

James Madison to George Washington, November 18, 1787. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON. WASH. MSS.

New York, Novr. 18, 1787.

Dear Sir, —Your favor of the 5th instant found me in Philada., whither I had proceeded, under arrangements for proceeding to Virginia or returning to this place, as I might there decide. I did not acknowledge it in Philada., because I had nothing to communicate which you would not receive more fully and correctly from the Mr. Morris, who were setting out for Virginia.

All my informations from Richmond concur in representing the enthusiasm in favor of the new Constitution as subsiding, and giving place to a spirit of criticism. I was fearful of such an event from the influence and cooperation of some of the adversaries. I do not learn however that the cause has lost its majority in the Legislature, and still less among the people at large.

I have nothing to add to the information heretofore given concerning the progress of the Constitution in other States. Mr. Gerry has presented his objections to the Legislature in a letter addressed to them,¹ and signified his readiness if desired, to give the particular reasons on which they were founded. The Legislature it seems decline the explanation, either from a supposition that they have nothing further to do in the business, having handed it over to the Convention, or from an unwillingness to countenance Mr. Gerry's conduct; or from both of these considerations. It

Library of Congress

is supposed that the promulgation of this letter will shake the confidence of some, and embolden the opposition of others in that State; but I cannot discover any ground for distrusting the prompt & decided concurrence of a large majority.

1 See Elliot's *Debates*, i., 494.

I inclose herewith the 7 first numbers of the federalist,² a paper addressed to the people of this State.

2 “Ye Paper inclosed contained a piece signed *Publius* with which I am extremely pleased, from his introduction I have the highest expectations from him—If it would not impose too great a task upon you I would request that his subsequent papers may be sent to me, the Nos. written by an American Citizen have had good effects & with some other pieces of merit have been printed in a small pamphlet for the information of the people.”—Archibald Stuart to Madison, Nov. 9, 1787. *Mad. MSS.* The first papers of the *Federalist* appeared over the signature “A Citizen of New York,” but afterwards the pseudonym “Publius” was used. “An American Citizen” was the pseudonym of Tench Coxe. Rev. James Madison of William and Mary wrote to Madison that he was afraid the constitution of the Senate and Executive would lead to aristocracy and tyranny; but Feb. 9, 1788, he wrote that the papers of “Publius” had well nigh worked a conversion in him.— *Mad. MSS.* Of the 85 papers of the *Federalist* Madison wrote twenty-six, Nos. 10, 14, 18, 19, 20, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 62 and 63. It has been disputed, however, that he wrote more than fourteen by himself,— *i. e.*, Nos. 10, 14, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47 and 48, or had more than a joint authorship with Hamilton in Nos. 18, 19 and 20. (See Lodge's *Federalist*, introduction, and P. L. Ford in *The American Historical Review*, ii., 675.) The other numbers given above were, however, stated by Madison to be his (See *post*) and his right to be considered their author has been conclusively established by Professor Edward Gaylord Bourne in *The American Historical Review*, ii., 443, 682.

Library of Congress

They relate entirely to the importance of the Union. If the whole plan should be executed, it will present to the public a full discussion of the merits of the proposed Constitution in all its relations. From the opinion I have formed of the views of a party in Virginia I am inclined to think that the observations on the first branch of the subject may not be superfluous antidotes in that State, any more than in this. If you concur with me, perhaps the papers may be put into the hands of some of your confidential correspondents at Richmond who would have them reprinted there. I will not conceal *from you* that I am likely to have such a *degree* of connection with the publication here as to afford a restraint of delicacy from interesting myself directly in the republication elsewhere. You will recognize one of the pens concerned in the task. There are three in the whole. A fourth may possibly bear a part.

The intelligence by the packet as far as I have collected it, is contained in the gazette of yesterday.

Virginia is the only State represented as yet. When a Congress will be formed is altogether uncertain. It is not very improbable I think that the interregnum may continue throughout the winter.

With every sentiment of respect & attachment I remain dear Sir ye affecte. & hble Servant.