



James Madison's "Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787" (Annotated)

James Madison

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Supplemented and Edited for Easier Reading

What our Founding Fathers Really Said in Philadelphia Will Surprise You

There are many books that summarize the decisions that were taken at the Constitutional Convention, but that do not provide in depth insights into the personal characteristics of the delegates who participated in the debates. Readers of this book will cut through those summaries and come to understand from the words of the founders themselves (229,000 words to be exact) that these were eminently practical men who nevertheless were willing to take the risks associated with innovation.

They most assuredly were not obstinate visionaries of the type that are dominant in today's political scene and they were anything but smug about their so-called "original intent." They well understood that times would change and the Constitution would need to be adjusted from time to time via amendments in order to meet new societal needs and to correct errors in the original framework.

Above all these men were rational problem solvers who were dedicated to the exhaustive exploration of all reasonable alternatives in order to come up with an improved system of Government. One they knew would not be perfect but one that would offer the hope of durability and the ability to get things done while at the same time checking corruption in the corridors of power.

Unlike many of today's intellectually limited political leaders, our founders understood that republican government cannot work unless there is a willingness among elected representatives to yield and compromise on important issues. They well understood that thick-headed political obstinacy is not a formula for good government. It is a formula for national self-destruction.

This book is a "translation" of James Madison's "Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787," a day by day record he kept of the deliberations that ended with submission of the Constitution to the states for ratification. In this book the statements of speakers are presented in an edited form in order to make them easier to read and comprehend, but most of Madison's original words are preserved just as he wrote them.

Unlike the many published summaries of the events and decisions taken at the Convention, this book endeavors to enable readers to:

- 1) Understand the disciplined approach that enabled the founders to get their almost impossibly difficult job done.
- 2) See for themselves what the delegates actually said about the key issues of the day and to understand that on almost all of them there was a wide divergence of opinions.
- 3) Assess whether the notion of "the original intent of the founders" makes any sense in light of the fact that

most key decisions were by means of compromise.

4) Assess what the founders thought about fundamental issues that are still frequently debated.

A good deal of information on events and concerns that led to the Convention is provided. Also provided is a set of search terms that enables readers to skip directly to portions of the debates dealing with such things as "the turbulence and follies of democracy."



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