MATTHEW GRISWOLD

b. 1714

Representing: Lyme

PRESIDENT OF THE CONVENTION

You are Matthew Griswold, President of the Convention. You were Governor of Connecticut from 1784-1786, and your election to preside over the Convention is a sign of your continued high status among the leadership of the state. You were a devoted patriot during the Revolution. During your life you have risen from a simple farmer to the wealthiest person in your town. You were a lawyer, the King's attorney in New London County, and a Justice on the Superior Court, before being elected Deputy Governor and then Governor. You support the new Constitution and were in favor of its being written "to render the Constitution of the federal government adequate to the exigencies of the union." Nevertheless, you will do everything you can to insure all views get a fair hearing. It is this basic fairness that has always earned you much respect.

One might think that you, being a former governor, would be concerned about the states losing power to the central government. However, you are not afraid that the state governments will be swallowed up, as some have predicted. Nor do you feel the new plan will put an end liberty. You are convinced by Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth's arguments that the government's powers are sufficiently checked and that they rely on the people's consent. Also, you feel William Samuel Johnson is right in saying that free trade will bring great economic benefits to Connecticut and will outweigh any new taxes on imports that the government may impose. The nation is in desperate need of unity, and some sacrifice is necessary.

As President of the Convention, you must establish procedures for the debate. You will have to decide whether or not to discuss the Constitution as a whole, or "by single articles, sections, paragraphs, or detached clauses and sentences as occasion might require." Once this is decided, announce some ground rules, such as delegates must raise their hands to be recognized and may not interrupt another delegate unless the delegate who has the floor consents. Also, ask each delegate to identify himself and the town he represents each time he speaks. When all views have been heard, you should call a vote. Make a list of the delegates ahead of time, so that you can take a roll-call vote, recording whether each delegate votes in favor of or against ratification of the Constitution.

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GOVERNOR SAMUEL HUNTINGTON

b. 1731
Representing: Norwich

PRO-RATIFICATION

You have been Governor of Connecticut since 1786. You are a self-taught lawyer, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, a former adviser to Governor Trumbull, and one-time President of the Continental Congress under the Articles of Confederation. Although somewhat shy and stern in your demeanor, you are known for your sensitivity to the less fortunate in your state. You are a personal friend of Roger Sherman and a strong supporter of the new Constitution, for you are aware of the need for a strong central power in the national government. You do not think the interests of your state will be endangered by the powers the Constitution gives Congress. In fact, as leader of a small and relatively weak state—one which is currently not in good shape financially—you know that placing taxation, treaty-making, war-making, and commerce regulation powers in Congress is the best thing that can happen to Connecticut. Your state has been subject to the whims of more economically and militarily powerful states like New York, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania for too long. Furthermore, the state is deeply in debt. Inflation, the suffering of the poor and veterans, the need for education and more incentives for manufacturing, and the need to assist merchants in developing stronger maritime trade networks all concern you. You are not afraid of Congress becoming oppressively powerful. In fact, you suspect the new Constitution will limit the power of the privileged class, especially in ports such as Norwich, and will give farmers more opportunity to participate in politics.

Of course, the new government's success will depend upon the ability of the people to make it work. "No Constitution can make a people happy without Virtue and Wisdom," you wrote to the governor of North Carolina. The new Constitution, which requires a well-educated and clear-thinking society for its survival, is well suited, you think, to the people of the United States.

You are confident that you have made the right decision to support this new order. The vast majority of people in your town and in your county, being aware of the need for better regulation of commerce by a central government, agree with you. You intend to speak for them in your closing remarks at the Ratification Convention, just before the vote:

> Mr. President, I do not rise to detain this Convention for any length of time. The subject has been so fully discussed, that very little can be added to what has already been offered. I have heard and attended with pleasure to what has been said on it. The importance of it merited a full and ample discussion. It does not give me pain, but pleasure, to hear the sentiments of those gentlemen who differ from me. It is not to be expected from human nature that we should all have the same opinion. The best way to learn the nature and effects of different systems of government, is not from theoretical dissertations, but from experience—from what has actually taken place among mankind. From this same source it is that mankind have obtained a more complete knowledge of the nature of government than they had in ages past. It is an established truth that no nation can exist without a coercive power—a power to enforce

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the execution of its political regulations. There is such a love of liberty implanted in the human heart, that no nation ever willingly gave up its liberty. If they lose this inestimable birthright of men, it is not for a want of the will, but of the proper means to support it. If we look into history, we shall find that the common avenue through which tyranny has entered in, and enslaved nations who were once free, has been their not supporting government.

The great secret of preserving liberty is, to lodge the supreme power so as to be well supported, and not abused. […] The history of man clearly shows that it is dangerous to intrust the supreme power in the hands of one man. The same source of knowledge proves that it is not only inconvenient, but dangerous to liberty, for the people of a large community to attempt to exercise in person the supreme authority. Hence arises the necessity that the people should act by their representatives; […] Liberty, however, is not so well secured as it ought to be when the supreme power is lodged in one body of representatives. There ought to be two branches of the legislature, that one may be a check upon the other. It is difficult for the people at large to know when the supreme power is verging towards abuse, and to apply the proper remedy. But if the government be properly balanced, it will possess a renovating principle, by which it will be able to right itself. […]

I am fully of opinion that the great council of the Union must have a controlling power with respect to national concerns. There is, at present, an extreme want of power in the national government; and it is my opinion that this Constitution does not give too much. As to the subject of representation, at the first view it appears small; but on the whole, the purposes of the Union could not be so well answered by a greater number. It is impracticable to have the number of representatives as great, and times of election as frequent, as they are in our state governments. Nor is this necessary for the security of our liberty. It is sufficient if the choice of our representatives be so frequent that they must depend upon the people, and that an inseparable connection be kept up between the electors and the elected.

The state governments, I think, will not be endangered by the powers vested by this Constitution in the general government. While I have attended in Congress, I have observed that the members were quite as strenuous advocates for the rights of their respective states, as for those of the Union. I doubt not but that this will continue to be the case; and hence I infer that the general government will not have the disposition to encroach upon the states. […] Upon the whole view of this Constitution, I am in favor of it, and think it bids fair to promote our national prosperity. This is a new event in the history of mankind. Heretofore most governments have been formed by tyrants, and imposed on mankind by force. Never before did a people, in time of peace and tranquility, meet together by their representatives, and, with calm deliberation, frame for themselves a system of government. This noble attempt does honor to our country. While I express my sentiments in favor of this Constitution, I candidly believe that those gentlemen who oppose it are actuated by principles of regard to the public welfare. If we will exercise mutual candor for each other, and sincerely endeavor to maintain our liberties, we may long continue to be a free and happy people.

GENERAL JEDEDIAH HUNTINGTON

b. 1743

Representing: Norwich

PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Jedediah Huntington, a delegate from Norwich. Like the other delegate from Norwich, Governor Samuel Huntington, you are a strong supporter of the new Constitution.

You are a small, quiet man, yet energetic and very active in civil affairs. Your reserved and polished manner disguises a man who has had a great deal of political and military experience. You trained in law and graduated from Cambridge University in 1763, but your experience in England did nothing to diminish your enthusiasm for your native Connecticut. An intensely religious man, you consider the Old World too corrupt, and upon your return to Connecticut, you soon became appalled at the way the clergy was treating the colonists. You were a member of the Sons of Liberty and rose in the ranks during the war to become a General in the Continental Army. After the war you joined the Society of the Cincinnati, serving as its Vice-president in Connecticut, and you held numerous political offices, including High Sheriff of New London County, Judge of Probate for the district of Norwich, First Alderman of the city of Norwich, and Representative for Norwich in the State Legislature. It is little wonder that your constituents thought you fit to represent them in this important gathering in Hartford. Some may not share your enthusiasm for the new Constitution, and a number of them resent and mistrust the hereditary—any many would say elitist—Society of the Cincinnati, but none will deny they have great respect for your abilities. You believe this kind of society—where men of talent, integrity, and wisdom are recognized and respected—can sustain a national republic, even if others disagree.

In fact, you think the new Constitution is needed now more than ever before. While you believe in doing all that is necessary to prevent tyranny (your record in the Revolution proves that), you are certain that the public good demands a stronger, more powerful, more efficient government than that under the Articles of Confederation. You still want the states to exist in a federal relationship but feel that they must give up some of their powers for the nation to avoid ruin. You stand in awe of the system created in Philadelphia and doubt a better one could ever be found. While some say the new Constitution is too ambiguous, you admire its flexibility to change with the times, the degree of representation the people have to protect their liberties, the remarkable system of checks and balances so that no one person or faction can get too much power, and the unifying features of the commerce clause and the ability of raise an army.

States divided will inevitably fall, while those that are united will triumph. Here, at last, after a decade of confusion, is a way of achieving the necessary unity. Also, you are sick of the extreme taxation those in the port towns like Norwich must endure. This new system, where Congress controls interstate commerce, will ensure a fairer system of raising revenue and regulating trade. Finally, having one commander-in-chief, elected in a sensible fashion (the electoral college), where the people have a say, is the best and only way to provide for the defense of a democratic republic.

These are the views you will express at the Convention in Hartford.

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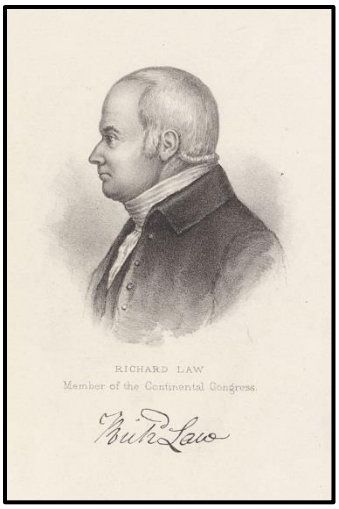
THE HONORABLE RICHARD LAW

b. 1733

Representing: New London



PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Richard Law, Chief Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court and one of the most respected leaders of the state. Because of your early support for the Constitution, you earned the endorsement of *The Connecticut Courant* and the support of your townspeople as a delegate to the Ratification Convention. You are well aware that no system of government is perfect, but you see this Constitution's basic principles—among them a dependence on the people—as sound and wise. In any case, Roger Sherman has convinced you that the amendment procedure should ensure the correction of any errors made at this point. You are firmly behind ratification and support your friends Sherman, Ellsworth, and Johnson in their efforts to achieve it. If the Constitution is not ratified, you see only a cloud of tyranny drifting over the nation.

Toward the end of the Ratification Convention, you plan to deliver this speech:

> Mr. President, the important subject before us has been examined so particularly, that I do not expect to add anything new. As we have been a long time poring upon the defective parts of the Constitution, I think it will not be amiss to pay some attention to its excellences. There is one clause in it which provides a remedy for whatever defects it may have. The clause to which I refer is that which provides that, whenever two thirds of Congress, or a convention to be called at the instance of two thirds of the states, shall propose amendments, and they be agreed to by three fourths of the states, such amendments shall be valid, as part of the Constitution. This is an easy and peaceable way of amending any parts of the Constitution which may be found inconvenient in practice.
>
> As this is a most important question, as it concerns not only present but future generations, we ought to consider it upon its real merits, without suffering our minds to be misled by examples of other nations, whose circumstances are very different from ours. Some have been led into a mistake, by comparing a part of this Constitution with that of Great Britain. But this is very different from theirs. Our President is not a King, nor our Senate a House of Lords. They do not claim an independent, hereditary authority. But the whole is elective; all dependent on the people. The President, the Senate, the Representatives, are all creatures of the people. Therefore the people will be secure from oppression; though I admit that, if our President and Senate were possessed of an independent, hereditary authority, the democratical branch would be too weak for the others.
>
> Some suppose that the general government, which extends over the whole, will annihilate the state governments. But consider that this general government rests upon the state governments for its support. It is like a vast and magnificent bridge, built upon thirteen strong and stately pillars. Now, the rulers, who occupy the bridge, cannot be so beside themselves as to knock

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away the pillars which support the whole fabric. But, some say, a free government, like this, has not energy enough to pervade a country of such vast extent.

We are not satisfied with this assertion. We want to try the experiment. A free system of government is now presented to our acceptance. We shall be wanting to ourselves, if, instead of adopting it, we wait for the arm of tyranny to impose upon us a system of despotism. The old Articles of Confederation were once the best that we should have been willing to adopt. We have been led on by imperceptible degrees to see that they are defective; and now, if it be the design of Providence to make us a great and happy people, I believe that he who turns the hearts of the children of men as the rivers of water are turned, will induce the people of the United States to accept of a Constitution which is well calculated to promote their national welfare.

AMASA LEARNED

b.1750

Representing: New London

PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Amasa Learned, a wealthy merchant from New London. You graduated from Yale in 1772, taught school until the Revolutionary War broke out, and then fought in the war until 1780. Afterward, you married into the rich and powerful Hallam family of New London and began a career in politics and business that has led to respect and prosperity.

You are very much in favor of the new Constitution, as is practically everyone from New London County. Your attention has been drawn, in particular, to the commerce clauses in Article I (section 8 and section 9.) As a merchant in a seacoast town doing trade with other states and other nations, you like the idea that Congress will be regulating interstate trade, will eliminate tariffs between states (which are currently inflicting disaster on Connecticut merchants to the benefit of New York State), will not tax exports, and will not favor one port over any other. You realize that some tariffs are important to raise necessary revenue to protect the nation and its shipping against foreign attack, and you are glad to pay those taxes as long as they are fairly imposed on all. It is a small sacrifice for such a great benefit of national security and unity. Thus, along with Richard Law, your co-delegate from New London, you plan to speak in favor of ratification and vote “yes” when the vote is called.

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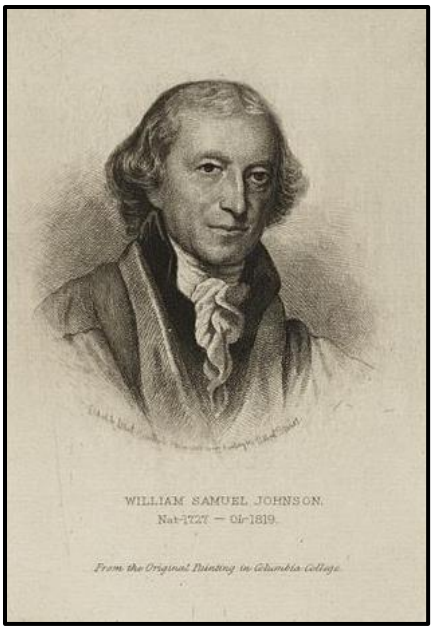
WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON

b.1727

Representing: Stratford



PRO-RATIFICATION

You are William Samuel Johnson, a graduate of Yale College and Oxford Law School, and a leading lawyer of your times. You have had a long career of public service—in Connecticut's State Assembly, at the Stamp Act Congress, and in the Continental Congress. You are now a justice of the Supreme Court of Connecticut and will soon assume the duties of President of Columbia University in New York City. As a member of Connecticut's delegation to the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, you helped to incorporate the "Great Compromise" (or as some like to call it, the "Connecticut Compromise") into the new Constitution. It wasn't easy pleasing both large and small states, but this agreement that states should have proportional representation in the lower house (House of Representatives) and equal representation in the upper house (Senate) did the trick.

You are greatly respected throughout Connecticut and in the nation for your "learning and eloquence," even though at one time there was some question about your future. In 1776 you actually opposed independence, and you were arrested for correspondence with the enemy in 1779. You were also a member of the Church of England and were once in favor of a Bishop for Americans to "reduce them to a better state of unity." (Needless to say, the Congregational establishment probably remembered these things when arresting you.) However, you were freed after taking an oath of loyalty to the state. Now you must use your prestige to achieve what you see as a necessary goal. After years of doubting the need for a strong central government, you now have come to believe that it is necessary to have a national government with the power to enforce laws directly upon individuals, rather than having to operate via state governments. For one thing, there is no monetary system in this new nation—a disgrace! Furthermore, the state governments have come under the influence of people who would use them to achieve their own selfish ends. Note how the "New Light" religious faction got control of Connecticut. More recently, a group that wanted the state to print worthless paper money caused harmful inflation during the war. At the Philadelphia convention you said:

> States are political societies. —; For whom are we to form a government? for the people of America, or for those societies? Undoubtedly the latter. They must, therefore, have a voice in the second branch of the general government, if you mean to preserve their existence. The people already compose the first branch. The mixture is proper and necessary—;For we cannot form a general government on any other ground.

Now you and your colleagues have forged such a government that will deal effectively with the present crisis of disunity, regional jealousies, and military weakness and ensure that the people are properly represented at the same time. With all your renowned eloquence, you plan to support this new order.

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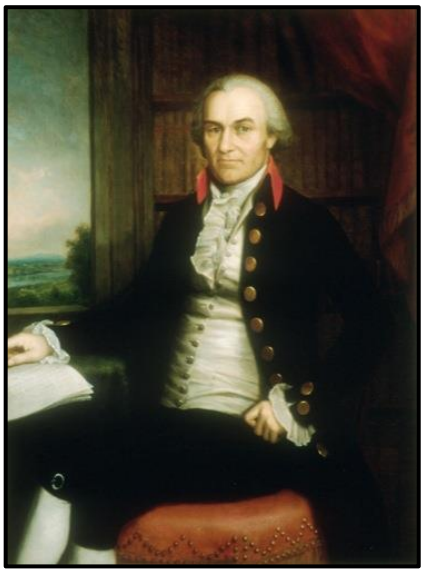
OLIVER ELLSWORTH

b. 1745
Representing: Windsor



PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Oliver Ellsworth, former member of the Continental Congress (1777-1784), member of Connecticut's delegation to the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, and member of the Superior Court of Connecticut. You graduated from Princeton in 1766, having trained for the ministry. You immediately allied yourself with the opponents of Parliamentary taxation, and your interests in these matters led you to practice law, beginning in 1771.

At the Philadelphia Convention you were instrumental in creating the first draft of the Constitution and in shaping its style and language. A delegate from Georgia described you in this way:

> ...he is a Gentleman of a clear, deep and copious understanding; eloquent and connected in public debate; and always attentive to his duty. His is very happy in a reply, and choice in selecting such parts of his adversary's arguments as he finds make the strongest impressions—; in order to take off the force of them so as to admit the power of his own.

The supporters of the new Constitution will look for to you for leadership in the ratification debates at Hartford. Your recent "Letters of a Landholder," printed by *The Connecticut Courant*, have done much to persuade wavering citizens to support the Constitution. You also wrote a biting criticism of William Williams, that old troublemaker from Lebanon. Williams criticized the Constitution because it prohibited a religious test for holding public office and made no mention of God. You defended the religious test clause and noted it would prohibit the sort of persecution the founders of Connecticut had sought to escape. Most of your efforts now are aimed at people from the farming communities, who seem to need more persuasion than others.

Here are some excerpts from speeches that you have prepared for the debates in Hartford:

> Mr. President, it is observable that there is no preface to the proposed Constitution; but it evidently presupposes two things: one is the necessity of a federal government; the other is the inefficacy of the old Articles of Confederation. A union is necessary for the purposes of a national defense. United, we are strong; divided we are weak. It is easy for hostile nations to sweep off a number of separate states, one after another. Witness the states in the neighborhood of ancient Rome. They were successively subdued by that ambitious city, which they might have conquered with the utmost ease, if they had been united. Witness the Canaanitish nations, whose divided situation rendered them an easy prey....Thus it always happens to small states, and to great ones, if divided. […]
>
> We must unite, in order to preserve peace among ourselves. If we be divided, what is to prevent wars from breaking out among the states? States, as well as individuals, are subject to ambition,

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to avarice, to those jarring passions which disturb the peace of society. What is to check these? If there be a parental hand over the whole, this and nothing else, can restrain the unruly conduct of the members.

Union is necessary to preserve commutative justice between the states. If divided, what is to prevent the large states from oppressing the small? What is to defend us from the ambition and rapacity of New York, when she has spread over the vast territory which she claims and holds? Do we not already see in her the seeds of an overbearing ambition? [...] New Jersey and Delaware have seen this, and have adopted the Constitution unanimously.

A more energetic system is necessary. The present is merely advisory. It has no coercive power. Without this, government is ineffectual, or rather is no government at all. But it is said, "Such a power is not necessary. States will not do wrong. They need only to be told their duty, and they will do it." I ask, sir, What warrant is there for this assertion? Do not states do wrong? Whence come wars? One of two hostile nations must be in the wrong. But it is said, "Among sister states, this can never be presumed." But do we not know that, when friends become enemies their enmity is the most virulent? [...]

But to come nearer to home. Mr. President, have we not seen and felt the necessity of such a coercive power? What was the consequence of the want of it during the late war, particularly towards the close? A few states bore the burden of the war. While we and one or two more of the states were paying eighty or a hundred dollars per man to recruit the Continental army, the regiments of some states had scarcely men enough to wait on their officers. Since the close of the war, some of the states have done nothing towards complying with the requisitions of Congress. Others, who did something at first, seeing that they were left to bear the whole burden, have become equally remiss. What is the consequence? To what shifts have we been driven? To the wretched expedient of negotiating new loans in Europe, to pay the interest of the foreign debt. And what is still worse, we have even been obliged to apply the new loans to the support of our own civil government at home.

Another ill consequence of this want of energy is that treaties are not performed. The treaty of peace with Great Britain was a very favorable one for us. But it did not happen perfectly to please some of the states, and they would not comply with it. The consequence is, Britain charges us with the breach, and refuses to deliver up the forts on our northern quarter. […]

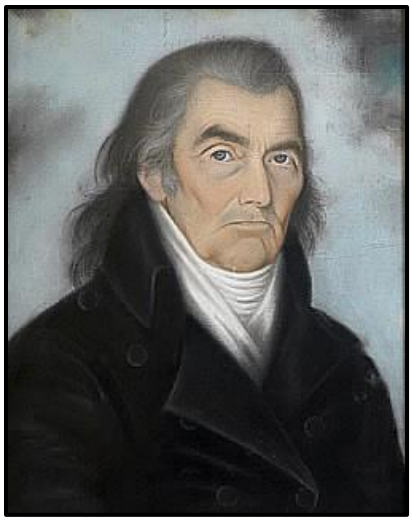
Will our weakness induce Spain to relinquish the exclusive navigation of the Mississippi, or the territory which she claims on the east side of that river? […] If a war breaks out, and our situation invites our enemies to make war, how are we to defend ourselves? Has government the means to enlist a man or buy an ox? Or shall we rally the remainder of our old army? The European nations I believe to be not friendly to us. They are pleased to see us disconnected from Great Britain; they are pleased to see us disunited among ourselves. […]

The Constitution before us is a complete system of legislative, judicial, and executive power. It was designed to supply the defects of the former system; and I believe, upon a full discussion, it will be found calculated to answer the purposes for which it was designed.

THE HONORABLE WILLIAM NOYES, ESQ.

b. 1728

Representing: Lyme



PRO-RATIFICATION

You are William Noyes, a Yale graduate and highly respected man in Lyme. Your town is composed mainly of farmers, and they have some concerns about turning over the powers of taxation and raising an army to the new central government under the Constitution. However, since both you and former Governor Matthew Griswold, whom they have also elected as a delegate to the Ratification Convention, are strongly in favor of the new Constitution, most of them are persuaded that you should go ahead and vote in favor of it.

Your community is certainly protective of its independence. As part of the "New Light" movement before the Revolution, these people wanted to be free from control of the New London "Association," a group of ministers who controlled what sort of preaching each congregation was allowed to have in its church. When Parliament began passing tax laws and other regulations restricting the colonists, the people of your community resisted. They voted to unseat magistrates at the state level who did not oppose Parliament's actions and also brought to power people more sympathetic to the movement for independent congregations.

It may be surprising that such a community would tolerate a new Constitution which gives a distant, central government significant powers over the lives of individual citizens. However, you feel—judging from the current crises of the times—that such power is necessary. You also are convinced by Roger Sherman that the powers of the government are sufficiently checked through representation of the people in the various branches. You think the new Constitution offers an ideal solution for a nation currently suffering from the type of chaos that has caused the fall of republics throughout history. This is the message you will try to get across to your fellow delegates at Hartford.

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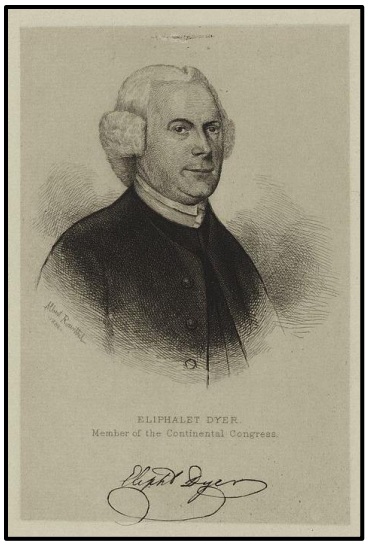
ELIPHALET DYER

b. 1721

Representing: Windham



PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Eliphalet Dyer, a member of the Superior Court of Connecticut and highly respected citizen of a fast-growing town in the northeastern part of the state. You are also well-known throughout the state for your skills in political affairs—*The Connecticut Courant* recently recommended your election as a delegate to this convention, and the voters of your town agreed.

You were educated at Yale College, served in the Connecticut militia as a regimental commander during the French and Indian War, and sat in the General Assembly from 1747 until 1762 and on the Governor's Council from then until 1784. You were also a delegate to the Stamp Act Congress and a member of the Continental Congress. In 1753, you helped organize the Susquehanna Company, which bought the rights to a lot of land in the part of western Pennsylvania which was supposedly granted to Connecticut in its original charter. The company stood to profit while also providing opportunities to the children of Connecticut farmers, who had few chances to buy good farmland near home. Eventually, though, Connecticut gave up its claims to much of this land, thanks to those men from the western part of the state who worked against you in the General Assembly.

You also had difficulties during your service in the Continental Congress, where you cast the deciding vote in favor of "commutation" of officers' pensions to full pay for five years. Opponents claimed this put huge financial burdens on the state and only benefitted the elite, and the people in Connecticut were so angry that they voted you out of office.

Actually, you see yourself as a person who stands up for the independent farmer and militiaman, who you feel is at the heart of the new republic. Your constituents have expressed a great deal of concern about the new Constitution, and you can see why they are upset. They resent distant governments that have power to tax and raise an army. They are suspicious of any government, whether republican or monarchical, which attempts to make laws for Virginians as well as New Englanders. In fact, they do not even like the General Assembly making laws for them, as they feel that the Assembly is not looking out for the interests of ordinary people.

In spite of your empathy for their views, it is often difficult for you to get people to see that you are on their side. You are not a very good public speaker, and it takes you a long time to explain your position. You have a difficult task here. You think the new government will be more likely to protect Connecticut's remaining land claims in the west than the government under the Articles of Confederation. If so, the children of Connecticut farmers will still be able to purchase land at a reasonable rate. You support this new Constitution, because you have seen the trouble Connecticut has had in negotiating with Pennsylvania over land claims. Apparently, your voters are willing to give you the benefit of the doubt and send you to Hartford. Now you need to explain your views to the other delegates, and you are not terribly confident of your ability to present this complex issue in a way that will not alienate those whom you most want to help.

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GENERAL SAMUEL HOLDEN PARSONS

b. 1737

Representing: Middletown

PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Samuel Parsons, a strong supporter of the new Constitution and admirer of Oliver Ellsworth. You are very anxious that the Constitution be ratified quickly, and at any cost. You understand that it is necessary to give the opposition a chance to speak, but you have, so far, been totally unimpressed with their arguments. You refer to people who do not support the new Constitution as the "Wrongheads" and argue they should to be kept out of positions in state and local government. You have a good feeling about the chances for ratification in Connecticut, though, and you wrote in a letter to Roger Allen that "the efforts of its enemies have been crowned with Shame and disappointment."

In fact, you find that those who oppose the new Constitution are some of the most offensive, ill-advised, and foolish people in the state. William Williams is a good example. He has done everything he could to obstruct the efforts of responsible people like yourself to settle the western land question in a wise manner. You favor the state getting out of the affair as quickly as possible by selling the Western Reserve off in large lots to persons like yourself, who are much more experienced in dealing with land settlement and can arrange for proper sale and settling of the area. That underhanded Williams tried to have anonymous articles printed opposing your ideas (all in the name of his precious small farmer, who would not know the first thing about what to do with that land!) You foiled him, though, by exposing his tactics and his identity.

You also find that many men opposed to the Constitution have written and spoken wild accusations about the Society of the Cincinnati, of which you are President. Among these are James Wadsworth of Durham and Noah Phelps of Simsbury, who do not seem to understand your concern for the welfare of former Continental officers. You want Congress to grant former officers lands in the west, and you were pleased that Congress granted them full pay for five years after the war. Those who sat at home, the "summertime patriots," do not seem to recognize the great sacrifice these officers made, risking their lives, honor, and fortune in the war.

There is a desperate need for a strong central government that can put things right, both for former officers and for all those who look forward to an era of order and harmony in a new national republic. You believe that a national republic will encourage men of distinction and talent to seek positions of power to which they are well suited. A new class of men will rise to the top thanks to their abilities, not because they have inherited their wealth and status, but also not just because their rhetoric pleases the common rabble.

As soon as possible, you will make the motion "That this convention do assent to, ratify and adopt the Constitution by the Convention of Delegates in Philadelphia on the 17th Day of September A.D. 1787 and referred to the determination of this Convention by an Act of the General Assembly in October last."

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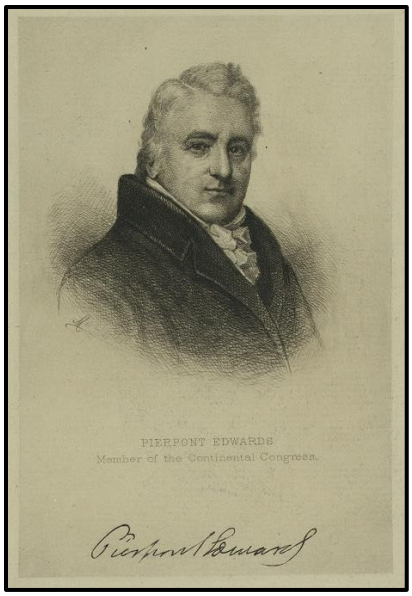
PIERPONT EDWARDS

b. 1750

Representing: New Haven



PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Pierpont Edwards, a leading lawyer from New Haven. You were born in Northampton, Massachusetts, the son of the great preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards. You were educated at Princeton and became a lawyer in Connecticut in 1771. You have served in the General Assembly and in Congress and are well-respected throughout the state.

You have great respect for Oliver Ellsworth and Roger Sherman and think they have put together a marvelous Constitution for a national government. At the Convention you plan to speak on behalf of this new plan. Under this plan the new government will be able to settle all of the problems of the last several years—especially those difficulties between the states (like New York and Connecticut.) The merchants of New Haven are solidly behind this document for that reason, and you are eager to retain their confidence in you by supporting their views at the Ratification Convention. They—and you—think that Connecticut will benefit from the central regulation of commerce, which will keep New York from charging prohibitive import taxes on Connecticut trade goods. While some are concerned about possible tyranny arising in this new government, Roger Sherman has convinced you that the document provides many checks against abuses of power. You are ready to join him in arguing the virtues of the document and to vote "yes" at the convention.

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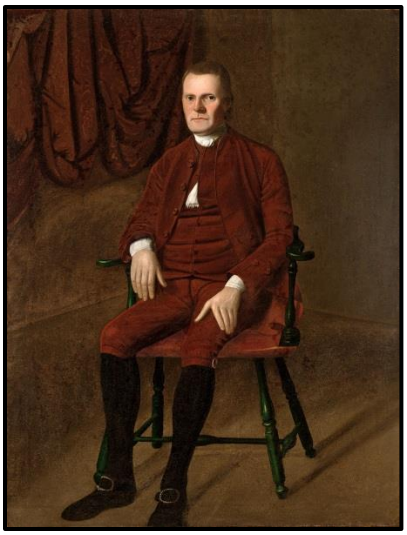
ROGER SHERMAN

b. 1721

Representing: New Haven



PRO-RATIFICATION

You are Roger Sherman, a man with an impressive background. Originally trained as a shoemaker, you taught yourself to be a surveyor, then a merchant, and then a lawyer, becoming successful at each. You have been a member of the Connecticut General Assembly, a justice of the Superior Court, mayor of New Haven, member of the Continental Congress, and signer of the Declaration of Independence, Articles of Confederation, and the new Constitution. Some people say it's thanks to you and your "Great Compromise" (or "Connecticut Compromise") that there even IS a new Constitution. It wasn't easy pleasing both large and small states, but the agreement that states should have proportional representation in the lower house (House of Representatives) and equal representation in the upper house (Senate) did the trick. At this time you have held more state and national offices than anyone in the country, and no one in Connecticut—not even Oliver Ellsworth—has a better grasp of the details of the new Constitution.

Originally, you had not been an enthusiastic delegate to the Philadelphia Convention. You are a strong believer in states' rights and knew the Philadelphia Convention would lean towards nationalism. However, you also thought it ridiculous that Congress had no real power to levy taxes to support of the new nation or that states would not necessarily consider laws of Congress and treaties the new nation made to be binding upon them. You were also concerned about other problems, like the currency crisis and the absurd trade duties between the states. Your commitment to a representative republic and your understanding that your constituents did not want too radical a change in their government allowed you to take a balanced approach and fight for essential republican principles within the new, more powerful central government.

Now you will use your widely reputed hard-headed common sense to insure Connecticut is among the early ratifiers of the Constitution. You have already been active in that effort, traveling about the state to talk with delegates to the Ratification Convention and writing letters from "A Countryman" in *The New Haven Gazette* and in *The Connecticut Courant*. Your town supports you strongly—New Haven was the first to call for a Ratification Convention last October.

You have decided your role at the convention will be to explain the Constitution and to calm fears. You will prove that the separation of powers and the system of checks and balances insures that there is no threat to liberty. To do this you will refer to clauses in the Constitution itself, such as the provision for impeachment, veto power, and the independent judiciary. You will stress that every branch of the government gets its power either directly or indirectly from the people. The people will not lose any power or rights. Some powers will shift from state assemblies to Congress, but this will actually help secure people's rights and property. And, of course, "property" includes state bonds, like those held by Oliver Wolcott and yourself. You must explain to state bond holders that the new government will not swallow up the states and that their investments are secure. You will argue that this new republic will be more capable of ensuring people's liberties than the states could alone or the nation could under the Articles of Confederation.

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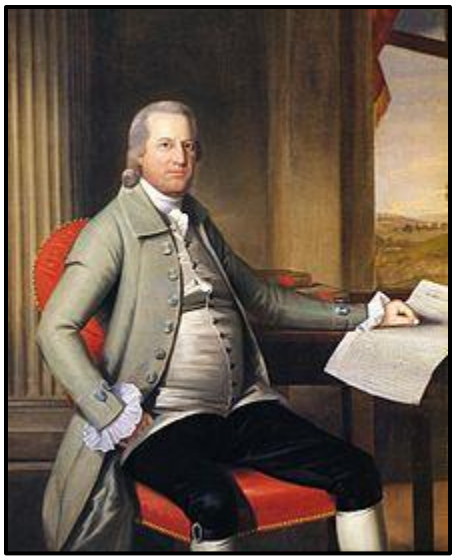
THE HONORABLE OLIVER WOLCOTT, SR.

b.1726
Representing: Litchfield



UNDECIDED (EVENTUALLY PRO-RATIFICATION)

You are Oliver Wolcott, Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut. You are a respected citizen of the state. You are a graduate of Yale College, a physician, and you have had a long career of public service as an officeholder, judge, and officer during the Revolution. In 1776 you were elected to the Continental Congress, and you signed the Declaration of Independence. You have a number of concerns over this Constitution. You feel there is a need for a national government that has the power to fix some of the recent national problems and promote more unity among the states. You feel that the rights and interests of individual states must remain secure, but you worry that states are just as capable of violating individual rights as a national government (Connecticut's tax-payer supported religious establishment is an example of that.) If you can be assured that the new government will always be founded upon election by the people, you will vote for the new Constitution. After all, something must be done. Just recently, in nearby Sharon, some farmers were caught planning a rebellion much like the one led by Daniel Shays in Massachusetts a few years ago. A strong government is needed to establish order and unity, and you actually expect the Constitution will pass fairly easily. One private concern you have, though, is that the states will disappear—have no powers at all. You hold a large number of state bonds you purchased during the war, and you don't want them to become worthless. At the convention you will ask your friend Roger Sherman for assurance they will be safe.

Only if you can receive assurances from Sherman that the states will continue to exist and that the new government will not become tyrannical, will you support the Constitution. You have a speech prepared, in case you are reassured:

> Mr. President, I do not expect to throw any new light on a subject which has been so fully discussed. Yet I cannot content myself without giving my opinion more explicitly than by a silent vote. It is generally agreed that the present Confederation is inadequate to the exigencies of our national affairs. We must therefore adopt this plan of government, or some other, or risk the consequences of disunion. As the present Articles of Confederation are inadequate, we ought to consider whether this Constitution be as good as can be agreed on by so many different states, or whether it be a dangerous system; whether it secures the liberties of the people, or whether its tendency be unfavorable to the rights of a free people. I have given it all the consideration in my power, and I have, a considerable time since, made up my mind on the subject, and think it my duty to give my voice in favor of adopting it. It is founded upon the election of the people. If it varies from the former system, or if it is to be altered hereafter, it must be with the consent of the people. This is all the security in favor of liberty that can be expected. Mankind may become corrupt, and give upon the cause of freedom; but I believe that love of liberty which prevails among the people of this country will prevent such a direful calamity.

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The Constitution effectually secures the states in their several rights. It must secure them for its own sake; for they are the pillars which uphold the general system. The Senate, a constituent branch of the general legislature, without whose assent no public act can be made, are appointed by the states, and will secure the rights of the several states. The other branch of the legislature, the Representatives, are to be elected by the people at large. They will therefore be the guardians of the rights of the great body of the citizens. So well guarded is this Constitution throughout, that it seems impossible that the rights either of the states or of the people would be destroyed.

I do not see the necessity of such a test as some gentlemen wish for [that is, a religious test for those who would hold office under the new government - William Williams of Lebanon was concerned that the Constitution forbade such a test]. The Constitution enjoins an oath upon all the officers of the United States. This is a direct appeal to that God who is the avenger of perjury. Such an appeal to him is a full acknowledgment of his being and providence. An acknowledgment of these great truths is all that the gentleman contends for. For myself, I should be content either with or without that clause in the Constitution which excludes test laws. Knowledge and liberty are so prevalent in this country, that I do not believe that the United States would ever be disposed to establish one religious sect, and lay all others under legal disabilities. But as we know not what may take place hereafter, and any such test would be exceedingly injurious to the rights of free citizens; I cannot think it altogether superfluous to have added a clause which secures us from the possibility of such oppression. I shall only add, that I give my assent to this Constitution, and am happy to see the states in a fair way to adopt a Constitution which will protect their rights and promote their welfare.

STEPHEN MIX MITCHELL

b.1743
Representing: Wethersfield

UNDECIDED (EVENTUALLY PRO-RATIFICATION)

You are Stephen Mix Mitchell, a powerful figure in state politics. Last year you strongly opposed the idea of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. You felt it was illegal, and most of the people of Wethersfield liked government under the Articles of Confederation anyway. Many of them also hold state bonds issued during the war, as do you, and fear that a new national government would mean the credit of the states would be worthless (thus making the bonds worthless.) Will the new government redeem the bonds at equal to face value, or at their current value on the market, which is much lower?

You don't want to see the states swallowed up by a strong central government. This is the main concern you will express at the Convention at Hartford. However, if you can be convinced that the procedure for adoption of the new Constitution is proper and that your bonds will be safe, you might vote "yes." While Wethersfield is suspicious of the Constitution, the town does trust you and gives your judgment the respect that a person of your social and economic station deserves. You have great respect for Roger Sherman and William Samuel Johnson, and their influence may pull you over.

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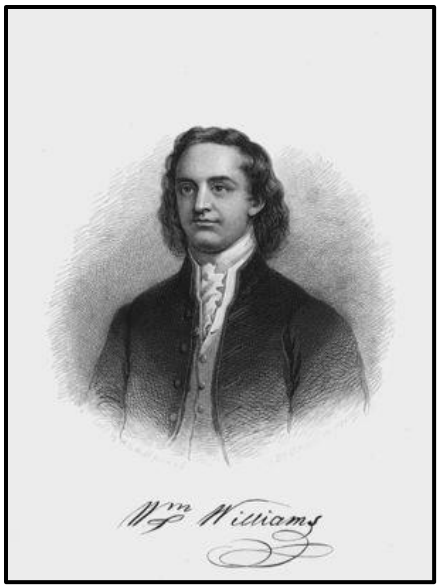
WILLIAM WILLIAMS

b. 1731

Representing: Lebanon



UNDECIDED (EVENTUALLY PRO-RATIFICATION)

You are William Williams, signer of the Declaration of Independence, patriot, member of Governor Huntington's Council, son-in-law of former governor Trumbull, and highly respected gentleman. The new Constitution worries you greatly. You believe that the Revolution was fought in order to secure the independence of Connecticut. The colony was originally established in the name of God by those chosen by God. In your part of the state, people have always tried to live up to that tradition—to live simple, pure, and, godly lives. To maintain this tradition, Connecticut has needed to avoid many threats to its independence from corrupt and ungodly governments—especially in 1687 (the Charter Oak incident) and in 1765, when people from your area joined in a great protest against the Stamp Act and won control of the State government from those who would give in to Britain. Now, 100 years after the Charter Oak incident, the independence of Connecticut, and thus the future of a godly community, may be at stake. For one thing the new Constitution expressly forbids state religious tests for office-holding. How else might this new and powerful government interfere with Connecticut's effort to remain pure and godly? Admittedly, there are problems that a stronger central government could solve, but couldn't there at least have been a mention of God in the preamble?

Your views have annoyed many of the leaders of Connecticut. In 1786 you authored the "Agricola" letters to the newspapers, arguing in favor of dividing the Western Reserve lands into small lots for sale to persons of moderate means; earlier you had written articles opposing the Society of the Cincinnati. These writings caused great concern among certain groups in the state. While you attempted to keep your identity as their author a secret, Samuel Holden Parsons, leader of the Connecticut Chapter of the Society of the Cincinnati and a land speculator, got hold of some of the correspondence and revealed your identity. Then his allies criticized you in the press and nicknamed you "William Wimble." If Parsons is at this convention, you plan to scold him in public for his selfish greed at the expense of the small farmers and militiamen of Connecticut, even if he and his allies accuse you of sympathy for rebels like Daniel Shays, who led the recent uprising in neighboring Massachusetts.

Your recently-published concerns about the religious test clause have also drawn attack from Oliver Ellsworth, who seems to have misunderstood your point. You didn't mean to say you wanted all officers to have to pass a religious test—you simply did not want to see religion (and thus morality) disappear from Connecticut.

Nevertheless, you greatly admire Roger Sherman, and you know he would not sacrifice the interests of Connecticut. He is a great patriot, and he has already made strong arguments for the new Constitution in conversations with you. In fact, you are beginning to believe that a strong national government is wise and necessary. The citizens of your town have instructed you to vote "no," but they did not even reelect you as Selectman, after 27 years of service in that post! How much do you really owe them as a representative? If Sherman argues well at the convention, you may just vote "yes." After all, aside from the religious test clause, there is little else in the document you object to, as long as Connecticut can maintain its independence.

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THE HONORABLE JAMES WADSWORTH

b. 1730

Representing: Durham

ANTI-RATIFICATION

You are James Wadsworth. You graduated from Yale in 1748 and have had a long military career since you first raised a company in 1758 to invade Canada during the French and Indian War. As a General in Connecticut's militia, a Judge on the Superior Court, and as State Comptroller on the Governor's Council (the highest paying position in the state government), you are a powerful and widely-respected man. Still, you have often been at odds with many of the leading Connecticut officials (Roger Sherman, Pierpont Edwards, and Governor Huntington.)

You feel that the interests of your town and other farming communities have often been overlooked in favor of the merchant class. Specifically, you opposed commutation of military pensions on the grounds that it increases national power and promotes a new aristocracy by granting benefits to former officers. You are a militiaman yourself and are firmly opposed to special privileges for Continental officers.

As for the new Constitution, you oppose it, as do the farmers of your town, who voted 67-4 to instruct their delegates to vote "no" at the Ratification Convention. Delegates from other towns who oppose the Constitution look to you for leadership. Generally, you find that those same people who favored commutation also favor the new Constitution. They are even more obnoxious than ever, suggesting that those who oppose the Constitution ought to be barred from any national or state offices once the Constitution is ratified. They call you and your followers "Wrongheads."

You especially object to giving Congress the power to levy taxes on imports, which you feel favors the southern states, who export a lot but import little from abroad, as your state does. Your constituents, mostly farmers, need to import textiles to ward off the winter cold, and they often buy manufactured tools, rather than making them themselves. The prices of these items would go up with import taxes. You don't see how Connecticut will gain much—even with free interstate trade—if the new government taxes imports.

Privately, you suspect that some self-interest is also involved on the part of New England merchants. You also suspect the army will have far too much power in the new order. Once a standing army is established, it will be impossible to disband it. Generally, you think the new national government has too much power. By uniting "the power of the sword" and "the power of the purse," the framers of the new Constitution created something potentially as tyrannical as Parliament. As you have said, "though the convention that formed it, supposed that they guarded the rights of the State, advantage would be taken of it, in times of popular excitement, to encroach upon state rights." You will work very hard to persuade others that government under the Articles of Confederation was more consistent with the principles of the Revolution.

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NOAH PHELPS

b. 1740
Representing: Simsbury

ANTI-RATIFICATION

You are Col. Noah Phelps. You are one of the wealthiest and most respected men of Simsbury and a well-known figure in the State Assembly. During the War you served with distinction, first in a daring raid on Fort Ticonderoga, and later as a leader of the Connecticut Militia. You risked much for the ideals of the Revolution, and you now have serious doubts that those ideals will survive. You feel the new Constitution threatens both individual liberty and the independence of the states.

You have never supported powerful national governments making rules for people thousands of miles away. Parliament, with its atrocious taxes and its closing of the Boston Port, was a good example of this. So was the Continental Congress, when it tried to enact an import tax and give enormous sums of money as a pension to officers of the Continental army after the war. You are a militiaman, and you stepped forward to serve your country in its time of need. Now your country ignores that service and instead offers men incentives to serve as officers in a permanent army, a despicable institution that has no place in a freedom-loving country.

You are equally unimpressed by many of the leaders of the state, like Oliver Ellsworth. While you were risking your life in the war spying on Fort Ticonderoga, which held the guns necessary for the siege of Boston, many of those men were just sitting around bickering with each other. And while they sat in comfort in the state house and in Philadelphia, your townspeople endured great sacrifices, shortages, and a smallpox epidemic.

Just two years ago the Connecticut government accepted a petition which separated half of the town from Simsbury, creating Granby. You strongly opposed this, because it would make it nearly impossible for Simsbury to finance its government and pay for projects like bridges over the Farmington River, but the state ignored you, and then had the gall to reduce Simsbury's representation from two to one in the General Assembly. At least you eventually managed to get THAT insult repaired! Most men in Simsbury agree with your feelings, and see the new Constitution as a plot by aristocratic merchants and Continental officers to further suppress the farmers of Connecticut and make them pay more than their fair share for government. These men of Simsbury have sent you to the Ratification Convention with clear instructions to vote "no" and to argue against ratification, and you see no reason to do otherwise.

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HEZEKIAH HOLCOMB

b. 1726

Representing: Granby

ANTI-RATIFICATION

You are Hezekiah Holcomb, a leading citizen of Granby, a fast-growing town just recently incorporated from the northern part of Simsbury. You live in the eastern section of the new town (Turkey Hills) with the more affluent farmers. In fact, you and a number of your friends had hoped that Turkey Hills would leave Simsbury to become a separate town from Salmon Brook, the western part of Granby. There are good people in Turkey Hills, and you have your own ecclesiastical society already. Salmon Brook has more people and will always be able to outvote your area on the issue of location of schools and the town meetinghouse. Also there are many religious dissenters in Salmon Brook—Baptists and nonbelievers, and people of lower social orders who have trouble remembering their place at town meetings. You would rather manage your local affairs separately if you can get the Assembly to set up a town of East Granby. In the meantime, you do your best to stay in a position of authority in town politics. Your record as a soldier in the war helps you here, for you commanded Connecticut's 11th Regiment and helped to win the Battle of Saratoga. The majority of Granby seems to recognize your leadership talent, for they chose you last year as their first representative to the General Assembly. You, yourself, are not strongly opposed to the new Constitution, but most of the people of Salmon Brook are. If you vote "yes," at the Ratification Convention, you risk alienating these people and will probably lose your prominent position in town politics. This could ruin your hopes for a future separation and generally endanger the interests of eastern Granby.

Actually, you do understand their concern. They have always been a fiercely independent people, having separated from Simsbury ecclesiastically in 1736, having thumbed their noses at the Hartford County Association of elders and installed numerous "New Light" preachers in the 1740s, and having been staunchly opposed to Parliament's policies in the 1770s. You remember well the night Salmon Brook people danced wildly around their "Liberty Tree," cursing the ministry; you also remember how they nearly shackled the Simsbury town clerk to his chair the day they held their illegal town meeting and passed resolutions against commutation of military pensions and in favor of splitting the town. They are upset by anything that resembles a new aristocracy or rule by a faraway government (even five miles away is too far for them!)

You think that this new Constitution does not pose a great threat to their precious liberty, but politically you realize you cannot possibly support it and serve the interests of Turkey Hills. Therefore, much as you dislike it, you will defer to the wishes of the rabble. You are not exactly sure what you are going to say at the Convention, but you are resigned to the fact that you will have to vote "no."

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GENERAL ANDREW WARD

b. 1727

Representing: Guilford

ANTI-RATIFICATION

You are Andrew Ward. Like James Wadsworth of Durham, you strongly oppose the new Constitution, and you plan to make clear your opposition when you get a chance to speak at the Convention at Hartford. You see the document as another trick by American merchants, like those in nearby New Haven, to make a fortune at the expense of the farmers. Guilford is a farming community, and its people agree with you. For years they have suffered as New Haven creditors grew wealthy collecting high interest rates and refusing to accept paper money, even though it was issued by the state itself. Now the merchant-creditors have insured the new government will only tax imports—things regular people buy because they need them—not the exports that merchants sell to their despicable slave-trading clients in West Indies. In almost every phrase in the document, you can see a plot by the rich city merchants and the slave-owning planters of Virginia to secure their position as the rulers of the United States. This Constitution creates a monarch (even if he is call "President," not King) with his own personal standing army, gives the power of taxation to a distant Congress dominated by the large states like New York, provides extra protection for rich creditors and the evil slave trade, establishes a nearly permanent House of Lords (the so-called "Senate"), and—above all—provides absolutely no guarantee anywhere of individual rights and liberties. This was not what you fought for in the War of the Revolution!

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CAPTAIN EPHRAIM CARPENTER

b. 1738
Representing: Lebanon

ANTI-RATIFICATION

You are Captain Ephraim Carpenter, delegate from Lebanon (along with William Williams.) You have served your town as an officeholder for a number of years, and now are a member of the General Assembly of Connecticut. Your town has instructed you to vote "no" on the new Constitution, and you are strongly opposed to ratification.

Your main objection is to the clauses in the Constitution related to taxes, imports, and excises. You think it is unwise to give "the power of the purse" to a government that also has "the power of the sword." Furthermore, you think that the new tax system will benefit the southern states. Their primary trade is exports, which would not be taxed, while Connecticut farmers will have to pay even higher prices (because of import taxes) for the goods they need, such as textiles (to ward off the cold winters that southerners do not face) and hardware. And how is it possible that the new government will not treat Connecticut unfairly, when Connecticut has so few representatives in the House compared to many other states?

Overall, you suspect that this new government will become tyrannical. One might as well call the President, Senate, and House "King, Lords, and Commons," like they have in Britain. Did we fight the Revolution only to reestablish that tyranny on this side of the Atlantic? The farmers of Lebanon say "NO!" Furthermore, they see all of those bigwig merchants, land-speculators, and Society of the Cincinnati aristocrats lining up behind the Constitution. That MUST mean that it won't be good for the ordinary farmer. You plan to give this convention and the Connecticut leaders a piece of your mind in defense of Liberty! This country does not need a stronger government—this country needs a government of the people.

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