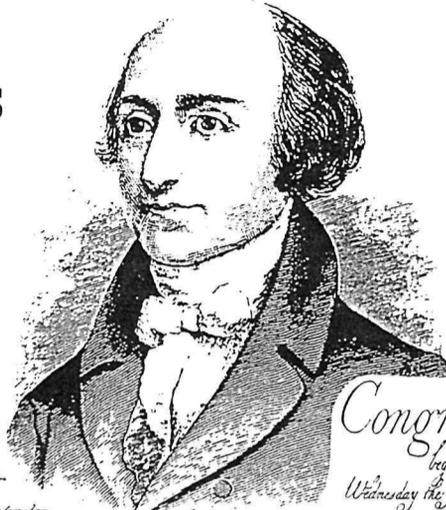




Albert Gallatin's Views on

The Constitution & The Bill of Rights



We the People
 of the United States
 in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquillity, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do hereby adopt this Constitution for the United States of America.

Article I
 Section 1. All legislative Powers herein granted shall be vested in a Congress of the United States, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Section 2. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Government.

Section 3. The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, chosen by the Legislature of the State for which they are elected, nine Years shall be the Term of their Office, and there shall be one Senator from each State in which a Majority shall be ascertained by the Votes of the People.

Section 4. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Government.

Section 5. The House of Representatives shall be composed of Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, and the Electors in each State shall have the Qualifications requisite for Electors of the most numerous Branch of the State Government.

Congress OF THE United States
 begun and held at the City of New York, on
 Wednesday the Fourth of March, one thousand seven hundred and eighty nine

THE Convention of the thirteen original States, having agreed upon the following Constitution, do hereby ordain, ratify, and confirm the same.

RESOLVED by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, That the following Constitution be the Constitution of the United States, to be in full Force and Effect from the first Day of September next.

ARTICLES in addition to, and Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America proposed by Congress, and ratified by the States.

Article the first. After the first Meeting required by the first Article of the Constitution, there shall be one Representative for every thirty thousand Persons, until the number shall amount to one hundred; after which the proportion shall be regulated by Congress, but there shall never be less than one Representative for every forty thousand Persons, and the number of Representatives shall never exceed five hundred.

Article the second. The Congress shall consist of a Senate and House of Representatives.

Article the third. Congress shall make all Laws, regulate all Commerce, regulate the Coinage, regulate the Post, and regulate all other Affairs which may be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States.

Article the fourth. The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union a Republican Form of Government.

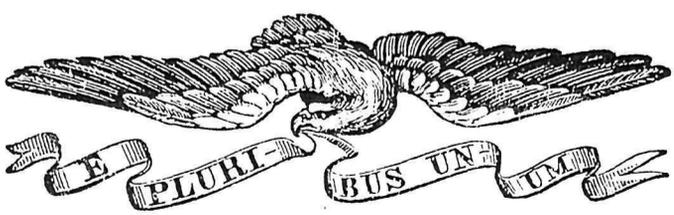
Article the fifth. No State shall be deprived of its equal Suffrage in Congress.

Young America Experiments with Democracy

A product of the American Revolution, the Articles of Confederation were the first attempt to provide the states with an alliance against the threat of other countries. It gave us the necessary government to survive the war but was failing by the mid 1780s. The Articles placed the power with the state governments creating, in essence, thirteen individual countries instead of one united nation. Alarm over Shay's Rebellion, a tax revolt in western Massachusetts in 1786-87, would help bring about the Philadelphia Convention.

The Philadelphia Convention began in the spring of 1787 when delegates from twelve of the thirteen states met to revise the Articles of Confederation. Over a period of five months these notable gentlemen debated and created a new framework of government, that become known as the *Constitution of the United States*. This Constitution provided for a strong central government containing three branches: a bicameral legislation (House of Representatives and Senate), an executive (the President), and a judicial (the Supreme Court). With this centralization of authority, the states could surely say they were united because their representatives in a national government now had the power to create an army and navy, pay their debts, and band together for mutual defense. The Constitution was signed in September of 1787 and officially adopted in 1788.

However not everyone supported the Constitution. A growing faction of prominent citizens in America were concerned and fearful of a strong central government; a government that might take away their personal rights and liberties. Known as Antifederalists, these men met and debated on how to improve the Constitution to allow for more individual rights. The authors of the Constitution had provided a system of amendments to allow for additions and modifications as the country grew and situations changed. This system of amendments would be put to use very quickly. The result of the Antifederalists efforts was the creation of a series of amendments known as the *Bill of Rights*.



Enter Albert Gallatin

In August of 1788, Gallatin attended his first political meeting held in Uniontown, Pennsylvania. The topic to be discussed was the election of county representatives to the Harrisburg Meeting. Pennsylvania was predominately Antifederalist and had fought hard to prevent the Constitution's adoption. However, once it was adopted, the Antifederalists planned to create amendments to make the federal document less "objectionable". Gallatin, fond of frontier democracy, quickly took up the Antifederalist banner and was selected as one of the Fayette County representatives to go to Harrisburg.

Gallatin showed his writing skills in Harrisburg, creating several proposals and resolutions. His greatest ability, though, was as an orator. In one speech he admitted to the fact that the Articles of Confederation were weak, especially in granting power to the legislature; but on the other hand, the Constitution was no better. Gallatin saw the document as being dangerous due to loosely worded provisions which could be abused by the executive or the legislature. He and his fellow delegates put together proposals that were forwarded to the Federal Congress. These Pennsylvania proposals along with several other states were given to Congressman James Madison. Madison combined the proposals into twelve amendments for ratification. Ten were adopted and became known as the Bill of Rights.

Gallatin Makes Use of the Bill of Rights

Albert Gallatin became painfully aware of the Constitution during his short stint as a U.S. Senator. Failing to meet the nine year citizenship requirement to hold that office, Gallatin returned to his frontier home to resume the life of a country gentleman. Western Pennsylvania, at that time, was embroiled in the Whiskey Rebellion and Gallatin could not sit idly by watching his neighbors sink deeper into trouble. Under the First Amendment, the citizenry has the right to peacefully assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. As part of the moderate faction of rebels, Gallatin took full advantage of this amendment trying to prevent violence and get the excise tax repealed. He attended most every meeting and served as secretary at all but a few. Unfortunately, President George Washington and Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton did not see any good in the moderates' peaceful protest meetings and were horrified by the violence perpetrated by the radical "Whiskey Boys". The aggravated President invoked the Second Amendment when he federalized the militia and sent the 13,000 man army west to break up the rebellion.

After the Whiskey Rebellion, Gallatin was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. During his three terms, Gallatin assumed the role of party leader in the House which made him the target of Federalist's rhetoric. The Federalists looked upon all persons of foreign birth living in the United States as enemies to the country. America in 1798 conducted an unofficial war with France known as the Quasi-War. To protect the country, Congress passed a series of laws called the *Alien & Sedition Acts*. These raised the standards for foreigners to become citizens and empowered the President to evict foreigners and arrest citizens for misconduct or dangerous behavior. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison thought that several of the acts were aimed specifically at Gallatin. While the acts were being debated, Gallatin spoke out against them declaring them unconstitutional. The Federalist majority amended the rules in the House for speaking on a question to further hinder Gallatin. This was one battle Gallatin was going to lose. Fortunately the acts had a time limit of two years of enforcement and Gallatin bided his time. The election of 1798 would bring more Democratic-Republicans to the Congress and the Federalist Party would slowly fade away.

Gallatin's Legacy

Although Albert Gallatin was against the United States Constitution, he used its very principals to help create and support the addition of the Bill of Rights to protect individual freedoms. Had it not been for men like Gallatin who saw the weaknesses in this great document, our very rights would be much different today. The Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights continue to provide the basic freedoms of our democracy and a strong foundation for this country's future.



Friendship Hill National Historic Site

R.D. 1, Box 149-A
Point Marion, PA 15474

