

Jeremy Belknap to Ebenezer Hazard, Boston, 10 February 1788 (excerpt)

...S Adams had almost upset the apple-cart by *intruding* an amendment of his own fabrication on ye morn'g 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” 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” & 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, 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....

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