

MINUTES OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE CONVENTION  
OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA, HELD AT PHILA-  
DELPHIA THE 15th DAY OF JULY, 1776, AND CON-  
TINUED BY ADJOURNMENTS TO THE 28th SEPTEMBER  
FOLLOWING.

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At a meeting of the convention for the state of Pennsylvania,  
held in the city of Philadelphia, on the 15th day of July, in the  
year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

MONDAY, July 15th, 1776. P. M.

The respective judges of the election of the city of Phila-  
delphia and the several counties, made the returns as follow,  
viz:

For the city of Philadelphia.

Timothy Matlack,	James Cannon,
Benjamin Franklin,	George Clymer,
Frederick Kuhl,	George Schlosser,
Owen Biddle,	David Rittenhouse.

For the county of Philadelphia.

Frederick Antis,	John Bull,
Henry Hill,	Thomas Potts,
Robert Loller,	Edward Bartholomew,
Joseph Blewer,	William Coates.

For the county of Bucks.

Joseph Hart,	William Vanhorn,
John Wilkinson,	John Grier,
Samuel Smith,	Abraham Van Middleswarts,
John Keller,	Joseph Kirkbride.

For the county of Chester.

Benjamin Bartholomew,	Samuel Cunningham,
John Jacobs,	John Hart,
Thomas Strawbridge,	John Mackey,
Robert Smith,	John Flemming.

## For the county of Lancaster.

George Ross,	Joseph Sherrer,
Philip Marsteller,	John Hubley,
Thomas Porter,	Henry Slaymaker,
Bartram Galbreath,	Alexander Lowrey.

## For the county of York.

John Hay,	Francis Crazart,
James Edgar,	James Smith,
William Rankin,	Robert M'Pherson,
Henry Slagle,	Joseph Donaldson.

## For the county of Cumberland.

John Harris,	William Duffield,
Jonathan Hoge,	James Brown,
William Clarke,	Hugh Alexander,
Robert Whitehill,	James M'Clean.

## For the county of Berks.

Jacob Morgan,	Daniel Hunter,
Gabriel Hlester,	Valentine Eckert,
John Leshner,	Charles Shoemaker,
Benjamin Spyker,	Thomas Jones.

## For the county of Northampton.

Simon Dresbach,	Jacob Stroud,
Jacob Arndt,	Neigal Gray,
Peter Buckholder,	Abraham Miller,
Peter Rhoads,	John Ralston.

## For the county of Bedford.

Thomas Smith,	Joseph Powell.
John Wilkins,	Henry Rhoads,
Benjamin Elliot,	John Burd,
Thomas Coulter,	John Cessna.

## For the county of Northumberland.

William Cooke,	Walter Clark,
James Potter,	John Kelley,
Robert Martin,	James Crawford,
Matthew Brown,	John Weltzell.

For the county of Westmoreland.

James Barr,	John Carmichael,
Edward Cook,	James Perry,
James Smith,	John M'Clellan,
John Moore,	Christopher Lavingair.

TUESDAY, July 16, 1776.

Dr. Benjamin Franklin was unanimously chosen President.

Col. George Ross was unanimously chosen Vice-President.

John Morris, Esq. was chosen Secretary.

Mr. Jacob Garrigues was chosen assistant clerk to the Secretary.

Mr. Morris not being in the city at present, Col. Matlack is requested to perform the duty of Secretary till Mr. Morris may return.

The qualification and profession of faith recommended by the conference of committees, held at Philadelphia on the 25th of June last, were read, taken and subscribed by all the members now present, viz:

Benjamin Franklin,	Robert Smith,
Timothy Matlack,	Samuel Cunningham,
Frederick Kuhl,	John Mackey,
Owen Biddle,	George Ross,
James Cannon,	Bartram Galbreath,
George Clymer,	Joseph Sherrer,
George Schlosser,	John Hubley,
David Rittenhouse,	Henry Slaymaker,
Frederick Antis,	Alexander Lowrey,
Henry Hill,	John Hay,
Robert Loller,	James Edgar,
Joseph Blewer,	Francis Crazart,
John Bull,	James Smith,
Edward Bartholomew,	Robert M'Pherson,
Joseph Hart,	Joseph Donaldson,
John Wilkinson,	John Harris,
Samuel Smith,	Jonathan Hoge,
John Keller,	William Clarke,
William Vanhorn,	William Duffield,
John Grier,	James Brown,
Joseph Kirkbride,	James M'Clean,
John Hart,	Jacob Morgan,
Thomas Strawbridge,	Gabriel Hiester,

John Leshner,	John Ralston,
Benjamin Spyker,	Thomas Smith,
Daniel Hunter,	John Wilkins,
Charles Shoemaker,	Benjamin Elliot,
Thomas Jones,	Thomas Coulter,
Simon Dresbach,	Joseph Powell,
Jacob Arndt,	Henry Rhoads,
Peter Buckholder,	John Burd,
Peter Rhoads,	John Cessna,
Jacob Stroud,	Walter Clark,
Neigal Gray,	John Kelley,
Abraham Miller,	James Crawford.

William Sheed is appointed doorkeeper.

On motion, Resolved, That application be made to Gen. Roberdeau, requesting him to issue an order for permitting John Morris and Jacob Garrigues to return to this city, they being appointed to the offices of secretary and assistant clerk to this convention.

The convention then proceeded to the consideration of legislative business.

### WEDNESDAY, July 17, 1776.

Upon motion, Resolved, That the Rev. Mr. William White, be requested to perform divine service to-morrow morning before this convention, that we may jointly offer up our prayers to Almighty God, to afford us his divine grace and assistance in the important and arduous task committed to us, and to offer up our praises and thanksgivings for the manifold mercies and the peculiar interposition of his special providence, in behalf of these injured, oppressed and insulted United States.

Col. Matlack and Mr. Clymer are appointed to wait on the Rev. Mr. White, and furnish him a copy of the foregoing resolve.

Mr. Matthias Brown, John Flemming, Philip Marsteller and Robert Whitehill appeared in the house for the first time, took the oaths, and made and signed the profession of faith required.

The convention then resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

THURSDAY, July 18th, 1776.

Mr. Morris, the Secretary, now attending, it was ordered, upon motion, that he should take the following affirmation, viz:

I, John Morris, do declare, that I do not hold myself bound to bear allegiance to George the third, king of Great Britain, and that I will steadily and firmly at all times promote the most effectual means, according to the best of my skill and knowledge, to oppose the tyrannical proceedings of the king and parliament of Great Britain, against the American colonies, and support a government in this state on the authority of the people only; and that as secretary of this convention, I will be faithful and make fair and just minutes of all their proceedings, according to the best of my abilities, and keep all such secrets as shall be directed to be kept by the convention

Which he did accordingly.

Ordered, also, That the clerk, when he shall come, shall make a declaration to the like import.

The Rev. Mr. White attending, agreeably to the request of yesterday, and having performed divine service, and being withdrawn, it was

Ordered, on motion, That Mr. Matlack and Mr. Clymer wait upon that gentleman, with the thanks of the convention for his services.

Upon motion, and after debate, Resolved, That a committee be appointed to make an essay for a declaration of rights for this state.

Resolved, also, That the said committee consist of eleven persons, viz: Mr. Biddle, Col. Bull, the Rev. Mr. Vanhorn, Mr. Jacobs, Col. Ross, Col. James Smith, Mr. Hoge, Mr. Morgan, Col. Stroud, Col. Thomas Smith and Mr. Martin.

Mr. Abraham Van Middleswarts, Mr. Robert Martin, Mr. John Weitzel and Mr. John Jacobs appeared in the house for the first time, took the oath or affirmation, and made and signed the profession of faith required.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative executive business.

FRIDAY, July 19, 1776.

Col. James Potter, one of the members from Northumberland, and Mr. William Rankin, one of the members for York county,

appeared in the house for the first time, took the oaths and made and subscribed the profession of faith required.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

SATURDAY, July 20, 1776.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

MONDAY, July 22, 1776.

The following members from Westmoreland, viz: James Barr, Edward Cook, John Moore, John Carmichael, John M'Clellan, Christopher Lavingair and James Smith, now appeared in the house, took the oaths, and made and subscribed the profession of faith; as did also Hugh Alexander, of Cumberland, and Valentine Eckart, of Berks.

On motion, Ordered, That Mr. John Moore be added to the declaration of rights committee, and that the said committee have leave of absence.

The convention then resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

TUESDAY, July 23, 1776.

Mr. Benjamin Bartholomew and Mr. James Perry appeared in the house for the first time, took the oaths, and made and subscribed the profession of faith.

The convention then resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

WEDNESDAY, July 24, 1776.

Col. Henry Slagle appeared in the house for the first time, and took the oath, and made and subscribed the profession of faith.

On motion, Resolved, That the same gentlemen who are on the declaration of rights committee, be appointed to draw up an essay for a frame or system of government for this state.

On motion, Resolved, That Mr. John Leshar be one of the committee for essaying a frame of government, in the room of Mr. Jacob Morgan, who is absent with leave.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

THURSDAY, July 25, 1776.

Mr. Thomas Porter appearing in the house for the first time, took the oath, and made and subscribed the profession of faith.

It was moved and Resolved, That this convention do agree to the following resolution and declaration, viz:

We, the representatives of the freemen of the state of Pennsylvania, in general convention assembled, taking into our most serious consideration the clear, strong and cogent reasons given by the honorable continental Congress, for the declaring this, as well as the other United States of America, FREE and INDEPENDENT, do thereupon resolve, and be it hereby resolved and declared, that we, in behalf of ourselves and our constituents, do unanimously approve of the said resolution and declaration of Congress of the 4th inst: And we do declare before God and the world, that we will support and maintain the freedom and independence of this and the other United States of America, at the utmost risk of our lives and fortunes.

The committee for essaying a declaration of rights, reported a draft for that purpose, which being read, was ordered to lie on the table for further consideration.

On motion, Ordered, That Col. Matlack, Mr. Cannon, Col. Potter, Mr. Rittenhouse, Mr. Whitehill and Col. Galbreath, be added to the committee for bringing in an essay for a frame of government.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

FRIDAY, July 26, 1776.

The report of the committee for the declaration of rights was again read, and a motion was made and seconded, that the same be recommitted, but the previous question being called for, it was thereupon

Resolved, That the question be not now put on the said motion.

Upon motion, Resolved, That the minutes of this convention be published weekly, in English and German, and that this house will appoint a committee to superintend the publication.

The convention resumed the consideration of the report of the declaration of rights, and after some considerable time spent therein, it was,

Upon motion, Resolved, That the said report be recommitted to the committee who were originally appointed thereon.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

SATURDAY, July 27, 1776.

The committee appointed to bring in an essay of the declaration of rights, and to whom the same was recommitted, reported a new draft thereof; which being in part read by paragraphs and debated upon for some time, was postponed for further consideration.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

MONDAY, July 29, 1776.

The convention resumed the consideration of the draft of the declaration of rights, and went through the same by paragraphs. Whereupon it was

Ordered, That Col. Hill and Mr. Hubley procure to be printed 96 copies of the said draft, for the further consideration of the members of this house.

July 30, 31, and August 1, 1776.

The convention resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business, with this exception. On the 1st August,

On motion, Resolved, That this convention will to-morrow morning resolve itself into a committee of the whole, in order to take into consideration some important matters relative to the proposed new frame of government. Also

Ordered, That every member of this convention be punctual in his attendance at the house to-morrow morning.

FRIDAY, August 2, 1776.

A memorial from the inhabitants of Turkey-foot township, in Bedford county, setting forth their opinion respecting the intended new frame of government, was read, and

Ordered, To lie on the table.

The order of the day was then read, and the convention in consequence thereof resolved itself into a committee of the whole house; Col. Joseph Kirkbride was called to and assumed the chair.



After a very considerable time spent in deliberation, the president resumed the chair, and then Col. Kirkbride, the chairman of the committee, reported: That it was the opinion of the said committee, that the future legislature of this state shall consist of one branch only, under proper restrictions.

Whereupon, it was moved and resolved, That the future legislature of this state shall consist of one branch only, under proper restrictions.

August 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 12th, 1776.

The convention was occupied in the consideration of legislative and executive business.

On the 5th Jacob Garrigues, the assistant clerk, appearing, took the affirmation required by a former minute.

Aug. 7. William Cooke appearing for the first time in the house, took the oath, and made and subscribed the profession of faith.

August 13th, 1776.

The convention in committee of the whole, made progress in the consideration of the bill of rights, and also resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

August 15, 1776.

According to the order of the day.

The convention resolved itself into a committee of the whole house; Col. Kirkbride was called to and assumed the chair. After some further deliberation on the declaration of rights, the president resumed the chair, and Col. Kirkbride, from the committee, reported that they had agreed to the report which he then delivered into the house, and being read, the further consideration thereof was postponed.

FRIDAY, August 16, 1776.

The convention resumed the consideration of the report of the committee respecting the declaration of rights, which being read by paragraphs, received the final assent of the convention.

[For declaration, &c. see postea.]

SATURDAY, August 17, 1776.

The convention was occupied with the consideration of legislative and executive business.

MONDAY, August 19, 1776.

The convention appointed to essay a frame or plan for the future government of this state, brought in a draft for that purpose, which being read, was ordered for consideration on Wednesday next, the 21st inst.

TUESDAY, August 20, 1776.

The committee resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

WEDNESDAY, August 21, 1776.

The convention, according to the order of the day, resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, in order to take into consideration the frame of government—Mr. Rittenhouse was called to and assumed the chair. After a very considerable time spent in debating and deliberating, the president resumed the chair, and Mr. Rittenhouse reported from the committee, that they had made some progress in the business committed to them, and desired leave of the house to sit again tomorrow morning; which was given accordingly.

August 22d and 23d, 1776.

The committee reported further progress.

August 24, 26, 27 and 28, 1776.

The convention was occupied with the consideration of legislative and executive business.

August 29, 30 and 31, 1776.

The committee of the whole reported further progress in the consideration of the frame of government.

September 3d and 4th, 1776.

The convention, among other things, made progress in the committee of the whole in the consideration of the frame of government.

THURSDAY, September 5, 1776.

The convention resolved itself into a committee of the whole house, in order to resume the consideration of the frame of government. Mr. Rittenhouse was called to and assumed the

chair; after some time the president resumed the chair, and Mr. Rittenhouse reported from the committee, that they had finished the business referred to them, and were ready to report thereon. Which report was read, and

Ordered, That the president, Mr. Rittenhouse and Mr. Vanhorn, be desired to revise the same, and make such alterations therein in method and stile, without affecting the sense, as they may think proper; and when that is done, to get 400 copies printed for public consideration.

The convention then resumed the consideration of legislative and executive business.

From the 5th to the 16th of September, 1776.

The convention was engaged in the consideration of legislative and executive business.

MONDAY, September 16, 1776.

The convention, agreeably to the order of the day, resumed the consideration of the frame of government.

It was moved by Col. Ross and seconded by Mr. Clymer, that the first and second sections of the proposed frame of government be debated upon and amended. Whereupon it was

Resolved, That the further debate on the second section is precluded, because it was fully debated and determined before, as appears by the minutes of the 1st and 2d of August last.

Moved and seconded that the yeas and nays on any question in the frame of government shall be entered on the minutes, when it shall be required by any four members: But the previous question being put, it was determined that the question be not now put.

September 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23 and 24, 1776.

The convention was engaged in legislative and executive business, and in considering the frame of government.\*

WEDNESDAY, September 25, 1776.

A letter from the Rev. Messrs. Duffield and Marshall, praying that the clergy of this state may be exempted from the burthen of civil offices, and setting forth their reasons for such

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\* No details are given of the proceedings of the convention in relation to the constitution. The journal only states on the several days, "That the house resumed the consideration of the frame of government, and after some time adjourned."

exemption, was read, and ordered to lie on the table for consideration.

A letter from the Rev. Messrs. Muhlenberg and Weynberg, praying for an addition to the 47th article of the proposed frame of government, confirming the incorporations for promoting religious and charitable purposes, was read, and ordered to lie on the table.

The House resumed the consideration of the frame of government.

Ordered, That Mr. Cannon, Mr. Jacobs and Mr. Rittenhouse, be appointed to prepare a draft of a preamble to the declaration of rights and frame of government, and of the oaths of allegiance and office to be inserted in the said frame.

In the afternoon the gentlemen appointed to draw up a preamble to the declaration of rights and frame of government, reported an essay for that purpose, which was read and referred for further consideration.

They also reported an essay for the oaths and affirmations of allegiance and of office, which being read and amended, at the table, were approved of, and ordered to be inserted in the frame of government.

#### THURSDAY, September 26, 1776.

On the 23d September, Col. Matlack, Mr. Jacobs and Col. Thomas Smith, were appointed a committee to bring in a draft of a resolve, for settling and regulating the general election for the present year. On this day the committee reported a draft for that purpose, which was then read and amended: The following is an abstract of this resolution.

Whereas, it is not convenient to hold the next election throughout this state, for choosing the elective officers thereof, on the day on which it will be most convenient to the people to hold their elections for the future; and this convention being desirous that the freemen of this state may, as soon as possible, enjoy the advantages of a free and established government, it is therefore

Resolved, That the next election for representatives, &c. usually chosen on the 1st of October, shall be held for the city and counties respectively, on Tuesday, the 5th day of November next.

Provision is made for the election of inspectors, and the appointment of judges and clerks, and making the returns of the election, &c.