

Biographical Gazetteer

Six of the eight men listed below were “conservatives” in state politics on such issues as paper money during the 1780s. Only Clark and Dayton supported such “radical” proposals. All eight men supported ratification of the Constitution, although Clark believed that it needed to be amended. Three of the men—Boudinot, Dayton, and Paterson—were Federalists during the 1790s. The other five men—Houston, Brearley, Livingston, Stevens, and Clark—had died by 1794.

BOUDINOT, ELIAS (1740–1821)

Born Philadelphia. Admitted to New Jersey bar, 1760. Member Essex County committee of correspondence, 1774. Delegate to first provincial congress, 1775. U.S. commissary-general of prisoners, 1777–78. Delegate to Congress, 1778, 1781–83 (president, 1782–83). Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 1783. Honorary member New Jersey Cincinnati. Member U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–95. First counsellor admitted to bar of U.S. Supreme Court, 1790. Director U.S. Mint, 1795–1805.

BREARLEY, DAVID (1745–1790)

Born Hunterdon County. Admitted to New Jersey bar, 1767. Continental Army officer, 1776–79. Chief Justice Supreme Court, 1779–89. Member New Jersey Cincinnati (vice president, 1783–90). First Most Worshipful Grand Master of Masons in New Jersey, 1786–89. Delegate to Episcopal General Convention, 1786. Delegate to Constitutional Convention, signed Constitution, 1787. Delegate to state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Presidential Elector, 1789. U.S. district judge for New Jersey, 1789–90.

CLARK, ABRAHAM (1726–1794)

Born Elizabethtown. Practiced law in Rahway though never admitted to bar. Colonial sheriff and clerk of Assembly. Member committee of safety, 1775–76. Delegate to the three provincial congresses, 1775–76. Delegate to Congress, 1776–78, 1780–83, 1786–88 (signed Declaration of Independence, 1776; proposed resolution to send Constitution to states without comment, 1787). Essex member of Council, 1778–79. Essex delegate to Assembly, 1783–86. Author of “Willing to Learn” essays favoring state paper money, 1785–86. Delegate to Annapolis Convention, 1786. Elected delegate to Constitutional Convention, 1787, but declined. Defeated for election to U.S. House of Representatives, 1789. Commissioner to settle New Jersey accounts with U.S., 1789–90. Member U.S. House of Representatives, 1791–94.

DAYTON, JONATHAN (1760–1824)

Born Elizabethtown. College of New Jersey (Princeton) B.A. 1776, M.A. 1783, LL.D. 1798. Admitted to New Jersey bar, 1776. Continental Army officer, 1776–83 (aide-de-camp to General John Sullivan, 1779–80). Member New Jersey Cincinnati. Essex delegate to Assembly, 1786–88, 1790, 1814–15 (speaker, 1790). Delegate to Constitutional Convention, signed Constitution, 1787. Delegate to Congress, 1787, 1788. Defeated for

election to U.S. House of Representatives, 1789. Essex member of Council, 1789. Member U.S. House of Representatives, 1791–99 (speaker, 1795–99). Brigadier general U.S. Army, 1798. U.S. Senator, 1799–1805. Indicted for treason in Aaron Burr affair, but nolle prosequi entered in 1807.

HOUSTON, WILLIAM CHURCHILL (1746–1788)

Born South Carolina. Raised in North Carolina. College of New Jersey (Princeton) B.A. 1768 (tutor and professor of mathematics and philosophy, 1768–83; librarian, 1770–83; treasurer, 1779–83). Militia captain, 1776. Deputy secretary of Congress, 1777–78. Somerset delegate to Assembly, 1777–79. Member council of safety, 1778. Delegate to Congress, 1779–81, 1784, 1785. Member federal court which issued “Trenton Decree,” 1782. Admitted to New Jersey bar and settled in Trenton, 1781. Clerk Supreme Court, 1781–88. Receiver of Continental taxes for New Jersey, 1782–85. Delegate to Annapolis Convention, 1786. Delegate to Constitutional Convention, 1787.

LIVINGSTON, WILLIAM (1723–1790)

Born Albany, N.Y. Fifth child of Philip Livingston, the second Lord of Livingston Manor. Yale B.A. 1741. Studied law with James Alexander and William Smith, Sr. in New York City. Admitted to New York bar, 1748. Opposed royal charter for and Anglican control of King’s College (Columbia), 1751–53. With William Smith, Jr., published digest of New York laws, 1752, 1762. Member New York commission to settle boundary with Massachusetts, 1754. Coauthor “Watch Tower” column in New York Mercury, 1754–55. Admitted to New Jersey bar, 1755. Member “New York Triumvirate” (with William Smith, Jr. and John Morin Scott) and a leader of Livingston faction. Livingston Manor delegate to New York Assembly, 1758–60. Author of “The Sentinel” essays, 1765. Opposed establishment of Anglican episcopacy in America, 1767–69. Member New York commission to settle boundary with New Jersey, 1768. Moved to Elizabethtown, N.J., 1772. Member Essex County committee of correspondence, 1774. Delegate to Congress, 1774–76. Militia brigadier general, 1775–76. Governor, 1776–90. Author of “Primitive Whig” essays opposing state paper money, 1786. Delegate to Constitutional Convention, signed Constitution, 1787. Member of Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture.

PATERSON, WILLIAM (1745–1806)

Born Antrim, Ireland. Family emigrated to Delaware, 1747. Settled in New Jersey, 1749. College of New Jersey (Princeton) B.A. 1763, M.A. 1766. Studied law with Richard Stockton. Admitted to New Jersey bar, 1769. Delegate to first and third provincial congresses, 1775, 1776 (assistant secretary, secretary). Officer Somerset County minutemen, 1777. Member council of safety, 1777. Somerset member of Council, 1776–77. Attorney general, 1776–83. Elected delegate to Congress, 1780, but declined. Moved to New Brunswick, 1783. Delegate to Constitutional Convention, 1787 (introduced “New Jersey Plan”; signed Constitution). U.S. Senator, 1789–90. Governor, 1790–93. Associate justice U.S. Supreme Court, 1793–1806.

STEVENS, JOHN, SR. (1716–1792)

Born New York City. Raised in Perth Amboy, N.J. Member colonial Assembly. Member Governor's Council, 1762–76. Member and vice president of Council, 1776–82. Delegate to Congress, 1784. President state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787.

Cite as: The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution Digital Edition, ed. John P. Kaminski, Gaspare J. Saladino, Richard Leffler, Charles H. Schoenleber and Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

Canonic URL: <http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/RNCN-02-03-02-0002-0011>
[accessed 16 Dec 2010]

Original source: Ratification by the States, Volume III: Delaware, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut