

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, August 11, 1788. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.**

**TO EDMUND RANDOLPH. CHIC. HIST. SOC. MSS.**

New York, August 11, 1788.

Dear Sir,

The length of the interval since my last has proceeded from a daily expectation of being able to communicate the arrangements for introducing the new Government. The times necessary to be fixed by Congress have been many days agreed on. The place of meeting has undergone many vicissitudes and is still as uncertain as ever. Philadelphia was first named by a member from Connecticut, and was negatived by the voice of one from Delaware, who wished to make an experiment for Wilmington. New York came next into view. Lancaster was opposed to it and failed. Baltimore was next tried and to the surprize of every one had seven votes, South Carolina joining the Southern States and Pennsylvania in the question. It was not difficult to foresee that such a vote could not stand. Accordingly the next day, New York carried it on a second trial, and at present fills the blank. Its success however was owing to Rhode Island whose Delegates have refused

to vote on the final question and have actually gone home. There are not at present seven States for any place, and the result must depend (unless Rhode Island should return with instructions as is *given out*) on the comparative flexibility of the Northern and Southern delegations. In ordinary cases this would not augur well to the latter. In the existing one something may be hoped from the palpable unreasonableness of the pretensions of N.

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York, which has 17 Reps. & 8 Senators on one side agst. 42 Reps. & 16 Senators on the other; which is not more than three hundred miles from the Eastern Extreme Metropolis; and not less than 4 times that distance from the Southern, and which has no reference at all to the accommodation of the Western Country. I am persuaded also that if the first position be taken here the second will not be taken on the Potowmac & that this consideration is among the motives of those who advocate N. York. Indeed I *know* the latter to be one of the motives.