

Acknowledgments

The law of large numbers and the law of offsetting errors say that you best correct errors with a very large sample. This history of our Constitution has tried to reduce error by casting out a large net into the sea of documents that survive from the period so that the catch for inspection will be as large as possible. This work could not have been possible without the digital searches available through the wonderful Library of Congress website, *A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation*.¹ Two generations ago a serious historian of the constitutional period had to visit dozens of small archives spread north and south along the east coast. Forrest McDonald says he put 100,000 miles on his car when he got started.² A generation ago, the scattered letters and documents started to get collected in scholarly editions, with learned commentary, so that a scholar with access to a research university could see the core of the important sources with months' instead of years' worth of work. Now much of the original documentation is becoming available on the Internet. When this revolution is completed, one will find the same quotes that used to take years to collect in minutes from your desk terminal, or, for that matter, from your handheld wireless computer. Every researcher will have thousands of volumes of original sources available any time. One will be able to search, play, recheck quotes, run down ideas at any time of day or night with no lead or preparation time. With digital searches, one can follow how a word is used, or how an actor changes his mind simply, by searching for a word or a cluster of related words. One can copy and paste to get quotes and cites right the first time, and take accurate notes by boiling down the original material, without ever having

¹ Word and phrase searches can be made from <<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/hlawquery.htm>>

² Forrest McDonald, *Review*, DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION, vol. 3, 14-16 (Merrill Jensen, John Kaminski, et al., eds. 1978-1984), in 3 WILLIAM & MARY Q 643 (3d Series 1987).

to use a quill pen. The digital archives available on the Internet are bringing the papers and letters of the founding of the democracy out to the democracy.

I am also thankful to the generation of editors and historians who have made the Papers of Madison, Hamilton, Washington, Jay, Mason, and Jefferson so readily available. I thank especially the *Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, which is seeking to collect and publish all the available evidence of the ratification.³ I thank my home library, the University of Texas Law School Library, which has been of so much service with such good cheer in getting the newest books and the oldest Assembly minutes available to me. I am, of course, thankful for the grand histories that I gratefully remember teaching me so much, including (without meaning to slight anyone) nine I can think of warmly: Jack Rakove, *ORIGINAL MEANINGS* (1996) and his *THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONAL POLITICS* (1979); Forrest McDonald, *ALEXANDER HAMILTON* (1979) and his *WE, THE PEOPLE* (1958); E. James Ferguson, *THE POWER OF THE PURSE* (1961); Stanley Elkins and Eric McKittrick, *THE AGE OF FEDERALISM* (1995); Norman Risjord's *CHESAPEAKE POLITICS, 1781-1800* (1978); Gordon Wood, *CREATION OF THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC 1776-1787* (1969); and Richard B. Morris, *THE FORGING OF THE UNION, 1781-1789* (1987). These are all great books for different reasons.

Many people have critiqued various chapters, including Walter Dean Burnham, Brenda Clayton, Jane Cohen, Sandy Levinson, Doug Laycock, Lino Graglia, and Scot Powe. Jim and Shelley Fishkin have heard these arguments in rehearsal enough times to break the patience of Job. I am deeply appreciative of them for their affection and support. Dennis Drapkin read the entire manuscript with wonderful comments to every chapter. I am thankful for the comments I received when I presented various chapters at the University of Texas Law School, where I teach, and at the Vanderbilt Law School. I am very grateful to Kristin Konschnik, Yvette Piggush, and Calvin E. Johnson for assisting in the research for the manuscript.Carolynn Johnson and Matthew Johnson checked cites. Jolyn Piercy was given a bounty of a nickel an error for the version of the manuscript she read and corrected, and I trust she will retire handsomely on her earnings. I take all the credit for the errors that remain, sometimes maintained in the face of hard but constructive advice. My family has had to live through my monomaniacal obsession with 1787-1788 for more than the time that it took to write the Constitution. To Maria, for her love and support, I dedicate this book.

³ DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF THE RATIFICATION OF THE CONSTITUTION (Merrill Jensen, John Kaminski, et al., eds. 1978-).

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Having finished this book and sent it out into the world, I want to continue to discuss its conclusions and implications. I will maintain a website at <http://www.utexas.edu/law/faculty/calvinjohnson/RighteousAnger/> where I will post news, discussions and related articles. I invite you to join in the discussion at that site.