

THE RECORDS OF THE FEDERAL
CONVENTION OF 1787

JOURNAL

In fœderal-Convention.

On Monday the 14th of May. A.D. 1787. and in the eleventh year of the independence of the United States of America, at the State-House in the city of Philadelphia — in virtue of appointments from their respective States, sundry Deputies to the fœderal-Convention appeared — but, a majority of the States not being represented, the Members present adjourned from day to day until friday the 25th of the said month, when, in virtue of the said appointments appeared from the States of

- Massachusetts The honorable Rufus King Esquire.
New-York The honorable Robert Yates, and Alexander Hamilton Esquires.
New-Jersey The honorable David Brearly, William Churchill Houston, and William Patterson Esquires.
Pennsylvania The honorable Robert Morris, Thomas Fitz Simmons, James Wilson, and Gouverneur Morris Esquires.
Delaware The honorable George Read, Richard Basset, and Jacob Broom Esquires.
Virginia His Excellency George Washington, Esquire, His Excellency Edmund Randolph Esquire The honorable John Blair, James Madison, George Mason, George Wythe, and James McClurg Esquires.
North-Carolina The honorable Alexander Martin, William Richardson Davie, Richard Dobbs Spaight, and Hugh Williamson Esquires.

Friday

JOURNAL

May 25

South-Carolina The honorable John Rutledge, Charles
Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Pinckney,
and Pierce Butler Esquires.

Georgia The honorable Few Esquire.

In federal-Convention Friday May 25. 1787.

It was moved by the honorable Robert Morris Esquire, One of the Deputies from Pennsylvania, that a President be elected by ballot, which was agreed to — and thereupon he nominated, on the part of the said State,

His Excellency George Washington Esquire

The Members then proceeded to ballot on behalf of their respective States — and, the ballots being taken, it appeared that the said George Washington was unanimously elected — and he was conducted to the chair by

The honorable Robert Morris, and John Rutledge Esquires. The President then proposed to the House that they should proceed to the election of a Secretary — and, the ballots being taken, it appeared that

William Jackson Esquire was elected.

The following credentials were produced and read — (here insert the Credentials).

The House then appointed Nicholas Weaver Messenger, and Joseph Fry Door-Keeper.

On motion of Mr C. Pinckney — ordered that a Committee be appointed to draw up rules to be observed as the standing Orders of the Convention — and to report the same to the House. — a Committee by ballot was appointed of

Mr Wythe, Mr Hamilton, and Mr C. Pinckney.

And then the House adjourned 'till monday next at 10 o'clock A.M.¹

¹ It seems to have been the practise of the Convention at the close of the day's session to adjourn until the next morning at ten o'clock. Apparently the hours were somewhat irregular, and on August 18, it was agreed to meet precisely at 10 A.M., and no motion to adjourn was to be in order until 4 P.M. On August 24, the hour of adjournment was fixed at 3 P.M. See further August 18 note 9, and Appendix A, LXXXIIIa, XCIVa, CX, CXX.

Friday

MADISON

May 25

MADISON

Monday May 14th 1787 was the day fixed for the meeting of the deputies in Convention for revising the federal² system of Government. On that day a small number only had assembled Seven States were not convened till,³

Friday 25 of May,

(when the following members appeared to wit:

viz. From *Massachusetts* Rufus King. *N. York* Robert Yates, Alexr. Hamilton. *N. Jersey*, David Brearley, William Churchill Houston, William Patterson. *Pennsylvania*, Robert Morris, Thomas Fitzsimmons, James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris. *Delaware*, George Read, Richard Basset, Jacob Broom. *Virginia*, George Washington, Edmund Randolph, John Blair, James Madison, George Mason, George Wythe, James McClurg. *N. Carolina*, Alexander Martin, William Richardson Davie, Richard Dobbs Spaight, Hugh Williamson. *S. Carolina*, John Rutledge, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Pinckney, Pierce Butler. *Georgia*, William Few.)⁴

Mr Robert Morris informed the members assembled that by the instruction & in behalf, of the deputation of Pena. he proposed George Washington Esqr. late Commander in chief for president of the Convention. Mr. Jno. Rutledge seconded the motion; expressing his confidence that the choice would be unanimous, and observing that the presence of Genl Washington forbade any observations on the occasion which might otherwise be proper.

General (Washington)⁵ was accordingly unanimously elected by ballot,⁶ and conducted to the chair by Mr. R. Morris and Mr. Rutledge; from which in a very emphatic manner he thanked the Convention for the honor they had conferred on him, reminded them of the novelty of the scene

² Crossed out "Constitution".

³ For further information regarding the Convention, May 14-25, see Appendix A, VIII-XXVI, XXIX, CCLXXXV.

⁵ Originally "The General".

⁴ Copied from *Journal*.

⁶ See Appendix A, XX *et seq.*

Friday

MADISON

May 25

of business in which he was to act, lamented his want of (better qualifications),⁷ and claimed the indulgence of the House towards the involuntary errors which his inexperience might occasion.

(The nomination came with particular grace from Penna, as Doctr. Franklin alone could have been thought of (as a competitor).⁸ The Doctr. was himself to have made the nomination (of General Washington, but the state of the weather and of his health confined him to his house.)⁹

Mr. Wilson moved that a Secretary be appointed, and nominated Mr. Temple Franklin.

Col. Hamilton nominated Major Jackson.

On the ballot Major Jackson had 5 votes & Mr. Franklin 2 votes.¹⁰

On¹¹ reading the Credentials of the deputies it was noticed that those from Delaware were prohibited from changing the Article in the Confederation establishing an equality of votes among the States.¹²

The appointment of a Committee, consisting of Messrs. Wythe, Hamilton & C. Pinckney, on the motion of Mr. C. Pinckney, to prepare standing rules & orders was the only remaining step taken on this day

May 14, 1787¹³ — appointed for the meeting of ye Convention on the 7 States met

May 25. — (page 1 to 4) list of members assembled — G. Washington unanimously elected prest. notes of J. M. Major Jackson elected Secy — credentials of deputies read. Commee appd to prepare rules.

⁷ Crossed out "the requisites for it".

⁸ Crossed out "for the President".

⁹ Crossed out "of the Genl. but the season of the rain did not permit him to venture to the Convention chamber."

¹⁰ On the election of Jackson as secretary see Introduction, note 6.

¹¹ This paragraph may be a later insertion suggested by Yates.

¹² See below *Records*, May 30, and Appendix A, XXIII, CLVIII (3), Appendix B, note 6.

¹³ Memoranda by Madison, preserved with his Debates. Evidently a summary of his notes.

Friday

YATES

May 25

YATES

FRIDAY, MAY 25, 1787.

Attended the convention of the states, at the state house in Philadelphia, when the following states were represented:

NEW-YORK,	Alexander Hamilton, Robert Yates.
NEW-JERSEY,	David Brearly, William Churchill Houston, William Patterson.
PENNSYLVANIA,	Robert Morris, Thomas Fitzsimons, James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris.
DELAWARE,	George Read, Richard Bassett, Jacob Broom.
VIRGINIA,	George Washington, Edmund Randolph, George Wythe, George Mason, James Madison, John Blair, James M'Clurg.
NORTH-CAROLINA,	Alexander Martin, William Richardson Davie, Richard Dobbs Spaight, Hugh Williamson.
SOUTH-CAROLINA,	John Rutledge, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Charles Pinckney, Pierce Butler.

A motion by R. Morris, and seconded, that General Washington take the chair — unanimously agreed to.

When seated, he (Gen. Washington) declared, that as he never had been in such a situation, he felt himself embarrassed;

Friday

YATES

May 25

that he hoped his errors, as they would be unintentional, would be excused.

Mr. Hamilton, in behalf of the state of New-York, moved that Major Jackson be appointed secretary; the delegates for Pennsylvania, moved for Temple Franklin: by a majority Mr. Jackson carried it — called in and took his seat.

After which, the respective credentials of the seven states were read. N. B. That of Delaware restrained its delegates from assenting to an abolition of the fifth article of the confederation, by which it is declared that each state shall have one vote.

Door keeper and messengers being appointed, the house adjourned to Monday the 28th day of May, at ten o'clock.