

South Carolina Biographical Gazetteer

The following sketches outline the political careers of the principal South Carolina leaders who participated in the process of ratifying the U.S. Constitution. When known, their political positions are indicated (1) on the Constitution in 1787–1788; and (2) in national politics after 1789. Categorizing South Carolina political leaders in the 1790s is difficult because family ties and in-state factions played important roles in political alignments. The two leading Federalist factions were the Izard-Manigault-Smith faction (led by Ralph Izard, Sr., and his two sons-in-law, Gabriel Manigault and William Loughton Smith) and the Pinckney-Rutledge faction (led by the Pinckney and Rutledge brothers but not Charles Pinckney). Members of the Izard-Manigault-Smith faction supported the Federalists more consistently than members of the Pinckney-Rutledge faction, who varied their support between Republicans and Federalists.

BURKE, AEDANUS (1743–1802)

Antifederalist/Republican

Born, Galway, Ireland. Jurist. Studied for Roman Catholic priesthood in France. Arrived in Virginia by 1769, where he studied law. Moved to South Carolina, c. 1775. Officer, Continental Army and S.C. militia during the Revolutionary War; held by British as prisoner of war, 1780–81. Associate judge, S.C. Court of General Sessions and Common Pleas, 1778–80, 1783–99; Chancellor, S.C. Court of Equity, 1799–1802. Member, S.C. House of Representatives, 1779–88; U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–91. Author of pamphlets critical of confiscation of Tory property (1782), the Society of the Cincinnati (1783), and British merchants in Charleston (1785). Represented Lower District between the Broad and Saluda Rivers in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted against ratification of Constitution.

BUTLER, PIERCE (1744–1822)

Federalist/Federalist/Republican

Born, County Carlow, Ireland. Son of fifth baronet of Cloughgrenan. Planter. Officer in the British Army in Ireland and America in the 1760s until 1773, rising to the rank of major by 1766. Through marriage acquired substantial plantations in South Carolina. He also purchased property in Georgia. Appointed adjutant general of S.C. militia, 1779. Member, S.C. House of Representatives, 1776–84, 1786–89, 1796–97, 1799. Delegate, Confederation Congress, 1787. Delegate, Constitutional Convention, 1787; signed Constitution. Served in U.S. Senate, 1789–96 (resigned), 1802–4 (resigned). Originally a supporter of the Hamiltonian financial plan, by 1793 Butler had moved to the Republican position and actively opposed the Jay Treaty. Unsuccessful candidate for U.S. House of Representatives, 1798. In retirement, lived in Philadelphia, Pa., where he was a director of the Second Bank of the United States, 1816–19.

FAYSSOUX, PETER (1745–1795)

Antifederalist/Republican

Born, Charleston. Physician and planter. Studied medicine in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1766–69. Returned to Charleston, where he practiced medicine and owned property. Physician, Continental Army during the Revolutionary War; held by British as prisoner of war, 1780–81. Co-founder and first president, S.C. Medical Society, 1788. Member, S.C. House of Representatives, 1786–90.

Represented the parish of St. John, Berkeley, in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted against ratification of the Constitution.

LOWNDES, RAWLINS (1721–1800)

Antifederalist

Born, St. Kitts, West Indies. Lawyer and planter. Arrived in Charleston with his parents in 1730. Studied law under Robert Hall. S.C. deputy provost marshal, 1742–52. Owned several plantations in parish of St. Bartholomew. Member, S.C. Commons House of Assembly, 1749–54, 1757–75 (speaker, 1763–65, 1772–75); S.C. provincial congresses, 1775–76; S.C. House of Representatives, 1776–78, 1787–90. Elected to S.C. Legislative Council, 1776, but declined to serve. Assistant judge, S.C. Court of Common Pleas, 1766–72. S.C. president, 1778–79. Accepted British protection after the fall of Charleston in 1780. Principal opponent to U.S. Constitution in debates in S.C. House of Representatives, January 1788. Elected to 1788 state Convention for the parish of St. Bartholomew, but declined to serve. Intendant (i.e., mayor) of Charleston, 1788.

PINCKNEY, CHARLES (1757–1824)

Federalist/Federalist/Republican

Born, Charleston. Lawyer and planter. Studied law in Charleston and admitted to bar, 1779. First cousin once removed of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and Thomas Pinckney; son-in-law of Henry Laurens, Sr.; brother-in-law of David Ramsay. Officer, S.C. militia during the Revolutionary War; held on British prison ship in Charleston harbor, 1781. Member, S.C. House of Representatives, 1779–80, 1784, 1787–89, 1792–96, 1806, 1810–13. Delegate, Confederation Congress, 1784–87. Delegate, Constitutional Convention, where he submitted a draft constitution, 1787; signed Constitution. Represented the parish of Christ Church in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted to ratify the Constitution. Broke with Federalists in the early 1790s and aligned with Republicans. Opposed the Jay Treaty and helped build support for Jefferson in South Carolina. Member and president, of state constitutional convention, 1790. S.C. governor, 1789–92, 1796–98, 1806–8. Served in U.S. Senate, 1799–1801; U.S. House of Representatives, 1819–21. U.S. minister to Spain, 1801–5.

PINCKNEY, CHARLES COTESWORTH (1746–1825)

Federalist/Federalist

Born, Charleston. Lawyer, planter, and land speculator. Brother of Thomas Pinckney; first cousin once removed of Charles Pinckney. Lived in England, 1753–69, where he attended Oxford and Middle Temple. Admitted to English bar, 1769; admitted to South Carolina bar, 1770. Practiced law in Charleston. Colonel, S.C. militia. Officer, Continental Army, 1776–83; British prisoner of war and exchanged in Philadelphia, 1782; brevetted brigadier general prior to his retirement. Member, S.C. Commons House of Assembly, 1769–75; S.C. provincial congresses, 1775–76; S.C. House of Representatives, 1776–80, 1783–90; S.C. Senate, 1791–95, 1800–1804. Member, S.C. Society of the Cincinnati. Entered into business partnerships with his law partner Edward Rutledge after Revolutionary War. Delegate, Constitutional Convention, 1787; signed Constitution. Represented the parishes of St. Philip and St. Michael in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted to ratify the Constitution. Presidential elector, 1789. Member, state constitutional convention, 1790. Declined appointments by President Washington to be commander of the U.S. Army, a U.S. Supreme Court justice, secretary of war, and secretary of state. Minister and special envoy to France, 1796–97. Recalled to U.S. Army, 1798–1800, commissioned major general. Unsuccessful Federalist candidate for vice president, 1800, and for president, 1804, 1808.

PINCKNEY, THOMAS (1750–1828)

Federalist/Federalist

Born, Charleston. Lawyer and planter. Brother of Charles Cotesworth Pinckney; first cousin once removed of Charles Pinckney. Lived in England, 1753–74, where he attended Oxford and Middle Temple. Admitted to the English and South Carolina bars, 1774. Officer, Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, rising to the rank of major. British prisoner of war from 1780 until exchanged in 1781. Member, S.C. House of Representatives, 1776–87, 1789–91, 1802–4; U.S. House of Representatives, 1797–1801. S.C. governor, 1787–89. Represented the parishes of St. Philip and St. Michael in the 1788 state Convention, where he supported the Constitution but did not vote because of his role as Convention president. U.S. minister to Great Britain, 1792–96. Envoy extraordinary to Spain, 1794–95, where he negotiated the 1795 Treaty of San Lorenzo (Pinckney's Treaty). Unsuccessful Federalist candidate for vice president, 1796. Served as major general in U.S. Army during War of 1812.

RAMSAY, DAVID (1749–1815)

Federalist/Federalist

Born, Lancaster County, Pa. Physician and historian. Son-in-law of Henry Laurens, Sr.; brother-in-law of Charles Pinckney. Graduate, College of New Jersey (Princeton), 1765; medical degree, College of Philadelphia, 1773. Practiced medicine in Maryland before moving to South Carolina around 1774. Successfully practiced medicine in South Carolina until his death, including a medical partnership with John Budd, 1783–91. Co-founder and first treasurer, S.C. Medical Society, 1788. Physician, S.C. militia during the Revolutionary War. Arrested by British at the fall of Charleston in 1780 and exiled to St. Augustine, Florida. Delegate, Confederation Congress, 1782–83, 1785–86 (served as chairman from 23 November 1785 through 12 May 1786 during the absence of President John Hancock). Member, S.C. House of Representatives, 1776–90; S.C. Senate, 1791–97 (president, 1791–97). Represented the parishes of St. Philip and St. Michael in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted to ratify the Constitution. Unsuccessful candidate for U.S. House of Representatives, 1788, and for U.S. Senate, 1794. Presidential elector, 1796. Author of numerous histories of the American Revolution, South Carolina, and the United States.

RUTLEDGE, EDWARD (1749–1800)

Federalist

Born, Christ Church Parish, S.C. Lawyer, planter, and land speculator. Brother of Hugh and John Rutledge. Educated in Charleston and read law with his brother John before attending Middle Temple in England. Admitted to English bar, 1772; admitted to South Carolina bar, 1773. Practiced law in Charleston. Officer, S.C. militia during the Revolutionary War, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Arrested by British at the fall of Charleston in 1780 and exiled to St. Augustine, Florida. Member, First and Second Continental congresses, 1774–76; signed Declaration of Independence. Member, S.C. provincial congresses, 1775–76; S.C. House of Representatives, 1776–95; S.C. Senate, 1796–98. Entered into business partnerships with his law partner Charles Cotesworth Pinckney after the Revolutionary War. Represented the parishes of St. Philip and St. Michael in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted to ratify the Constitution. Member, state constitutional convention, 1790. Declined appointment as U.S. Supreme Court justice. Presidential elector, 1789, 1792, 1796. S.C. governor, 1798–1800. In politics, Rutledge was hard to classify, supporting the Hamiltonian faction on economic issues and the Jeffersonian faction on foreign affairs.

RUTLEDGE, JOHN (1739–1800)

Federalist/Federalist

Born, Christ Church Parish, S.C. Lawyer and planter. Brother of Edward and Hugh Rutledge. Educated in Charleston and attended Middle Temple in England. Admitted to English bar, 1760; admitted to South Carolina bar, 1761. Practiced law in Charleston. Member, S.C. Commons House of Assembly, 1761–75; S.C. provincial congresses, 1775–76; S.C. House of Representatives, 1776, 1778–79, 1782, 1784–90. Delegate, Stamp Act Congress, 1765. S.C. president, 1776–78; S.C. governor, 1779–82. Member, First and Second Continental congresses, 1774–75; Confederation Congress, 1782–83. Delegate, Constitutional Convention, 1787 (chaired Committee of Detail), signed Constitution. Represented the parish of Christ Church in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted to ratify the Constitution. Presidential elector, 1789. Justice of the peace, 1765, 1767 (Berkeley County), and 1774 (Charleston District); judge, S.C. Court of Chancery, 1784–91; associate justice, U.S. Supreme Court, 1789–91; chief justice, S.C. Court of Common Pleas, 1791–95. Nominated in 1795 as U.S. Supreme Court chief justice and presided at August term, but Senate refused to confirm him. Opposed the Jay Treaty. Suffered mental illness and financial loss after death of wife in 1792.

SUMTER, THOMAS (1734–1832)

Antifederalist/Republican

Born, Hanover County, Va. Upcountry planter, storekeeper, and land speculator. Moved to South Carolina upcountry around 1764 to avoid imprisonment for debt in Virginia. Officer, S.C. militia during the Revolutionary War, rising to the rank of brigadier general. Sumter's brigade harassed British troops in the upcountry, 1780–82, earning him the nickname "Gamecock." Member, S.C. provincial congresses, 1775–76; S.C. House of Representatives, 1776–80, 1783–90. Represented the District Eastward of the Wateree River in the 1788 state Convention, where he voted against ratification of Constitution. Member, state constitutional convention, 1790. Served in U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–93, 1797–1801; U.S. Senate, 1801–10.