

whether two persons in deferent States may not for small affairs Cary thier suit to the Supream Court of the Land

Mr Parsons that it may be posible they may yet[.] it will not do to throw away a Constitution for so Small an Inconvenience

afternoon

Genl Brook why there was not mention of trial by Jury

Mr Gorham that the several States were divided as to that & it Could not be put in

Mr Sedgwick that the Court is always considered as Court & Jury that it is not Likly that it will be allowed unless it will be for the advantage of some party & in this Case it would not

that we have no reason to think a Jury will be Excluded unless in Cases Expressed in the Constitution

Mr Nason that we have been always used to trial by Jury & therefore will suit the people best

Mr Strong the deferent state were defrent in their Sentiments with respect to trials & it was thought best to Leave it to the Congress

Esqr Singultary the federal government are the Supream Law of the Land & Can distroy all the Laws of the deferent States
if any man had advanced such a thing as this Constitution ten years ago he would have [been] Called a tory

Mr Dench Queries what is Delagated to the federal Judicial Court & what reserved to the Several States

Mr Parsons that there are not one in a Hundred of actions that Can be Carried to the federal Court

Mr White I wonder what that Court is to try the sun moon & seven stars [i.e., planets] no I know what they will try they will try us without Jury & ~~I believe that~~ I know that man Seting on the Stairs¹⁸ thinks so by his Looks

Mr Wedgery whether a man in a deferent State holding securities against other States Cant Sue at this Court

Mr Sedwick that will come under the Ex post facto Law

Wednesday, 30 January, A.M. and P.M.

Judg Sumner the Judicial Judges having a Setled Sallary will render them Independant & therefore act free[.] it is Likly that the Inferiour Court mentioned will be the Supream Judicial Courts of the several States

Mr Nason that it was one of the objection that we had against the British administration¹⁹

Mr Dawes that the word Court Implies a Jury

if so why is it said so many times that it is Likly Congress will make Laws to appoint Juries

Genl Thompson Exclaimed against narrow minds that acted by private views

afternoon passed to Section 3

Passed to article 4th Section 1

Passed to Section 2d

Passed to Section 3

Query whether the state of Vermont was admitted to the Convention that formed the Constitution

Mr King that [---] was Inserted New States may be Erected purely for Vermont²⁰

Passed to Section 4th

Mr Parsons that guarantee implies to warrant that Each State is to have a Republican form of Government but not to have Just such a form as they pleas

Mr Adams that no State will be allowed any other form but Republican

Mr West Exclaims against Genl Thompson Casting reflections on a Certain Gentl[eman] who had turned since he Came to this Convention

Genl Thompson that what he said with respect to a Certain Gentl[eman] was to prove that the Constitution was difficult to be understood (Digresion)

Mr King that under the present Confederation there is no Possible way of Erecting new States that new states Erected in the Eastern parts will make the Balance in the senate in favour of the Eastern States

Esqr Singaltary whether the forms of Government is to be such as the Congress makes or such as the states Chose

Mr Gorham I Believe that Each State will have thier own Government

Esq Singiltary that our Priviledges may be great or very small

Mr Sedwick I suppose the Convention thought of nothing but Each State have their own

Thursday, 31 January, A.M. and P.M.

article 5th

Genl Thompson whether the two third mentiond is two thirds of nine States or the whole

Mr Parsons that it suposes all in the union

Genl Thompson Speaks against the slave trade

Mr Stilman when Independ[ent] states Enter into an allianc they must agree one with another that Each State may abolish Slavery that we are not partakers with them becaus we are in alliance

Dr Taylor that we may not do Evel that good may Come we do in Efect Establish the trade

Genl Heath it is not in the power of any to force any to oblige to give up the trade and therefore are not partakers of others Sins

Quaker²¹ Exclames against slavery

Genl Thompson on a Religous test he thinks it would be best

Mr Parsons that a Religous test would answer no purpos but to keep out good men out of office but not bad men

the Last section read Mr Parsons moved for the Question²²

Genl Heath made a Long Spe[e]ch setting forth that it was best to adopt it & recomend it to the first Congress to amend it

& Concluded that if he should be so hapy as to Convinc five or ten he should think his time well Spent

In the afternoon

Govr Hancock brought on a Proposal that the first Congress should be Instructed to have some amendmets such as he Presented

Mr Adams that it is highly necessary that we agree in some union

Doctr Taylor that it is not safe to trust to that method becaus we have nothing to do but to Except or reject that we have no Certanty that the alteration will be made

Friday, 1 February, A.M.

Mr Bodoin [i.e., James Bowdoin, Jr.] took the whole Constitution and set forth the wisdom and goodness of it

Mr Adams took the Proposals of amendment by article & set forth the great advantage there would be in haveing the amendments & in his opin[i]on would not be safe without

Saturday, 2 February

D[eaco]n Peirc²³ that he hop[e]s that there will be no such thing as Leading the Convention into a notion that the amendments are Certain

Gen Brook that as the amendments will not afect the Local Circumstances of any State it is Likely they will take place

Mr Strong took the proposed amendments and argued on them that it was more Likly to have them take place to propose them than to Insert them as part of the Constitution

that several of the States will not agree to amend the old Confederation

Chose a Committe to make amendments of 26 [i.e., 25] the Committe Spent the Sabath on the Bussiness adjourned to 3 oClock Monday PM

Monday, 4 February

Monday 3 oClock meet Febr 4th

Mr [Rev. Thomas Thacher] made a Long spe[e]ch seting forth the great necessary of adopting the Constitution

that this Comonwealth has advanced a greater proportion of Expenc than any other State

that we are ruined unless we adopt it

Tuesday, 5 February, A.M. and P.M.

Meet a motion made that the Question be put tomorrow 11 oClock

Mr Ames that it is more Likly that the amendments will take place if the Constitution is accepted than to get them any other way

Mr Dench set forth the great necessity of Consulting our Constituents before we proceed to the grand Question²⁴

Mr White that it is much best to Consult our Constitutents

Mr Parker²⁵ that to go fast is to go sure therefore Let us take the best method to keep peace

proposed to have his Exelency write the several amendments to the several states that have adopted the Constitution

Mr Sedgwick that the Convention has no right to adjourn that the peoples minds will be more adgita[t]ed

Mr Snow that if we adjourn we shall never meet again

Mr Parsons that there is a number of men & in this Convention that will oppose Every method to reconcile the people that if we adjourn once we may again that the people will have a right to Chuse new members & have to go all over again that if he knew his Constituents were all against it he would vote for it

Mr Barrel that some of the States have hurried on the adopting the Constitution Jehu²⁶ Like[.] that it is his opinion that the people ought to know the proposed amendments

Genl Thompson that it will show to the world to[o] if we adjourn that we are willing they should know the debates of this Convention and act for themselves

Mr ____ that if there is an adjourn we shall in two month be in as great Confusion as Ever we were since the Witchcraft²⁷

in the afternoon after many Debates it was put to vote whether this Convention adjourn to some future day pased in the Negative whole number of the Convention 329 voted to adjourn 115

Wednesday, 6 February, A.M. and P.M.

Brought on the Motion for assignng a time for taking the yeas & nays on the Question²⁸

Mr White objected against haveing it near night he did not Like the works of Darkness

he said he Could not divine what would be the Consequences but he Could almost

Voted to assign 4 oClock this afternoon

Genl Thompson that we have only to adopt or reject

Dr Jarvis that it is an afront to Common Sense to think that we may not take the Liberty of proposing amendments if w[e] think best

Some amendments proposed to be aded²⁹

Mr White it is a sugar teat to make the Constitution go down & he hopes that people will not be taken in

in the afternoon at 4 oClock the Question whether we adopt the Constitution the whole number present 355 yeas 187: Nays 168

19 majarrity in favour of the Constitution but a great number voted Contrary to there Constituants

Thursday, 7 February

meet and read over the pay role the whole sum £4499: 2: 0

Friday, 8 February

Set out for home got as far as Worcester

Saturday, 9 February

got home

Convention Payments and Expenses

Was at Boston under pay 30 days with the Travil was

	£13: 13: 0
Recd a bank note	4: 10: 0
Yet due	9: 3 0

an account of the Expences on our Journey to Boston		
at Cook at Western	£ 0: 0: 10	
at Colo Reads Brookfield	0: 3 6	
at Burns	0: 0 5	
at Stares	0: 8: 4	

at No[rth]borough	0:	1	6
at "	00:	0	10
Capt Jones in Weston	0	4	4
Williston	0:	1	1
at the bridge			6
	1:	1:	4
<hr/>			
Charges at [Baker?] ³⁰	£2:	14	0
<hr/>			
Barber	0:	4:	4½
Williams			8
Peases		8:	10

1. The Massachusetts Convention convened in the State House which was the meeting place of the Massachusetts General Court, the state's legislature.

2. Dwight is the only source for the number of votes received by Hancock.

3. A reference to the Brattle Street Congregational Church whose pastor was Peter Thacher. For the church, see "The Meeting Places of the Massachusetts Convention," 9 January–7 February 1788 (RCS:Mass., 1163–65).

4. The Stone Chapel (originally King's Chapel) was established in 1686 as the first Episcopal church in New England. Its pastor in 1788 was James Freeman.

5. Delegate Theodore Sedgwick claimed that the majority was about twenty votes "in a house of about 320" (to Henry Van Schaack, 18 January, RCS:Mass., 741). For more on Elbridge Gerry, see "Elbridge Gerry and the Massachusetts Convention," 12–22 January 1788 (RCS:Mass., 1175–81).

6. Caleb Strong probably refers to the Septennial Act of 1716 which allowed Parliaments to continue no longer than seven years. This act superseded the Triennial Act of 1694 which stipulated that Parliament should be elected at least once every three years.

7. See RCS:Mass., 1194, at note 7.

8. Samuel Thompson was one of the last speakers in the morning session and one of the first in the afternoon. The next speaker listed by Dwight, Christopher Gore, spoke in the afternoon.

9. For the Reverend Jeremy Belknap's Congregational Church in Long Lane, see "The Meeting Places of the Massachusetts Convention," 9 January–7 February 1788 (RCS:Mass., 1163–65).

10. See the debates of 17 January, P.M. (RCS:Mass., 1236, 1240–41).

11. See the speech of Rufus King (RCS:Mass., 1236, 1240).

12. An amendment to the Articles of Confederation, proposed in April 1783, provided that population (including three-fifths of slaves) should replace land valuation as the means of apportioning federal expenses among the states. Even though this amendment had not been adopted, Congress used it to allocate its 1786 requisition.

13. John Phelps represented Westfield in the state House of Representatives, 1788–90, and 1791–92, and served as a justice of the peace from 1790 through at least 1801. He did not vote on the ratification of the Constitution. For a full discussion of the alleged attempt to bribe members of the Convention, see RCS:Mass., 759–67.

14. For Francis Dana's absence from the Convention and his return, see RCS:Mass., 1180.

15. Benjamin Lincoln, Jr., the son of Hingham delegate Benjamin Lincoln. For the younger Lincoln's funeral, see RCS:Mass., 1249, note 1.

16. For the Convention's action on this motion, see RCS:Mass., 1334–36, 1338, 1556–57.

17. Jeremy Belknap's notes reveal that it was John Coffin Jones who read a letter from Alexandria, Va. (RCS:Mass., 1361–62). Both Jones and Gore were Boston delegates.

18. Below the word "Stairs," Dwight wrote "Parsons," apparently identifying the "man Setting on the Stairs" as Theophilus Parsons.

19. In 1772 and 1773 the popular party in Massachusetts, especially in Boston, vigorously opposed the attempt of the British government to have the salaries of Massachusetts judges, which traditionally had been voted annually by the colonial legislature, paid instead from customs revenues. The popular party, which feared that the judges would be dependent upon the Crown, was largely successful because only the colony's chief justice accepted his salary from the Crown.

20. Article IV, section 3, clause 1, of the Constitution states: "New States may be admitted by the Congress into this Union; but no new State shall be formed or erected within the Jurisdiction of any other State; nor any State be formed by the Junction of two or more States, or Parts of States, without the Consent of the Legislatures of the States concerned as well as of the Congress." This clause was so worded to enable Vermont to be admitted to the Union without the consent of New York, which had not yet relinquished its claim to Vermont. (See Farrand, II, 455–56, 462–63.)

21. Probably James Neal.

22. Theophilus Parsons moved "that this Convention do assent to and ratify this Constitution" (RCS:Mass., 1377).

23. Probably Ebenezer Peirce of Partridgefield.

24. Gilbert Dench made a motion that the Convention adjourn to a future date so that the delegates could consult with their constituents about the Constitution and the recommendatory amendments proposed by John Hancock (RCS:Mass., 1450–52).

25. Timothy Parker of Sturbridge, a militia captain during the Revolution, represented that town in the three Massachusetts provincial congresses, 1774–75, and in the state House of Representatives, 1775–77, and 1778–79. He voted against ratifying the Constitution. Sturbridge elected Parker a Convention delegate on 3 December and instructed him on 17 December. The town records do not reveal the nature of the instructions (RCS:Mass., 1045).

26. 2 Kings 9:20.

27. Probably a reference to the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692–93.

28. See RCS:Mass., 1452–53.

29. Samuel Adams proposed additional amendments, but then he withdrew his motion. Some Antifederalist leaders renewed the motion which was defeated (RCS:Mass., 1452–54).

30. Possibly Mrs. Baker's tavern, *Sign of the Punch Bowl*, located in Dock Square in Boston, not far from the State House.

Errata

Errors in Massachusetts Volume 3

Due to Incorrect Transcription of Justus Dwight's Journal

- RCS:Mass., 1107, first paragraph, line 9: Replace "288" by "280" as the number of delegates counted by Dwight on 9 January.

- RCS:Mass., 1138, first two full paragraphs: Dwight's journal is thirty-two pages in length, not twenty pages. The manuscript has been recovered and is printed in this appendix; hence Keith Valentine Kaplan's transcription will not appear in Mfm:Mass.
- RCS:Mass., 1162, note 2, line 3: The estimate for the number of delegates present on 9 January should be "280" not "between 280 and 290."
- RCS:Mass., 1183, note 2, line 7: Daniel Cooley (Amherst) did not speak.
- RCS:Mass., 1184, headnote, first paragraph, line 2: Charles Turner did not read the preamble, but he did observe that the preamble should have referred to religion.
- RCS:Mass., 1187, note 8: Dwight says the speaker is "G[eneral] Brooks," which could be either John Brooks of Medford or Eleazer Brooks of Lincoln.
- RCS:Mass., 1360, note 1: Dwight lists as other speakers: Charles Jarvis, Rufus King, Theodore Sedgwick, Caleb Strong, and "Genl Brooks," which could be either John or Eleazer Brooks. He does not list Joseph Hosmer and Jonathan Keep.
- RCS:Mass., 1362, note 2: Dwight says that Christopher Gore "Produces" the letter.
- RCS:Mass., 1363-64, 1365: The text for 29 January, A.M. and P.M., is superseded by the transcription of the manuscript in this appendix.
- RCS:Mass., 1462, first paragraph, lines 8-9: The correct quotation from Dwight is "a great number voted Contrary to there Constituants."

Massachusetts Cumulative Index

Explanatory Note

This cumulative index covers Volumes IV–VII of *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*. Because these four Massachusetts volumes are paginated continuously, volume numbers do not appear in this index. Volume IV consists of pages i–lxxx, 1–474; Volume V, 475–1105; Volume VI, 1106–1514; and Volume VII, 1515–1825.

The names of residents of Massachusetts in this index are followed by the town of residence placed in parentheses. (“Maine” follows the town name both in the identification of individuals and in the separate entries for each town.) In addition to the place of residence, delegates to the Massachusetts Convention are identified as voting in favor of ratification (Y) or as opposing ratification (N) on the vote that took place on 6 February 1788. The delegates who were absent on that date are indicated by an “A.” Nonresidents of Massachusetts are identified by either their state or country of residence.

To aid the reader, compilations of similar items have been grouped under a common main entry. Such compilations are listed below. In addition to the grouping under Pseudonyms, pseudonymous items printed in these four volumes are indexed individually. The author’s name (when known) is placed in parentheses after the pseudonym. Some entries in this index are so unusual that they deserve to be highlighted. The reader should be particularly aware of these entries which are listed below.

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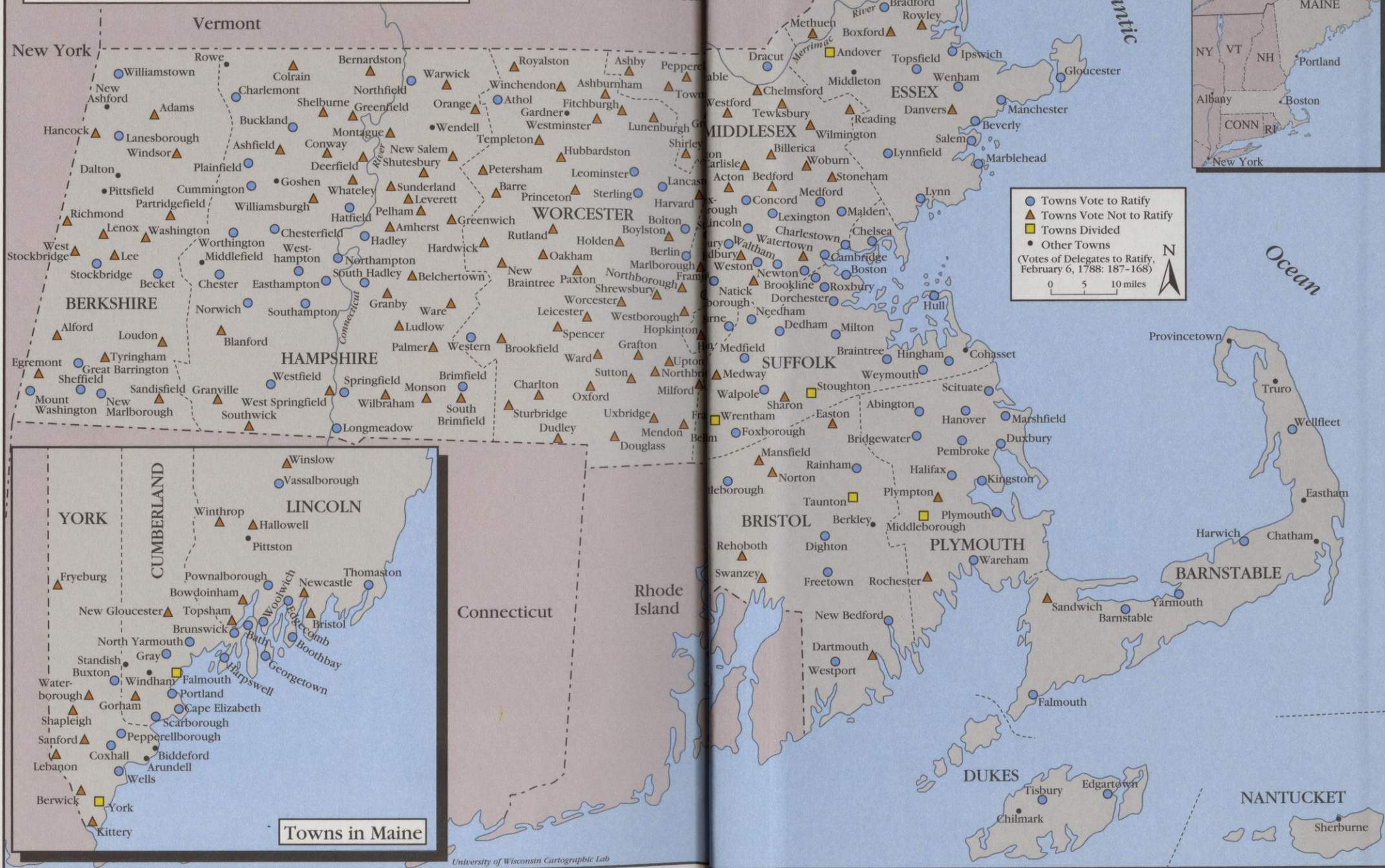
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- YORK COUNTY: Antifederalists from in Convention, 1072, 1073; gives Nathaniel Barrell cold reception after Convention, 1589, 1590n, 1708; Convention committee approves election of delegates from, 1171; and election of Convention delegates, 572, 573, 907; estimate of strength of parties in Convention delegation from, 1537, 1545; not many strongly Federalist or Antifederalist in, 781; receives Nasson well after Convention, 1707–8; usually sends supporters of Shays to General Court, 573; vote of delegates from on ratification, 574n, 1491, 1691
- YOUNG, WILLIAM (Williamstown): and disputed convention election, 896, 1066, 1067, 1068, 1069
- “Z,” 370, 371, 820; text of, 373–75, 559–60n, 1039–40; responses to, 370–71, 375–76, 378

Massachusetts Towns Vote on the Constitution



● Towns Vote to Ratify
▲ Towns Vote Not to Ratify
■ Towns Divided
● Other Towns
 (Votes of Delegates to Ratify, February 6, 1788: 187-168)

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Towns in Maine

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Especially noteworthy is the section on celebrations. Massachusetts ratification was the first to be celebrated throughout America, particularly in larger towns and cities. The most significant celebration occurred in Boston on 8 February 1788, only two days after ratification. About 4,500 people—representing most trades and professions—marched in an elaborately staged “grand procession” designed to depict the Constitution as the embodiment of union and patriotism. For the first time the people participated in the celebration rather than just being spectators. A celebration of this magnitude was unique in America; within months people in other states patterned their celebrations on Boston’s procession.

Building on the themes of union and patriotism, Federalists in Massachusetts and throughout America, including such a luminary as George Washington, praised those Antifederalist Convention delegates who pledged to support the Constitution in order to restore peace and harmony in Massachusetts. Federalists also lauded Governor Hancock for his pivotal role in ratification, thereby ensuring his overwhelming reelection as governor in the spring of 1788.

Despite these Federalist efforts, opposition to the Constitution endured. On 27 February Governor Hancock, addressing the last session of the old legislature, praised the Convention and its recommendatory amendments. A heated debate then ensued in which a former Antifederalist Convention delegate in the House of Representatives, where a majority opposed the Constitution, sought to include in the customary reply to the governor a harsh criticism of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 for reporting a constitution so inimical to the rights of the people and the states. Ultimately, both sides agreed to forego the reply. The House of Representatives also refused to concur with the Senate’s resolution for printing the Convention’s address (never completed) to the people of Massachusetts.

After returning home, some Antifederalist Convention delegates were criticized for voting to ratify, while others renewed their attacks on the Constitution. Three Hampshire County delegates even published a lengthy dissent to the Constitution in one of the local newspapers. Ever steadfast, the Antifederalist *American Herald* of Boston reprinted an avalanche of out-of-state essays attacking the Constitution. These ongoing Antifederalist endeavors proved ineffective as Federalists elected the governor, lieutenant governor, and majorities in both houses of the legislature in the spring of 1788.

Also included in this volume are a full-color endpaper map of Massachusetts ratification, a general and a Massachusetts chronology, a list of state officeholders, and an exhaustive cumulative index for all four Massachusetts volumes.

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