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> Significant Events and Individuals in Pennsylvania Politics

Pennsylvania Biographical Gazetteer

The following sketches outline the political careers of the principal Pennsylvania leaders. When known, their political positions are indicated (1) in state politics prior to 1787; (2) on the Constitution in 1787; (3) in national politics after 1787.

BRACKENRIDGE, HUGH H. (1748–1816) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Scotland; came to Pennsylvania, 1753; graduate College of New Jersey (Princeton University), 1771. Army chaplain in War for Independence. Admitted to practice before state Supreme Court, 1780; moved to Pittsburgh, 1781; helped establish *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 1786; Westmoreland County assemblyman, 1786–87. Published essays and poems supporting Constitution in *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 1787–88. Justice of state Supreme Court, 1799–1806.

BRYAN, GEORGE (1731–1791) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist

Born Dublin, Ireland; came to Philadelphia, 1752; entered mercantile partnership. Member Anti-Proprietary party; opposed Stamp Act; delegate Stamp Act Congress, 1765. Appointed judge of Court of Common Pleas and Orphans' Court, 1765; appointed naval officer port of Philadelphia, 1776. Member Supreme Executive Council from Philadelphia, 1776–79; Philadelphia assemblyman, 1779–80; leading supporter of act abolishing slavery, 1780. Justice state Supreme Court, 1780–91. Delegate Council of Censors, opposed revision of state constitution, 1784. Supported revocation of Bank of North America charter, 1785. Opposed ratification of Constitution, 1787–88; was believed to be author of "Centinel" essays; delegate Harrisburg Convention, 1788.

CHAMBERS, STEPHEN (1750?–1789) Republican/Federalist

Born northern Ireland; came to Pennsylvania before 1776; lawyer in Sunbury. Officer Pennsylvania regiment, 1776–78. Northumberland County assemblyman, 1778–79. Member Republican Society, 1779; admitted to Philadelphia bar, 1779. Moved to Lancaster, 1780; delegate Council of Censors, supported revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Delegate state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Defeated for election to U.S. House of Representatives, 1788.

CLYMER, DANIEL (1748–1810) Republican/Federalist/?

Born Philadelphia; cousin George Clymer; graduate College of New Jersey (Princeton University), 1766; admitted to Chester County bar, 1769; admitted to practice before state Supreme

Court, 1770. Lieutenant colonel Pennsylvania regiment, 1776; U.S. deputy commissary general of prisoners, 1777. Moved to Reading, Berks County, 1778; assemblyman, 1782–84, 1786–87.

CLYMER, GEORGE (1739–1813) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Philadelphia; merchant. Member Common Council, 1767–70. Member council of safety, 1775–76; member Continental Congress, 1776–77, 1780–82; signed Declaration of Independence. Member Republican Society, 1779; helped establish Bank of North America, 1781. Philadelphia assemblyman, 1785–89. Delegate Constitutional Convention, 1787. Elected U.S. House of Representatives, 1788; declined reelection, 1790. Federal collector of excise, Pennsylvania, 1791–94.

DALLAS, ALEXANDER J. (1759–1817) Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born Jamaica, West Indies; attended Edinburgh University, Scotland; returned to Jamaica, 1780; admitted to bar. Came to Philadelphia, 1783; admitted to Philadelphia bar and to practice before state Supreme Court, 1785. Editor *Columbian Magazine*, 1787–89; *Pennsylvania Herald*, 1787–88. Reported debates in Pennsylvania Convention, 1787. Secretary of Pennsylvania, 1790–1801; U.S. district attorney Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1801–14; U.S. Secretary of Treasury, 1814–16. Editor, *Reports of Cases Ruled and Adjudged in the Several Courts of the United States and of Pennsylvania*, etc. (4 vols., 1790–1807).

EWING, JOHN (1732–1802) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born Maryland; graduated College of New Jersey (Princeton University), 1754; pastor First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1759–1802; degree of doctor of divinity Edinburgh University, Scotland, 1773; provost University of Pennsylvania, 1779–1802. Opposed ratification of Constitution, 1787–88; accused of writing “Centinel” essays.

FINDLEY, WILLIAM (1741–1821) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born northern Ireland; came to Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, 1763; weaver, school teacher, lawyer. Captain of militia, 1776–77; moved to Westmoreland County, 1782. Delegate Council of Censors, opposed revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Assemblyman, 1784–88; delegate state Convention, voted against ratification, 1787. Delegate Harrisburg Convention, 1788. Member Supreme Executive Council, 1789–90; delegate state constitutional convention, chairman of committee which wrote new state constitution, 1789–90. Member: state House of Representatives, 1790–91; U.S. House of Representatives, 1791–99, 1803–17; state Senate, 1799–1803.

FITZSIMONS, THOMAS (1741–1811) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Ireland, Roman Catholic parents; came to Philadelphia, 1761; wealthy merchant. Raised militia company, 1776; member Republican Society, 1779. A founder of Bank of North America, 1781; director of Bank, 1781–1803. Member Confederation Congress, 1782–83; delegate Council of Censors, supported revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Philadelphia assemblyman, 1785–89; delegate Constitutional Convention, 1787. Member U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–95. A founder, director, and president Insurance Company of North America; president Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.

FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN (1706–1790) Constitutionalist/Federalist

Born Boston. Statesman, diplomat, printer, publisher, inventor, and scientist. Attended Boston Latin School but did not graduate. Became printing apprentice at age 12. Moved to Philadelphia at age 17. Married Deborah Read, 1730. Inventor of the lightning rod, Franklin stove, and bifocal glasses, among many others. Was President of the University of Pennsylvania, 1749–54; Postmaster General of British America, 1753–74; Speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly, 1764; Delegate from Pennsylvania to Second Continental Congress, 1775–76; United States Postmaster General, 1775–76; United States Minister to France, 1779–85; United States Minister to Sweden, 1782–83; and President of Pennsylvania, 1785–88. Nominated for councillor from Philadelphia; elected unanimously, Oct. 1785; president, Supreme Executive Council, 1785–88. Delegate to Constitutional Convention, 1787; delivered conciliatory address at close of Convention which was widely published by Federalists late 1787 and early 1788. Nominated for state Convention by Constitutionals, but defeated, 1787. Last public act was to sign a petition to Congress encouraging abolition of slavery, 1790.

HUTCHINSON, JAMES (1752–1793) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born Bucks County; attended College of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania); studied medicine in England, 1775–77; returned to America, 1777. Surgeon General of Pennsylvania, 1777–84; member committee of safety. Elected to Assembly, May 1780 to complete George Bryan's term; defeated in election to Continental Congress, 1780. Opposed ratification of Constitution, 1787–88; possibly one author of "An Old Whig" essays. On medical staff, Pennsylvania Hospital almost continuously, 1777–93; taught at University of Pennsylvania, 1789–93; consulting physician port of Philadelphia, 1790–93.

LEWIS, WILLIAM (1751–1819) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Chester County, Quaker parents; admitted to Philadelphia bar, 1773. Took test oath during War for Independence; defended Quakers accused of treason. Philadelphia assemblyman, 1787–89. Delegate state constitutional convention, supported revision of state constitution, 1789–90. Appointed U.S. attorney, District of Pennsylvania, 1789; appointed judge federal district court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1791. Retired to private law practice, 1792. Lifelong opponent of slavery; helped pass act abolishing slavery, 1780.

LLOYD, THOMAS (1756–1827) Federalist/?

Born London, England, Roman Catholic parents; came to St. Mary's County, Maryland, 1771. Lieutenant Maryland regiment, 1775–79; captain quartermaster's department, 1779. Superintended printing *Journals* of Continental Congress, 1779; appointed clerk to treasurer of U.S., c. 1782. Settled in Philadelphia; attained reputation as shorthand writer and teacher. Employed by *Pennsylvania Packet* to take notes of Assembly debates; published four volumes Assembly debates, 1787–88; published partial notes of debates of Pennsylvania Convention, Feb. 1788. Commissioned by Philadelphia Federalists to take notes of debates in Maryland Convention but debates never published. Published debates of U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–90. Lived in England, 1791–96. Returned to America; held various reporting jobs, taught shorthand; published work on stenography, 1819.

LOGAN, GEORGE (1753–1821) Republican/Federalist/Democratic-Republican

Born Germantown, wealthy Quaker parents; apprenticed to merchant; received medical degree, University of Edinburgh, Scotland, 1779. Returned to America, 1780; never practiced medicine. Rebuilt “Stenton,” family estate; agricultural reformer; helped found Philadelphia Society for the Promotion of Agriculture; encouraged American manufactures. Philadelphia County assemblyman, 1785–89, 1795–97, 1799–1800. Private mission to France to bring about peace between U.S. and France, 1798, resulted in passage of “Logan Act” forbidding such missions, 1799. U.S. Senator, 1801–7.

M’CALMONT, JAMES (1727–1809) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican?

Born Cumberland County, son of immigrant from northern Ireland; major Pennsylvania regiment, War for Independence. Influential in establishing Franklin County, 1784; assemblyman, 1784–88. Judge Court of Common Pleas, Franklin County, 1789–91; associate judge Fourth (later Ninth) Pennsylvania Judicial District, 1791–1809.

McKEAN, THOMAS (1734–1817) Constitutionalist/Federalist/Democratic-Republican

Born Chester County; moved to Delaware, admitted to Delaware bar, 1754; admitted to Chester County bar, 1755; delegate Stamp Act Congress, 1765. Clerk Delaware Assembly, 1757–59; Delaware assemblyman, 1762–79; Assembly speaker, 1772–73, 1776; appointed collector port of New Castle, 1771; delegate Delaware state constitutional convention, 1776; acting president Delaware, Sept.–Nov. 1777. Moved to Philadelphia, 1774. Member Congress from Delaware, 1774–76, 1778–83; signed Declaration of Independence; member committee that drafted Articles of Confederation; president of Congress, July–Nov. 1781. Chief Justice Pennsylvania Supreme Court, 1777–99. Philadelphia delegate state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Delegate state constitutional convention, supported revision of state constitution, 1789–90. Presidential Elector, 1796; governor, 1799–1808; as governor was “father” of “spoils system” in Pennsylvania; and opposed efforts to call state convention to revise constitution of 1790.

McLENE, JAMES (1730–1806) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican?

Born Chester County; settled in Cumberland County, 1754. Delegate provincial conference, 1776; delegate state constitutional convention, 1776; assemblyman, 1776–78; member Supreme Executive Council, 1778–79. Member Continental Congress, 1779–80; delegate Council of Censors, opposed revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Represented newly-organized Franklin County, Supreme Executive Council, 1784–87; Assembly, 1787–89; state constitutional convention, 1789–90; state House of Representatives, 1790–91, 1793–94. Appointed justice of the peace, 1800.

MIFFLIN, THOMAS (1744–1800) Republican/Federalist/Democratic-Republican?

Born Philadelphia, Quaker parents; graduate College of New Jersey (Princeton University), 1760; formed mercantile partnership with brother, 1765. Opposed Stamp Act, 1765. Member First and Second Continental Congress, 1774–76. Appointed Washington’s aide-de-camp, 1775; quartermaster general Continental Army, 1775–78; major general Continental Army, 1777–79. Philadelphia assemblyman, 1778–79. Member Confederation Congress, 1782–84; president of Con-

gress, Dec. 1783–June 1784. Philadelphia County assemblyman, 1785–88; Assembly Speaker, 1785–88. Delegate Constitutional Convention, 1787. President Supreme Executive Council, 1788–90; president state constitutional convention, supported revision of state constitution, 1789–90; governor, 1790–99; member state House of Representatives, Dec. 1799–Jan. 1800.

MORRIS, GOUVERNEUR (1752–1816) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born New York; graduate King's College, 1768. Member New York Provincial Congress, 1775; delegate state convention, helped write new state constitution, 1776–77. Member Continental Congress, 1778–79. Became citizen of Pennsylvania, 1779; allied with Republican Party; admitted to Philadelphia bar, 1781. Assistant in U.S. office of finance, 1781–85. Delegate Constitutional Convention, delivered more speeches than any other delegate, member Committee of Style, 1787. Returned to New York and went to France as Robert Morris's business agent, 1788; minister to France, 1792–94. Returned to America, 1798; U.S. Senator 1800–1803; opposed War of 1812; supported Hartford Convention, 1814.

MORRIS, ROBERT (1734–1806) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born England; arrived in Maryland, 1747; apprenticed to Philadelphia merchant Charles Willing; formed mercantile partnership with Thomas Willing. Member Continental Congress, 1775–76; voted against independence, but signed Declaration of Independence; contracted with Congress for war supplies 1775 onwards. U.S. Superintendent of Finance, 1781–84, formulated long-range plans to strengthen central government. Political plans, business methods, and charges of corruption forced resignation in 1784. Elected Philadelphia assemblyman, 1776, 1778, 1780, 1785, 1786; delegate Constitutional Convention, 1787. U.S. Senator, 1789–95. Land speculation led to bankruptcy; in debtors' prison, 1798–1801.

MUHLENBERG, FREDERICK AUGUSTUS CONRAD (1750–1801) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Philadelphia County; attended University of Halle, Germany; Lutheran minister, 1770–79. Member Continental Congress, 1779–80. Philadelphia assemblyman, 1780–83; Assembly speaker, 1780–83. Philadelphia County delegate to and president Council of Censors, supported revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Appointed justice of the peace, register of wills, recorder of deeds of newly-organized Montgomery County, 1784. Delegate state Convention, President of Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Member U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–97; Speaker of House, 1789–91, 1793–95. Receiver general Pennsylvania land office, 1800–1801.

**NICHOLSON, JOHN (1757–1800) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican/
Federalist**

Born Wales; came to Cumberland County before 1775. Sergeant Pennsylvania regiment early in War for Independence; clerk chamber of accounts, Continental Board of Treasury, 1778–81. Appointed state auditor of accounts, 1781; comptroller general, 1782; receiver general of taxes, 1785; escheator general to liquidate estates of those attainted for treason, 1787; resigned all offices, 1794. Opposed Constitution, wrote pamphlet attacking it, 1787; organized petition campaign against legislative confirmation of Constitution after state Convention adjourned; had major role

in calling Harrisburg Convention, 1788. Became partner of Robert Morris in land speculation, 1794; went bankrupt and died in debtors' prison.

OSWALD, ELEAZER (1755–1795) Republican/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born England; came to America, 1770; settled in New Haven, Connecticut; apprenticed to New York newspaper publisher John Holt; married Holt's daughter, Elizabeth, 1772. Continental Army officer, 1775–79; in regiment of Colonel John Lamb, 1777–79. Published Baltimore *Maryland Journal* with William Goddard, 1779–81. Moved to Philadelphia, established *Independent Gazetteer*, 1782; opened City Coffee House, 1783. Helped Holt operate *Independent Gazette*; or the *New-York Journal*, 1782–84, and Holt's widow, 1784–87. Supported Constitution, then became opponent late in 1787. Went to England, 1792 and then to France; commissioned colonel in French revolutionary army; sent by French to Ireland in 1793 to see if Irish would rebel against British. Returned to America, Nov. 1793, and became active in Democratic societies of New York and Philadelphia.

PETERS, RICHARD (1744–1828) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Philadelphia; graduate College of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania), 1761; admitted to Philadelphia bar, 1763. Secretary Continental Board of War, 1776; member Board of War, 1777–81; member Confederation Congress, 1782–83. Philadelphia County assemblyman, 1787–90; Assembly Speaker, 1788–90. Judge, federal district court, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1792–1828.

PETRIKIN, WILLIAM (1761?–1821) Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born Scotland; came to Carlisle, Cumberland County, some time in mid-1780s; tailor, merchant. Arrested and then released for part in Carlisle riot of 26 Dec. 1787; wrote newspaper articles and a pamphlet opposing Constitution, 1788; delegate Harrisburg Convention, 1788; justice of the peace, Cumberland County, 1795. Moved to Bellefonte, Mifflin County(?), Dec. 1795. Appointed justice of the peace of newly-organized Centre County, 1800. County register and recorder, 1809–21; county notary, 1813.

PETTIT, CHARLES (1736–1806) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born New Jersey; son of Philadelphia merchant; appointed deputy secretary New Jersey, 1769; admitted to New Jersey bar, 1770; secretary of New Jersey, 1776–78. Assistant quartermaster general Continental Army, 1778–81. Moved to Philadelphia after war; merchant, insurance broker, speculator in national debt. Philadelphia assemblyman, 1784–85; principal author of state funding act, 1785; member Confederation Congress, 1785–87; defeated in election to state Convention, 1787; opposed Constitution. Delegate Harrisburg Convention, 1788; defeated in election to U.S. House of Representatives, 1788.

PICKERING, TIMOTHY (1745–1829) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Massachusetts; graduate Harvard College, 1763; admitted to Massachusetts bar, 1768; register of deeds Essex County, 1774. Militia colonel, 1775; adjutant general Continental Army, 1777–78; quartermaster general Continental Army, 1780–83. Moved to Pennsylvania, 1787; ap-

pointed to help organize Luzerne County. Delegate state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Delegate state constitutional convention, supported revision of state constitution, 1789–90. U.S. Postmaster General, 1791–94; Secretary of War, 1795; Secretary of State, 1795–1800. Returned to Massachusetts, 1800; U.S. Senator, 1803–11; member Massachusetts Executive Council, 1812–13; member U.S. House of Representatives, 1813–17. Opposed War of 1812; supported establishment of Northern confederacy.

RUSH, BENJAMIN (1745–1813) Republican/Federalist/Democratic-Republican

Born near Philadelphia; educated College of New Jersey (Princeton University); received medical degree, University of Edinburgh, Scotland. Began medical practice in Philadelphia, 1769. Member Continental Congress, 1776–77; signed Declaration of Independence. Appointed surgeon general, Middle Department, 1777; member Republican Society, 1779; helped found Dickinson College at Carlisle, 1782. Delegate to state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787; wrote newspaper articles supporting Constitution and campaigned for revision of state constitution. Member Pennsylvania Democratic Society, 1794. Treasurer of the United State Mint, 1797–1813. Supported movements for prison reform, educational reform, temperance, and abolition of slavery.

SMILIE, JOHN (1742–1813) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican

Born northern Ireland; came to Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 1760. Member provincial conferences, 1775, 1776; private Pennsylvania regiment, 1776–77; assemblyman, 1778–80. Moved to Westmoreland County, 1781; delegate Council of Censors, opposed revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Assemblyman newly-organized Fayette County, 1784–86. Supported revocation of Bank of North America charter, 1785. Member Supreme Executive Council, 1786–89. Delegate state Convention, voted against ratification, 1787; delegate Harrisburg Convention, 1788. Member: state constitutional convention, 1789–90; state Senate, 1790–92; state House of Representatives, 1795–98; U.S. House of Representatives, 1793–95, 1799–1813. Presidential Elector, 1796.

**SMITH, JONATHAN BAYARD (1742–1812) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/
Democratic-Republican**

Born Philadelphia; graduate College of New Jersey (Princeton University), 1760; merchant. Member committee of safety, 1775; council of safety, 1777. Member Continental Congress, 1777, but resigned to help defend Philadelphia. Prothonotary Court of Common Pleas of city and county of Philadelphia, 1777–88; appointed justice of that court, 1778 and associate justice, 1791. Opposed ratification of Constitution. Alderman, city of Philadelphia, 1792–94; state auditor general, 1794–95. Son-in-law of George Bryan.

WAYNE, ANTHONY (1745–1796) Republican/Federalist/Federalist

Born Chester County; surveyor, owner of tannery. Delegate provincial conference, 1775; colonel Chester County regiment, 1776; brigadier general Continental Army, 1777; served in battles of Brandywine, Germantown, Stony Point, Yorktown; defeated Creeks and Cherokees (British allies) in Georgia, 1782; negotiated treaties with them, 1782–83; retired as brevet major general, 1783. Delegate Council of Censors, favored revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Chester

County assemblyman, 1784–86; delegate state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Moved to Georgia and elected to U.S. House of Representatives, March 1791; seat declared vacant, March 1792, because of election irregularities and residence qualification. Appointed major general commanding U.S. Army in Northwest Territory, 1791; defeated Indians at Fallen Timbers, 1794; negotiated treaty of Greenville, 1795; appointed sole government commissioner for dealing with western Indians and receiver of military posts given up by British.

WHITEHILL, ROBERT (1738–1813) Constitutionalist/Antifederalist/Democratic-Republican
Born Lancaster County, son of immigrant from northern Ireland; moved to Cumberland County, 1770. Delegate state constitutional convention and leader in writing first state constitution, 1776. Member: Assembly, 1776–78, 1783–87; Supreme Executive Council, 1779–81; Council of Censors, opposed revision of state constitution, 1783–84. Led Assembly fight to revoke Bank of North America charter, 1785. Delegate state Convention, voted against ratification, 1787; proposed amendments to Constitution in Convention. Delegate Harrisburg Convention, 1788. Delegate state constitutional convention, 1789–90, refused to sign new state constitution. Member: state House of Representatives, 1797–1801; state Senate, 1801–5; U.S. House of Representatives, 1805–13.

WILSON, JAMES (1742–1798) Republican/Federalist/Federalist
Born Scotland; educated St. Andrews, Glasgow, and Edinburgh universities; came to Pennsylvania, 1765; studied law with John Dickinson; admitted to Philadelphia bar, 1767. Moved to Reading and then Carlisle. Elected to Continental Congress, May 1775; opposed independence, but voted for it on 2 July 1776. Moved to Philadelphia, 1778. Opponent of state constitution; a member Republican Society, 1779. Reelected to Congress, 1776, 1777, 1782, 1785; advocated measures to strengthen central government; defended Bank of North America. Delegate Constitutional Convention, member Committee of Detail, 1787. Speech at State House Yard, 6 Oct. 1787, provided standard arguments for supporters of Constitution. Delegate state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Presidential Elector, 1789; delegate state constitutional convention and principal author of new state constitution, 1789–90. Associate justice U.S. Supreme Court, 1789–98. Failure of land speculations led to flight to New Jersey in 1797 and then to North Carolina to escape imprisonment for debt in Pennsylvania. Died in North Carolina.

YEATES, JASPER (1745–1817) Republican/Federalist/Federalist
Born Philadelphia; graduate College of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania), 1761; admitted to Philadelphia bar, 1765. Moved to Lancaster. Chairman committee of correspondence, 1775; captain of associators, 1776; congressional commissioner at Fort Pitt conference with Indians, 1776. Delegate state Convention, voted to ratify, 1787. Associate justice, state Supreme Court, 1791–1817; federal commissioner to confer with Whiskey insurrectionists, 1794; acquitted in impeachment trial (along with two other justices), 1805; four volumes of his reports of Supreme Court cases (1791–1808) published after his death.

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