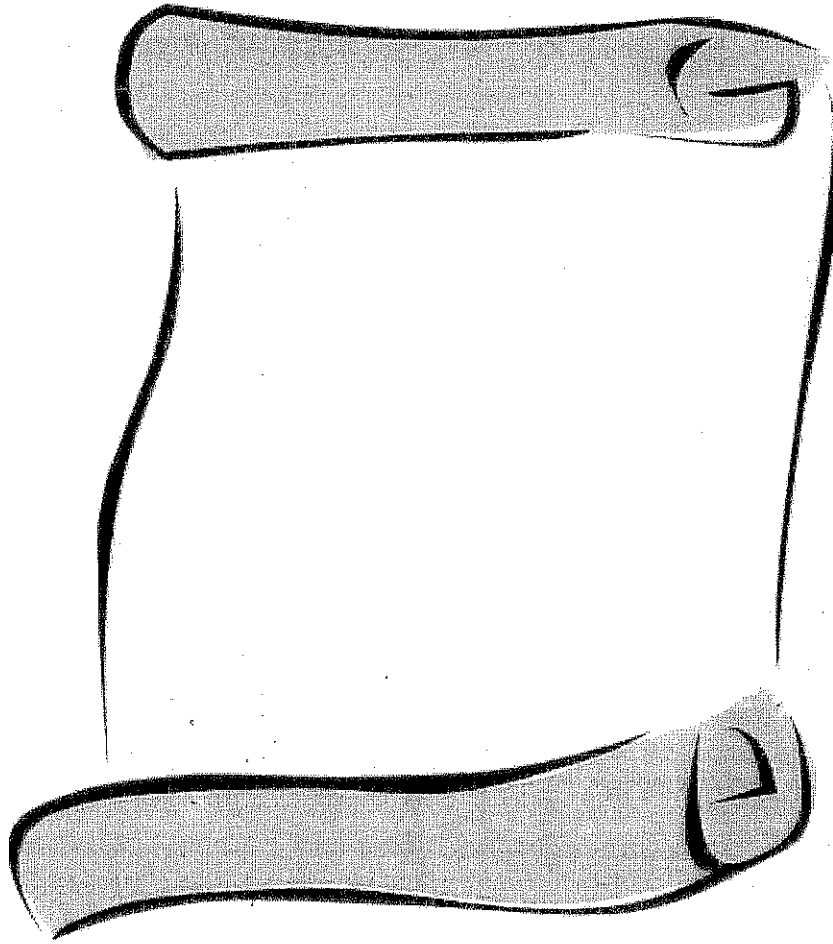
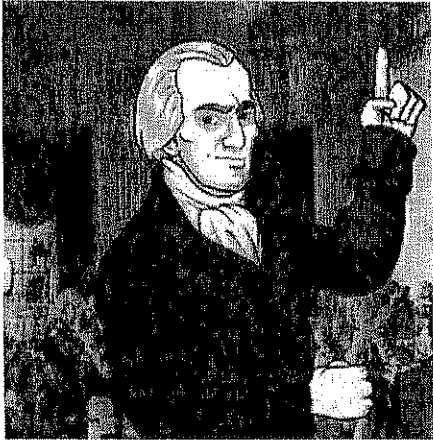


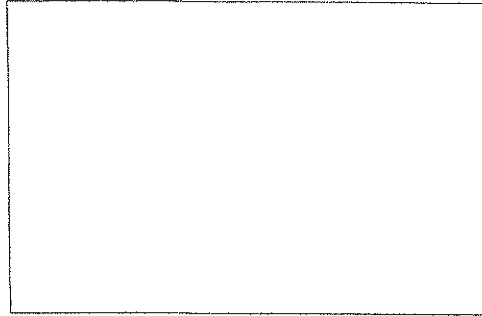
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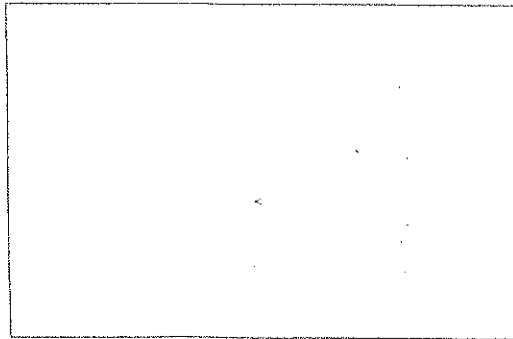
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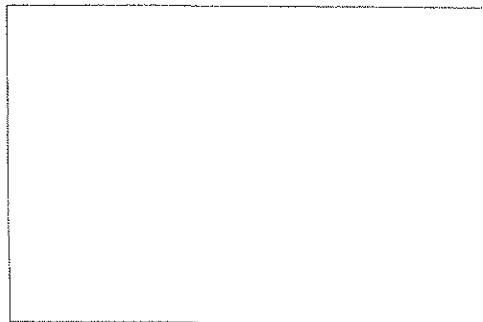
Elbridge Gerry, Massachusetts

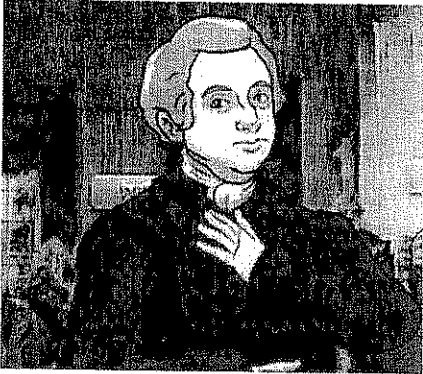


Roger Sherman, Connecticut

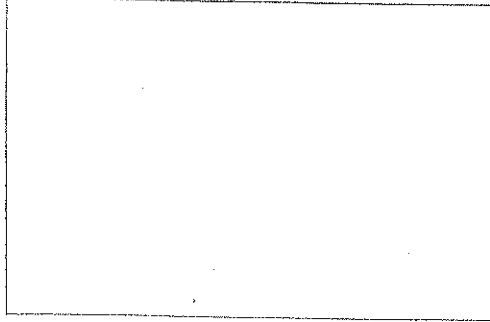


Alexander Hamilton, New York

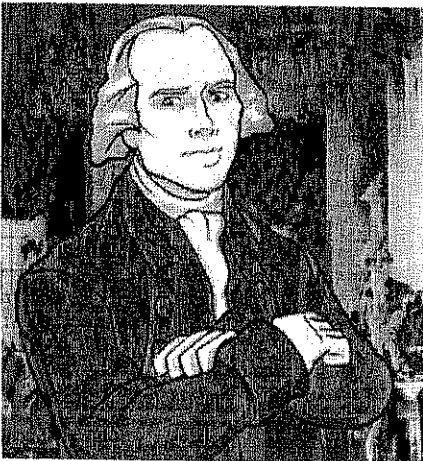
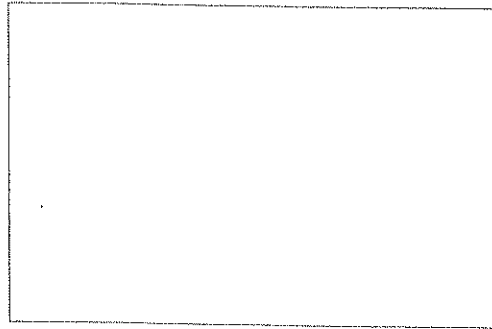




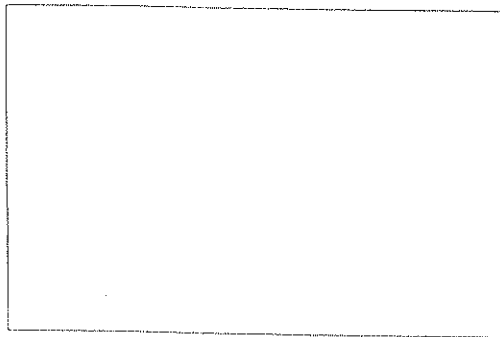
Gouverneur Morris,
Pennsylvania



James Wilson, Pennsylvania

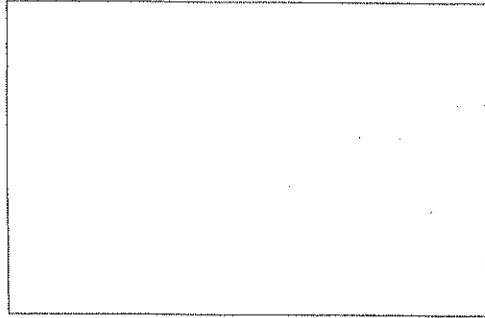


James Madison, Virginia

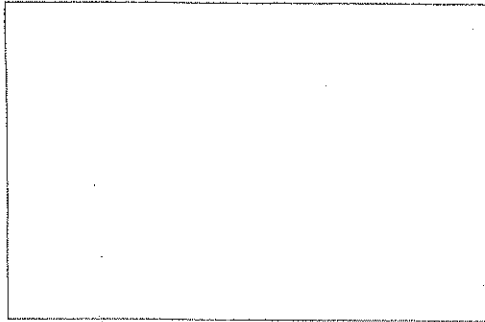




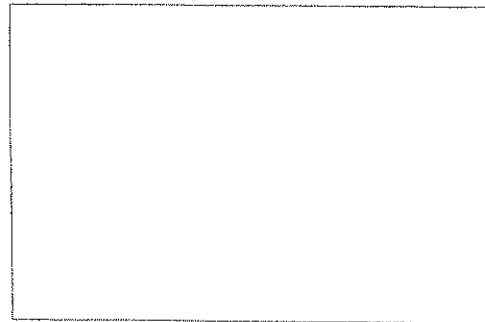
George Mason, Virginia



Edmund Randolph, Virginia



Charles Pinckney,
South Carolina



1 Alexander Hamilton, New York, Delegate to Convention



Hamilton then read law at Albany and quickly entered practice, but public service soon attracted him. He was elected to the Continental Congress in 1782-83. In the latter year, he established a law office in New York City. Because of his interest in strengthening the central government, he represented his state at the Annapolis Convention in 1786, where he urged the calling of the Constitutional Convention.

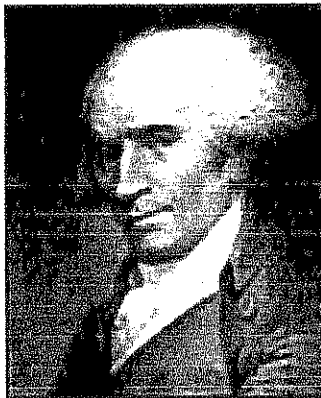
In 1787 Hamilton served in the legislature, which appointed him as a delegate to the convention. He played a surprisingly small part in the debates, apparently because he was frequently absent on legal business, his extreme nationalism put him at odds with most of the delegates, and he was frustrated by the conservative views of his two fellow delegates from New York. He did, however, sit on the Committee of Style, and he was the only one of the three delegates from his state who signed the finished document. Hamilton's part in New York's ratification the next year was substantial, though he felt the Constitution

was deficient in many respects. Against determined opposition, he waged a strenuous and successful campaign, including collaboration with John Jay and James Madison in writing *The Federalist*. In 1787 Hamilton was again elected to the Continental Congress.

When the new government got under way in 1789, Hamilton won the position of Secretary of the Treasury. He began at once to place the nation's disorganized finances on a sound footing. In a series of reports (1790-91), he presented a program not only to stabilize national finances but also to shape the future of the country as a powerful, industrial nation. He proposed establishment of a national bank, funding of the national debt, assumption of state war debts, and the encouragement of manufacturing.

Image: Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

2 Elbridge Gerry, Massachusetts, Delegate to Convention



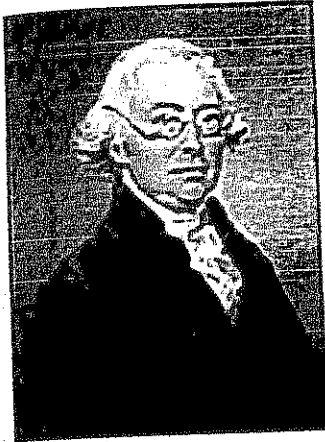
As a representative in Congress in the years 1783-85, Gerry numbered among those who had possessed talent as Revolutionary agitators and wartime leaders but who could not effectually cope with the painstaking task of stabilizing the national government. He was experienced and conscientious but created many enemies with his lack of humor, suspicion of the motives of others, and obsessive fear of political and military tyranny. In 1786, the year after leaving Congress, he retired from business, married Ann Thompson, and took a seat in the state legislature.

Gerry was one of the most vocal delegates at the Constitutional Convention of 1787. He presided as chairman of the committee that produced the Great Compromise but disliked the compromise itself. He annoyed nearly everyone by his inconsistency and, according to a colleague, "objected to everything he did not propose." At first an advocate of a strong central government, Gerry ultimately rejected and refused to sign the Constitution because it lacked a bill of rights and because he deemed it a threat to republicanism. He led the drive against ratification in Massachusetts and denounced the document as "full of vices." Among the vices, he listed inadequate representation of the people, dangerously ambiguous legislative powers, the blending of the executive and the legislative, and the danger of an oppressive judiciary. Gerry did see some merit in the Constitution, though, and believed that its flaws could be remedied through amendments. In 1789, after he announced his intention to support the Constitution and was elected to the First Congress.

Image: Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

James Wilson, Pennsylvania, Delegate to Convention

3



In 1776, reflecting the wishes of his constituents, he joined the moderates in Congress voting for a 3-week delay in considering Richard Henry Lee's resolution of June 7 for independence. On the July 1 and 2 ballots on the issue, however, he voted yes and signed the Declaration of Independence on August 2.

During 1781 Congress appointed Wilson as one of the directors of the Bank of North America, newly founded by his close associate and legal client Robert Morris. In 1782, by which time the conservatives had regained some of their power, the former was reelected to Congress, and he also served in the period 1785-87.

Wilson reached the apex of his career in the Constitutional Convention (1787), where his influence was probably second only to that of Madison. Rarely missing a session, he sat on the Committee of Detail and in many other ways applied his excellent knowledge of political theory to convention problems. Only Gouverneur Morris delivered more speeches.

That same year, overcoming powerful opposition, Wilson led the drive for ratification in Pennsylvania, the second state to endorse the instrument. The new commonwealth constitution, drafted in 1789-90 along the lines of the U.S. Constitution, was primarily Wilson's work and represented the climax of his 14-year fight against the constitution of 1776.

Image: Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Charles Pinckney, South Carolina, Delegate to Convention

4



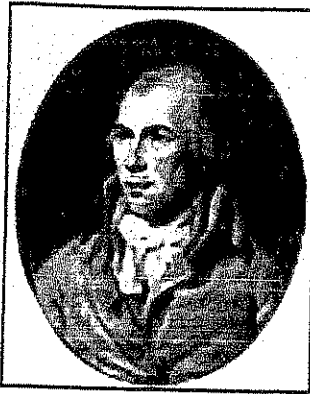
Pinckney's role in the Constitutional Convention is controversial. Although one of the youngest delegates, he later claimed to have been the most influential one and contended he had submitted a draft that was the basis of the final Constitution. Most historians have rejected this assertion. They do, however, recognize that he ranked among the leaders. He attended full time, spoke often and effectively, and contributed immensely to the final draft and to the resolution of problems that arose during the debates. He also worked for ratification in South Carolina (1788). That same year, he married Mary Eleanor Laurens, daughter of a wealthy and politically powerful South Carolina merchant; she was to bear at least three children.

Subsequently, Pinckney's career blossomed. From 1789 to 1792 he held the governorship of South Carolina, and in 1790 chaired the state constitutional convention. During this period, he became associated with the Federalist Party, in which he and his cousin Charles Cotesworth Pinckney were leaders. But, with the passage of time, the former's views began to change. In 1795 he attacked the Federalist backed Jay's Treaty and increasingly began to cast his lot with Carolina back-country Democratic-Republicans against his own eastern aristocracy. In 1796 he became governor once again, and in 1798 his Democratic-Republican supporters helped him win a seat in the U.S. Senate. There, he bitterly opposed his former party, and in the presidential election of 1800 served as Thomas Jefferson's campaign manager in South Carolina.

Image: Courtesy of National Archives, Records of Exposition, Anniversary, and Memorial Commissions (148-CCD-54)

James Madison, Virginia, Delegate to Convention

7



In 1780 Madison was chosen to represent Virginia in the Continental Congress (1780-83 and 1786-88). Although originally the youngest delegate, he played a major role in the deliberations of that body. Meantime, in the years 1784-86, he had again sat in the Virginia House of Delegates. He was a guiding force behind the Mount Vernon Conference (1785), attended the Annapolis Convention (1786), and was otherwise highly instrumental in the convening of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. He had also written extensively about deficiencies in the Articles of Confederation.

Madison was clearly played a dominant role at the convention. Some of the delegates favored an authoritarian central government; others, retention of state sovereignty; and most occupied positions in the middle of the two extremes. Madison, who was rarely absent and whose Virginia

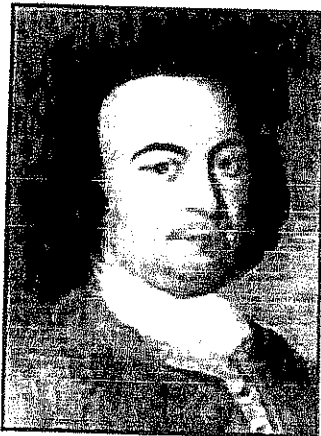
Plan was in large part the basis of the Constitution, tirelessly advocated a strong government, though many of his proposals were rejected. Despite his poor speaking capabilities, he took the floor more than 150 times, third only after Gouverneur Morris and James Wilson. Madison was also a member of numerous committees, the most important of which were those on postponed matters and style. His journal of the convention is the best single record of the event. He also played a key part in guiding the Constitution through the Continental Congress.

Playing a lead in the ratification process in Virginia, too, Madison defended the document against such powerful opponents as Patrick Henry, George Mason, and Richard Henry Lee. In New York, where Madison was serving in the Continental Congress, he collaborated with Alexander Hamilton and John Jay in a series of essays that in 1787-88 appeared in the newspapers and were soon published in book form as *The Federalist* (1788). This set of essays is a classic of political theory and a lucid exposition of the republican principles that dominated the framing of the Constitution.

Image: Courtesy of the Collection of Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa

George Mason, Virginia, Delegate to Convention

8



At Philadelphia in 1787 Mason was one of the five most frequent speakers at the Constitutional Convention. He exerted great influence, but during the last 2 weeks of the convention he decided not to sign the document.

Mason's refusal prompts some surprise, especially since his name is so closely linked with constitutionalism. He explained his reasons at length, citing the absence of a declaration of rights as his primary concern. He then discussed the provisions of the Constitution point by point, beginning with the House of Representatives. The House he criticized as not truly representative of the nation and the Senate as being too powerful. He also claimed that the power of the federal judiciary would destroy the state judiciaries, render justice unattainable, and enable the rich to oppress and ruin the poor. These fears led Mason to conclude that the new government was destined to either become a monarchy or fall into the hands of a corrupt, oppressive aristocracy.

Two of Mason's greatest concerns were incorporated into the Constitution. The Bill of Rights answered his primary objection, and the 11th amendment addressed his call for strictures on the judiciary.

Image: Courtesy of National Archives, Records of Exposition, Anniversary, and Memorial Commissions (148-CP-121)

Gouverneur Morris, Pennsylvania, Delegate to Convention



In 1777-78 Morris sat in the legislature and in 1778-79 in the Continental Congress, where he numbered among the youngest and most brilliant members. During this period, he signed the Articles of Confederation and drafted instructions for Benjamin Franklin, in Paris, as well as those that provided a partial basis for the treaty ending the War for Independence. Morris was also a close friend of Washington and one of his strongest congressional supporters.

Morris emerged as one of the leading figures at the Constitutional Convention. His speeches, more frequent than those by anyone else, numbered 173. Although sometimes presented in a light vein, they were usually substantive. A strong advocate of nationalism and aristocratic rule, he served on many committees, including those on postponed matters and style, and stood in the thick of the decision-making process. Above all, it was apparently he who actually drafted the Constitution.

Morris subsequently left public life for a time to devote his attention to business. Having purchased the family home from his half-brother, Lewis, he moved back to New York. Afterward, in 1789, Gouverneur joined in a business venture with Robert Morris, and traveled to France, where he witnessed the beginnings of the French Revolution.

Image: Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Edmund Randolph, Virginia, Delegate to Convention



Four days after the opening of the federal convention in Philadelphia, on May 29, 1787, Edmund Randolph presented the Virginia Plan for creating a new government. This plan proposed a strong central government composed of three branches, legislative, executive, and judicial, and enabled the legislative to veto state laws and use force against states that failed to fulfill their duties. After many debates and revisions, including striking the section permitting force against a state, the Virginia Plan became in large part the basis of the Constitution.

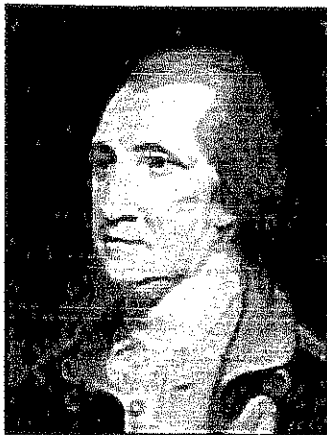
Though Randolph introduced the highly centralized Virginia Plan, he fluctuated between the Federalist and Antifederalist points of view. He sat on the Committee of Detail that prepared a draft of the Constitution, but by the time the document was adopted, Randolph declined to sign. He felt it was not sufficiently republican, and he was especially wary of creating a one-man executive. Instead of a president as the executive, he preferred a three-man council since he regarded "a unity in the Executive" to be the "fetus of monarchy." In a Letter . . . on the Federal

Constitution, dated October 10, 1787, Randolph explained at length his objections to the Constitution. The old Articles of Confederation were inadequate, he agreed, but the proposed new plan of union contained too many flaws. Randolph was a strong advocate of the process of amendment. He feared that if the Constitution were submitted for ratification without leaving the states the opportunity to amend it, the document might be rejected and thus close off any hope of another plan of union. However, he hoped that amendments would be permitted and second convention called to incorporate the changes.

By the time of the Virginia convention for ratification, Randolph supported the Constitution and worked to win his state's approval of it. He stated his reason for his switch: "The accession of eight states reduced our deliberations to the single question of Union or no Union."

Image: Courtesy of National Archives, Records of Exposition, Anniversary, and Memorial Commissions (146-CCB-40)

George Washington, Virginia, President of the Convention

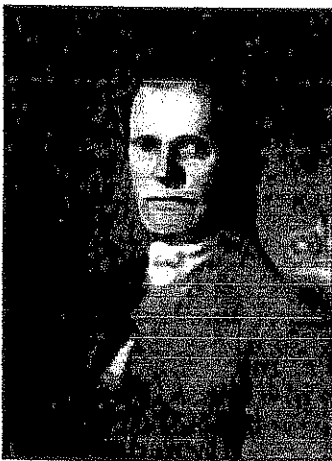


Dissatisfied with national progress under the Articles of Confederation, Washington advocated a stronger central government. He hosted the Mount Vernon Conference (1785) at his estate after its initial meetings in Alexandria, though he apparently did not directly participate in the discussions. Despite his sympathy with the goals of the Annapolis Convention (1786), he did not attend. But, the following year, encouraged by many of his friends, he presided over the Constitutional Convention, whose success was immeasurably influenced by his presence and dignity. Following ratification of the new instrument of government in 1788, the electoral college unanimously chose him as the first President.

The next year, after a triumphal journey from Mount Vernon to New York City, Washington took the oath of office at Federal Hall. During his two precedent-setting terms, he governed with dignity as well as restraint. He also provided the stability and authority the emergent nation so sorely needed, gave substance to the Constitution, and reconciled competing factions and divergent policies within the government and his administration. Although not averse to exercising presidential power, he respected the role of Congress and did not infringe upon its prerogatives. He also tried to maintain harmony between his Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, whose differences typified evolving party divisions from which Washington kept aloof.

Image: Courtesy of National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

Roger Sherman, Connecticut, Delegate to Convention



Sherman was a longtime and influential member of the Continental Congress (1774-81 and 1783-84). He won membership on the committees that drafted the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation, as well as those concerned with Indian affairs, national finances, and military matters. To solve economic problems, at both national and state levels, he advocated high taxes rather than excessive borrowing or the issuance of paper currency.

While in Congress, Sherman remained active in state and local politics, continuing to hold the office of judge of the Connecticut Superior Court, as well as membership on the council of safety (1777-79). In 1783 he helped codify Connecticut's statutory laws. The next year, he was elected mayor of New Haven (1784-86).

Although on the edge of insolvency, mainly because of wartime losses, Sherman could not resist the lure of national service. In 1787 he represented his state at the Constitutional Convention, and attended practically every session. Not only did he sit on the Committee on Postponed Matters, but he also probably helped draft the New Jersey Plan and was a prime mover behind the Connecticut, or Great, Compromise, which broke the deadlock between the large and small states over representation. He was, in addition, instrumental in Connecticut's ratification of the Constitution.

Sherman concluded his career by serving in the U.S. House of Representatives (1789-91) and Senate (1791-93), where he espoused the Federalist cause. He died at New Haven in 1793 at the age of 72 and is buried in the Grove Street Cemetery.

Image: Courtesy of The National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution

