



CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION

csac.history.wisc.edu > Document Collections > The Creation and Ratification of the Bill of Rights > Events Related to the Creation and Ratification of the Bill of Rights > The Harrisburg Convention Attempts to Amend the Constitution

Bucks County, Pa., Meeting: Proceedings and Resolutions *Pennsylvania Packet*, 25 August 1788

The ratification of the Federal Constitution and its expected operation forming a new æra in the American world, and giving cause of hope to some and fear to others, it has been thought proper that the freemen of the state, or delegates chosen by them, should meet together and deliberate on the subject. Accordingly it has been proposed, that a meeting of deputies from the different counties be held at Harrisburg the third day of September next. A circular letter, bearing the above proposition was sent to this county, and in pursuance thereof there met this day at Piper's Tavern, in Bedminster township, the following gentlemen from the townships annexed to their names respectively:—

<i>Newtown,</i>	James Hanna, Esquire.
<i>Warwick,</i>	John Crawford, Hugh Ramsey, Capt. William Walker, Benjamin Snodgrass, Samuel Flack.
<i>Newbritain,</i>	James Snodgrass, Thomas Stewart, David Thomas.
<i>Bedminster,</i>	Jacob Utt, Alexander Hughes, George Piper, Daniel Soliday.
<i>Haycock,</i>	Capt. Manus Yost, John Keller.
<i>Rockhill,</i>	Samuel Smith, Esquire.
<i>Millford,</i>	Henry Blitaz, Henry Hoover.
<i>Springfield,</i>	Col. John Smith, Charles Fleming.
<i>Durham,</i>	Richard Backhouse, Esquire.
<i>Tinicum,</i>	John Thompson, Jacob Weaver, George Bennet.
<i>Nockamixon,</i>	Samuel Wilson, George Vogle.
<i>Richland,</i>	Benjamin Seagle.
<i>Plumstead,</i>	Thomas Wright, Thomas Gibson, James Ruckman, Major John Shaw, James Farres, Thomas Henry, Moses Kelly, Henry Geddis.
<i>Warrington,</i>	Rev. Nathaniel Erwin, Capt. William Walker.
<i>Buckingham,</i>	Capt. Samuel Smith.
<i>Solesbury,</i>	Henry Seabring.
<i>Hilltown.</i>	Joseph Grier.

Samuel Smith, esquire, chosen chairman, and James Hanna, esquire, secretary. After some time spent in discussing the business of the meeting, Resolved, that the Rev. Nathaniel Erwin, Richard Backhouse, Samuel Smith, John Crawford, and James Hanna, esquires, be a committee to draw up resolves expressive of the sense of this meeting on the subject before them.

In a short time thereafter the following were presented by the gentlemen appointed, and unanimously approved.

Resolved 1. That it is the opinion of this meeting that the plan of government for the United States, formed by the general convention, having been adopted by eleven of the states, ought, in conformity to the resolves of said convention, to come into operation, and have force until altered in a constitutional way.

2. That as we mean to act the part of peaceable citizens ourselves, so we will support the said plan of government and those who act under it against all illegal violence.

3. That the said plan of government will admit of very considerable amendments, which ought to be made in the mode pointed out in the constitution itself.

4. That as few governments once established have ever been altered in favour of liberty without confusion and bloodshed, the requisite amendments in said constitution ought to be attempted as soon as possible.

5. That we will use our utmost endeavours in a pacific way to procure such alterations in the foederal constitution as may be necessary to secure the rights and liberties of ourselves and posterity.

6. That we approve of a state meeting being held at Harrisburg the third day of September next, on the subject of the above resolves.

7. That four persons ought to be delegated from this county to attend said meeting, and join with the deputies from other counties who may meet with them (in recommendation to the citizens of this state) of a suitable set of men to represent them in the new Congress, and generally to acquiesce and assist in the promotion of such plan or plans as may be designed by the said state conferres for the purpose of obtaining the necessary amendments of said constitution, as far as is consistent with our views, expressed in the foregoing resolves.

Agreeable to the resolve last past, the Rev. Nathaniel Erwin, Richard Backhouse, John Crawford, and James Hanna, esquires, or any two of them, were appointed to represent us in said conference to be held at Harrisburg.

Resolved, That James Hanna, esquire be requested to hand the foregoing proceedings to the Press for publication.

SAMUEL SMITH Chairman.

CITE AS: John P. Kaminski et al., eds., *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Vol. XXXIX: Bill of Rights [3] (Madison, Wis.: Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2023), 172–74.