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

...S Adams had almost overset the apple-cart by *intruding* an amendment of his own fabrication on ye morng 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 overset 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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