



0. RATIFICATION of the U.S. CONSTITUTION - Story Preface

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This illustration, by Paul Haas, was created in 1990. It completes earlier illustrations, published in the *Massachusetts Centinel* during 1788, conveying the idea that if the original 13 States ratified the proposed U.S. Constitution they would form strong pillars together, uniting the new country. If the States did not ratify the Constitution, however, America would be neither strong nor united.

Nine state legislatures had to ratify the new Constitution in order to make it law.

On July 2, 1788 - nearly ten months after the document was first available for public scrutiny - New Hampshire was the ninth state to approve. A new United States government would therefore be created, consistent with the various articles of the Constitution.

New York did not give its consent (which it ultimately did with a narrow margin) until later in July, 1788.

Congress created a committee to schedule the first federal elections which would be held in February of 1788. Until delegates could decide on the location of the federal capital, New York City would serve that purpose.

In the only unanimous presidential election in U.S. history, George Washington became President in 1789.

Although Madison believed the American Confederacy had failed - like all other confederacies before it - because insufficient power had been given to a central government, he also knew how quickly government officials can abuse their power.

Mindful of such tendencies, Madison was the primary author of the American Bill of Rights (originally twelve amendments to the Constitution, although only ten were ratified by 1791). He drew heavily from George Mason's earlier work in the Virginia Declaration of Rights.

Jefferson (although he supported ratification of the Constitution) had not favored a strong central government. He believed that institutions should always be subservient to "we the people" who created them - not the other way around. (Hundreds of years later, Don Knotts - in the role of Barney Fife - hilariously demonstrated his memory of "We the People" as he tried to recite the Constitution's Preamble.)

Alexander Hamilton (a self-made man who ironically believed popular democracy could lead to anarchy) and John Adams (who became the country's second president in 1797 but missed the Constitutional Convention while he was Minister to Great Britain) tried to give greater powers to the federal government. Hamilton, for example, wanted to create a national bank, causing Jefferson even more concern.

In a July 7, 1793 letter to James Madison, Jefferson urged his close friend to publicly disagree with Hamilton:

...for god's sake, my dear Sir, take up your pen, select the most striking heresies, and cut him
[Hamilton] *to peices* [sic]

A contemporary political cartoon, entitled "The Providential Detection," lambasts Jefferson and his attitudes. It illustrates the author's point that, but for the intervention of God and the American Eagle, Jefferson would burn the Constitution.

It was just the start of the mud-slinging and name-calling which would mark the election of 1800.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/RATIFICATION-of-the-U.S.-CONSTITUTION-Marbury-vs-Madison>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/RATIFICATION-of-the-U.S.-CONSTITUTION-Marbury-vs-Madison>

Media Stream



Ratifying the U.S. Constitution

Library of Congress (original drawings) and Teaching American History (for the 1990 version), Original illustration appeared in the "Massachusetts Centinel" on January 16, 1788. The illustration depicted here, by Paul Haas, was created in 1990 to celebrate Rhode Island's bicentennial

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Federal Hall in New York City

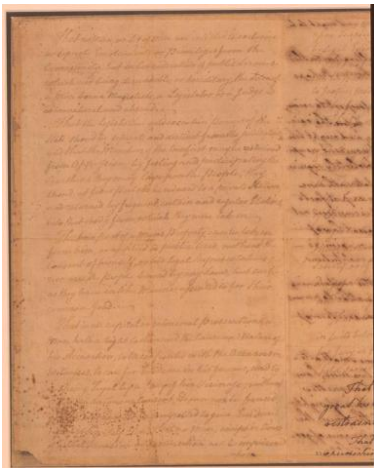
Image online, courtesy Library of Congress where it is [described as follows](#):

A view of the Federal Hall of the City of New York, as appeared in the year 1797; with the adjacent buildings thereto / by George Holland; lith. & printed in colors by H.R. Robinson, 31, Park Row, N.Y.

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George Mason - Virginia Declaration of Rights

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John Adams - Supporter of Public Schools

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives.

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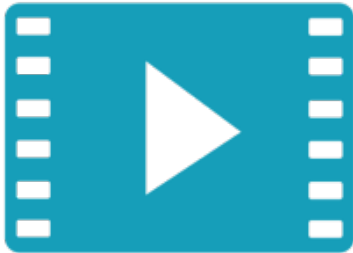


John Adams - Minister to Great Britain

Image online, courtesy U.S. National Archives. PD

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Barney Fife Recites "We the People"

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