Introduction

The debate over the ratification of the Constitution during the years 1787 and 1788 precipitated an avalanche of the finest and most prolific political writing in American history. The Constitution was debated at every level, but most particularly in newspapers, pamphlets, and broadsides. This was not the first time that Americans had resorted to these vehicles in such large measure to express their political opinions; they had done so in their struggle against British imperial rule before 1776. That debate set the stage for the debate over the Constitution.

The state of New York was one of the three great centers of the debate on the Constitution—the other two being the states of Massachusetts and Pennsylvania. Most important, these three states had the largest numbers of newspapers. At one time or another, from September 17, 1787 to July 26, 1788, thirteen newspapers and one magazine were published in the state of New York. These fourteen publications printed some of the most influential pieces for and against the Consti-
tution that appeared anywhere in the United States. In most instances, writers of articles signed themselves with pseudonyms, a time-honored practice that probably reached its peak during the debate over the Constitution. According to Douglass Adair, pseudonyms were the "norm" during the years of the American Revolution and the early Republic.

The pseudonyms in this list were selected from articles that, for the most part, discuss the provisions and purposes of the Constitution at some length, or that relate to essays that did. Those used in the campaign for the election of state ratifying convention delegates do not appear here unless the articles also include a substantial discussion of the Constitution. The newspaper articles are in the files of *The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution*, Department of History, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, or in some of the eight volumes already published by that project.

Almost every one of the writers sheltered by a pseudonym expressed his views on the Constitution strongly. In this list, supporters of the Constitution have been labeled "Federalists," opponents, "Antifederalists." These labels are commonly used by present-day students of the debate over the ratification of the Constitution. In the eighteenth century, however, these terms had different meanings. The "Antifederalists" of the ratification debate did not apply that term to themselves; it was fastened to them by the advocates of the Constitution. These advocates wanted to portray themselves as "federalists," not "nationalists" (proponents of a powerful central government), a more apropos label. "Antifederalists" believed themselves to be the true "federalists," those who wanted to divide the powers of government between the states and the central government, with the scales tipped in favor of the former. "Antifederalists" considered the government under the Articles of Confederation to be "federal" in structure. Those writers who did not take sides in their articles have been described as "impartial," rather than "neutral." The Constitution was too important an issue for anyone to remain truly neutral.

Pseudonyms were employed for a variety of reasons. The freedom of the press had not yet become firmly established. Some writers evidently wanted to cloak their identities because politics were sometimes rough and tumble and highly personal. Duelling was still fairly common. For example, the fiery Antifederalist newspaper publisher, Eleazer Oswald of Philadelphia, seemed to be constantly on the verge of fighting duels. Other writers probably wanted to wait for the most opportune political moment before they went public. On the other hand, some authors chose pseudonyms that they had used before, or sobriquets by
which they were known so that their readers would readily recognize them. Occasionally, the language that they employed plainly identified the writers. Pseudonyms were intended to express a particular point of view; readers were expected to know exactly where writers stood simply by the pseudonyms. Some pseudonyms, however, such as Cato, had such a powerful and positive image that both sides used them.

Many of the pseudonyms, used by both Federalists and Antifederalists, came from the classical world, or were based upon the Greek and Latin languages. According to Richard M. Gummere, the years 1787 and 1788 marked "a time when the influence of the classics was at its height" in America. The study of Greek and Latin, he said, peaked by 1789. Meyer Reinhold, another classicist, wrote that a "cult of antiquity" flourished in eighteenth-century America; he described these years as the "golden age of the classical tradition in America." The resort to classical pseudonyms was just one of the many manifestations of the "cult of antiquity." People in many walks of life used the classics as their authority, as a means of guiding their lives; the study of the classics was one of the principal roads taken in the pursuit of "civic virtue." At no time in American history have people more consciously mimicked the ancients.

Many of the pseudonyms, used by both Federalists and Antifederalists, came from the classical world, or were based upon the Greek Federalists and Antifederalists sought to portray themselves as republicans; failure to do so would have been courting political disaster. So strong was this feeling that one Antifederalist, Sidney, even took his pseudonym from Algernon Sidney, a leading and martyred player in the failed republican movement of seventeenth-century England.

Federalists also employed *noms de plume* that had a distinctly nationalistic or patriotic flavor; these choices emphasized the nation—America. On the other hand, Antifederalists chose pseudonyms that were localist, that were associated with the state of New York. A number of pseudonyms denoted the occupations of authors, or the groups to which they were appealing. This was especially true of the frequent use by Antifederalists of such terms as "countryman" and "farmer." This homespun quality was clearly one that Antifederalist writers tried to project; the simple folk, particularly the sturdy yeoman farmers, were the principal supporters of the Antifederalist cause. Federalists, however, keenly aware of the importance of shaping public opinion, did not allow Antifederalists to monopolize either these pseudonyms or those that were localist in tone. Both sides also battled over the use of the term "federalist." Bluntly put, they pulled few punches; the stakes were too high.
To discover the meanings and origins of the pseudonyms, biographical and classical dictionaries, foreign- and English-language dictionaries, encyclopedias, bibliographies, documentary collections, histories, biographies, and historical monographs were consulted. Most important were the classical and biographical dictionaries, though at times they differed on even the most essential facts. These dictionaries were supplemented by a number of Latin and English dictionaries. The most informative English ones were Dr. Samuel Johnson’s *A Dictionary of the English Language* (first printed in 1755) and the multivolume, unabridged *Oxford English Dictionary*. Also useful were dictionaries on the origins and meanings of first names and reference works on eighteenth-century English literature. Monographs on political and classical thought provided the historical context that made the search more meaningful. The selected bibliography at the end lists the works that were most helpful. Lastly, Frank M. Clover, Professor of Ancient History at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, graciously answered questions on a variety of subjects.

**Alexander the Great** (Antifederalist)

This item, published in the Poughkeepsie *Country Journal* on April 22, 1788, was an Antifederalist satire regarding the Federalist argument that encouraged people to support the Constitution because it was drafted and advocated by great men. The writer saw no reason why he, too, should not use a “pompous” pseudonym, like those employed by Federalist writers.

**America** (Federalist)

This article was written by Noah Webster, the editor of the New York *American Magazine*, and printed in the New York *Daily Advertiser* on December 31, 1787. It was an answer to the “Dissent of the Minority of the Pennsylvania Convention”—a document that explained why the minority had voted against ratification of the Constitution on December 12. (This document had been reprinted in three New York City newspapers before *America* answered it.) *America* attacked the dissenters for trying to disturb the peace of the United States, and he made a strong plea for “our Federal Union.” Webster was also *Giles Hickory* (below). (See also *A Citizen of America*, below.)

The pseudonym, *America*, clearly appealed to a sense of national feeling, rather than pride in and identification with a single state. When
Webster established his *American Magazine* in December 1787, he intended that it be a national magazine; articles were to be cast in a decidedly nationalistic tone.

**An American** (Federalist)

This essay was published in the *New York Packet* on May 27, 1788, about a week before the convening of the New York ratifying convention. It urged New York to remain in the Union because it would benefit economically. (See *America*, above, for the meaning of this pseudonym.)

**Americanus** (Federalist)

This series of seven essays was printed in the *New York Daily Advertiser* between November 2, 1787 and January 21, 1788. Written by John Stevens, Jr., of New Jersey, five of these articles criticized *Cato* (below), while the others attacked the “‘Dissent of the Minority of the Pennsylvania Convention’” (see *America*) and the October 10, 1787 letter of Virginia Governor Edmund Randolph to the Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates in which he explained why he had not signed the Constitution as a member of the Constitutional Convention. (Like the “‘Dissent,’” Randolph’s letter had been reprinted in New York City just before *Americanus* replied to it.) *Americanus* scored Antifederalists for their “blind attachment to a party, or to the local interests of a narrow district.” Unlike *Cato*, he believed that a republic could exist over a large territory like the thirteen states. *Americanus* obviously considered himself a citizen or resident of America, not just a single state.

**A Baptist** (Antifederalist)

This item, printed in the *New York Journal* on November 30, 1787, criticized the Baptist churches belonging to the Philadelphia Baptist Association for supporting the Constitution which did not guarantee the freedom of religion. The Association consisted of churches from the middle states, including New York.

**Brutus** (Antifederalist)

This series of sixteen essays was printed in the *New York Journal* between October 18, 1787 and April 10, 1788. The authorship of these essays has not been determined. Among those seriously suggested as
authors are Melancton Smith, Thomas Tredwell, Abraham Yates, Jr., and Robert Yates. These articles, along with the pamphlets of the Federal Farmer (below), are among the finest expressions of Antifederalist thought printed anywhere in the United States. In particular, Brutus believed that the Constitution destroyed the sovereignty of the states and that a bill of rights was needed to protect the rights and liberties of the people. He was also a defender of republican government which, he believed, the Constitution endangered. The Federalist by Publius (below) was, in part, initiated as a response to Brutus.

The pseudonym was probably a reference to Marcus Junius Brutus, a leader of the conspiracy against Julius Caesar that resulted in Caesar’s assassination, in the hope of restoring the republic. Brutus, a firm republican, is said to have acted out of patriotic reasons in opposition to the dictatorship of Caesar. He was also known for his moral earnestness and independence. Brutus’ second wife was Porcia, the daughter of Cato the Younger. She inherited her father’s firm republican principles, and she knew beforehand of the plot against Caesar. (See Cato and Caesar, both below.)

Another possibility is Lucius Junius Brutus, a founder of the Roman Republic who was consul in 509 B.C., after he helped to destroy the monarchy of Tarquin, the last king of Rome. Brutus loved the Republic so much that he put his two sons to death because they conspired to restore the Tarquins. He died fighting to retain the Republic.

Brutus, Junior (Antifederalist)

This article was published in the New York Journal on November 8, 1787. Brutus, Junior, sought to answer those Federalist arguments that had not been answered by, among others, Brutus (above). The identity of Brutus, Junior, has not been determined, but passages and references from his essay resemble some found in the Federal Farmer’s first pamphlet (below).

Caesar (Federalist)

Two articles signed Caesar, in answer to Cato (below), were published in the New York Daily Advertiser on October 1 and 17, 1787. These essays have long been ascribed to Alexander Hamilton, but the editors of The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, among others, have questioned this attribution.

The reference is to Caius Julius Caesar whom Cato the Younger had so long resisted; the author of these essays made that clear in his
first one. There has been much historical controversy over Caesar's true role and nature. The author of the Caesar essays obviously had Plutarch's Caesar as his model. Plutarch's Caesar, according to Douglass Adair, was a man of genius who sought absolute power and who wanted to be the greatest man in Rome. He was an honorable man, a man brave in battle, a man who yearned for distinction. Caesar passionately believed that he was born to accomplish great things. He disdained money-making, but he distributed his wealth effectively among his followers. Adair says that Alexander Hamilton admired these qualities in Caesar and considered him "the greatest man that ever lived."

Caesar was a man of extraordinary achievements. In the fifth decade B.C., he defeated Pompey and his followers (among them Cato the Younger) in a bitter civil war and became dictator of Rome. In this position, Caesar unified the Roman Empire after a century of strife and worked for the benefit of Rome and the Empire. He was a lawgiver and an advocate of good government and economic development. He established libraries, passed agrarian laws, improved housing, built aqueducts, drained marshes, enlarged harbors, and dug canals. He also secured the boundaries of the empire, pacified the provinces, and formed commercial colonies. In 44 B.C., a group of conspirators, disgusted with Caesar's increasing power, assassinated him, hoping to restore the Republic.

Caledonia (Antifederalist)

This item was printed in the New York Journal on April 22 and 25, 1788. Caledonia is the Latin name for Scotland. The article argued against ratification of the Constitution by describing the disadvantages to Scotland when it joined with England in 1707 to form Great Britain. In short, the Constitution would establish a consolidated government to the detriment of the states.

Cato (Antifederalist and Federalist)

This series of seven articles was printed in the New York Journal between September 27, 1787 and January 3, 1788. Cato was among the first major attacks upon the Constitution printed in the United States. Federalists attributed the articles to New York Governor George Clinton, a major Antifederalist leader. This attribution, long accepted by historians, has been challenged in recent years by some scholars. Cato was a strong advocate of a bill of rights and a defender of republican
government, endangered, he believed, by the Constitution. In particular, he thought that a republic could not exist over a large territory.

This pseudonym was probably taken from Marcus Porcius Cato Uticensis (Cato the Younger), a longtime opponent of Caius Julius Caesar (above) and a supporter of republican principles. (Uticensis means of or belonging to the city of Utica.) His opposition to Caesar came to a head in the fifth decade B.C., when he joined forces with Pompey against Caesar. After Pompey’s death, Cato fled with his army to the city of Utica in Africa, where he was pursued by Caesar. Facing certain defeat in 46 B.C., he committed suicide. Before he died, however, Cato asked his followers to make peace with Caesar. The great orator, Cicero, defended him in a pamphlet. Caesar replied in a pamphlet entitled Anticato, but overstated his case and made Cato a martyr. Cato became the rallying cry for republicans, and in some historical works, he came to personify godlike virtue.

The pseudonym was first used by English radical Whigs, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, who published 138 essays between 1720 and 1723, mostly attacking the policies of the ministers of George I. Among other things, the essays discussed the nature of virtue, the values of political liberty, the justice of tyrannicide, the evils of tyranny, and the essential nature of the freedom of the press and religion. The essays were widely read and reprinted in colonial America. Americans cited Cato most often on matters concerning the freedom of the press and religion, the evils of standing armies in peacetime, and the nature of the British empire. Bernard Bailyn says that the letters were quoted so often that they gave rise to a “Catonic image” that was central to the political theory of colonial America.

This pseudonym was also used by a Federalist writer (or writers) who published items in the Poughkeepsie Country Journal on December 12 and 19, 1787 (supplement) and July 8, 1788. In the article of July 8, Cato called upon the opponents of the Constitution to accept it and to put aside the idea of a civil war similar to the conspiracy of Catiline against the consuls of Rome. Cato was an opponent of Catiline and voted for his execution, as well as for the execution of the other conspirators. Catiline died in battle in 62 B.C.

That both sides could adopt Cato as a pseudonym is perhaps best illustrated by an event in English history—the performance and publication of Joseph Addison’s play, Cato, A Tragedy in 1713. English Whigs and Tories both claimed Cato and its lofty phrases about liberty. Addison portrayed Cato as a public man of the highest moral character and personal honor who emphasized the role of liberty and religion. Even Trenchard and Gordon were probably influenced in their choice of the
pseudonym because of the enormous popularity of Addison's play. In America, this play was performed as early as 1736, and its popularity peaked in the 1760s and 1770s. In 1778, it was performed at Valley Forge before General George Washington, who greatly admired Cato the Younger. Washington hoped that the play would be a morale booster. By 1800, at least eight editions of Cato were printed in the United States.

**Cincinnatus (Antifederalist and Federalist)**

This series of six Antifederalist essays, printed in the *New York Journal* between November 1 and December 6, 1787, was written by Arthur Lee of Virginia, a revolutionary patriot who was stationed, at this time, in New York City as a member of the Confederation Board of Treasury. The essays were addressed to James Wilson, Esq., of Pennsylvania and were political, philosophical, and personal responses to his speech of October 6 to a public meeting in Philadelphia. Wilson's speech, the most influential Federalist statement on the principles of the Constitution, had been reprinted in New York.

The pseudonym is probably taken from Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus who lived in the fifth century B.C. The consul Minucius' forces had been surrounded by the Aequians and Volscians, and Cincinnatus was called upon to serve as dictator and to rescue Minucius and his army. At the time that Cincinnatus was approached, he was ploughing his own fields, even though he was a member of the patrician order. Cincinnatus rescued Minucius, left his post as dictator about two weeks after he had been given it, and returned to his farm. He was considered the savior or deliverer of his country. Americans often compared George Washington to Cincinnatus.

A Federalist author, writing for the Lansingburg *Northern Cen­tiln* on October 15, 1787, also used this pseudonym. He painted a dismal picture of life during the Confederation and demonstrated how the Constitution would improve that life. He attacked Antifederalists as party men trying to hold on to their offices. Cincinnatus said that he was a soldier during the Revolution who, after the war, had "retired to private business." He had nothing to gain from the Constitution; he only wanted the United States to be able to rival the other nations of the world.

**A Citizen (Antifederalist, Federalist, and Impartial)**

This pseudonym was employed by Federalists, Antifederalists, and some who did not take sides. Only one example of each will be given.
An Antifederalist writer attacked Medium (below) in the New York Journal on November 24, 1787, for not being tougher on Federalists. On January 31, 1788, a Federalist writer in the Hudson Gazette took issue with some Antifederalist objections. On March 3, 1788, an impartial observer, writing for the Albany Federal Herald, asked people to think carefully about the Constitution; he was of no party. He described himself as a citizen of New York “entitled to the privileges, and immunities thereof in life, liberty and property.” Among other things, he was apparently a freeman or freeholder who had the right to vote. A “citizen” could also be “a townsman; a man of trade; not a gentleman,” according to lexicographer, Samuel Johnson.

A Citizen of America (Federalist)

Published in the New York Daily Advertiser on February 19, 1788, this essay was a strong plea for union and an energetic government. Noah Webster, who had published America (above) in the Daily Advertiser, had used this pseudonym as a pamphleteer in October, 1787, before he moved from Philadelphia to New York City.

A Citizen of New-York (Federalist)

This pamphlet, written by John Jay and entitled An Address to the People of the State of New-York on the Subject of the Constitution, was offered for sale on April 15, 1788. John Jay reviewed the inadequacies of the Articles of Confederation and the economic hardships of the 1780s. The Constitutional Convention, he said, was called to establish “a national government, competent to every national object.” The Constitution, the product of its deliberations, was not perfect, but another convention would not do better. New York was asked to ratify the Constitution for several reasons: it would benefit economically; it would appease its neighbors who had already ratified; and it would remain part of the Union because nine other states would definitely ratify.

On September 26, 1787, the New York Daily Advertiser published an article under this pseudonym that listed more than thirty possibilities for the first president of the United States under the Constitution. John Jay was not among those listed.

A Country Federalist (Federalist)

This pseudonym was used by Federalist James Kent (later Chancellor of New York) in the Poughkeepsie Country Journal on December
19, 1787 (supplement) and January 9, 1788. Since many country or rural people opposed the Constitution, Kent tried to demonstrate that some country folk could support the Constitution. Kent was in the process of publishing an abridgement of *The Federalist* (see Publius, below) in the *Country Journal*. (For the meaning of the term “federalist,” see the Introduction.)

**A Countryman (Antifederalist)**

This series of six “letters” was printed in the *New York Journal* between November 21, 1787, and February 14, 1788. Written by Antifederalist Hugh Hughes, a farmer and an old Revolutionary patriot, the essays were entitled (beginning with number II) “Letters from a Gentleman in Dutchess County, to his Friend in New-York.” The friend was possibly Antifederalist leader John Lamb to whom many Antifederalist essays were sent before they were printed in the *New York Journal*. (For example, see Expositor, below.) Hughes also wrote Expositor. (See also A Son of Liberty, below.)

**A Countryman (Antifederalist)**

This collection of five “letters” was printed in the *New York Journal* between December 6, 1787, and January 17, 1788. They were written by DeWitt Clinton, a nephew of Governor George Clinton and a native of rural New Britain in Orange County. DeWitt Clinton, then only eighteen years old, was reading law with Antifederalist leader Samuel Jones. In his fourth “letter,” the youthful DeWitt sarcastically remarked that the only thing that he had learned from *The Federalist* (see Publius, below) was “that it is better to be united than divided.”

**A Countryman (Federalist)**

This pastoral allegory was printed in the New York *Daily Advertiser* on March 5, 1788, supporting the decision of the Constitutional Convention to abandon the Articles of Confederation in favor of a new Constitution. Federalists were demonstrating that they, too, could use such a pseudonym.

**Curtiopolis (Federalist)**

This article, addressed to the New York legislature that was meeting to consider (among other things) the calling of a state ratifying conven-
tion, was printed in the New York *Daily Advertiser* on January 18, 1788. It was a Federalist spoof on the numerous Antifederalist objections to the Constitution.

The meaning of the pseudonym is uncertain, but perhaps it is related to Curtius (below). Curtius (or Curtii) is the name of a Roman clan related to the mythological hero, M. Curtius. Perhaps Curtiopolis wanted to indicate some sort of kinship with Curtius, who had also published material on the Constitution in the *Daily Advertiser*. “Polis” is a common suffix for a Greek name.

**Curtius** (Federalist)

This series of three articles, addressed to the citizens of New York, was published in the New York *Daily Advertiser* between October 18 and November 3, 1787 (supplement). The articles supported the Constitution and were critical of the essays of Cato and Brutus (both above).

This pseudonym appears to have been taken from the name of a mythological hero—M. (perhaps Marcus) Curtius. In the myth, a chasm opened suddenly in the Roman Forum. An oracle told M. Curtius that the Republic of Rome could survive and prosper only when the chasm was filled by something precious. M. Curtius believed that Rome’s finest treasure was a gallant, courageous, and armed citizen. Whereupon, armed and on horseback, he threw himself into the chasm and it closed over him. He had saved the Republic. At the point where M. Curtius had filled the chasm, the place came to be called the Lacus Curtius. (Other traditions, however, suggest other reasons for this name.)

**D---** (Federalist)

This item, printed in the New York *Daily Advertiser* on December 12, 1787, rejected a statement that originated in a Philadelphia newspaper claiming John Jay opposed the Constitution. D--- labeled the statement as an Antifederalist misrepresentation.

**Democritus** (Antifederalist)

This group of three essays was printed in the New York *Journal* on December 14, 21, and 28, 1787, as an answer to *The Examiner* (below). The author attacked *The Examiner* for criticizing republican writers, and he satirized Pennsylvania Federalists Benjamin Rush and James Wilson. Both men were attacked for mouthing religious platitudes and for making the Constitution appear to have been divinely inspired. This
pseudonym was probably taken from a Greek philosopher of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. who was known as "the laughing philosopher." He ridiculed the follies and vanities of mankind. In politics, he was a democrat. In Latin, "democritus" means one who is selected from the commons.

Detector (Antifederalist)

The writer of this item, printed in the New York Journal on October 25, 1787, found or detected a paradox. Some Massachusetts printers insisted that writers of essays attacking the Constitution identify themselves. Yet the Massachusetts Constitution declared that the liberty of the press was "essential to the security of freedom in a state," and, therefore, should not be restrained.

Dick a Dick (Antifederalist)

On March 7, 1788, the Philadelphia Independent Gazetteer printed a brief article stating that Arthur Lee of Virginia, a member of the Confederation Board of Treasury in New York City, had declared that four-fifths of the people of Virginia were Antifederalists. Several days later, three New York City newspapers printed items denying that Lee had made such a declaration. On March 29, Dick a Dick, writing for the New York Journal, questioned the authenticity of the denial and challenged Lee, who had just returned to New York from Virginia, to come forward with his denial. Dick a Dick probably means from one man to another, or man to man.

A Dutchess County Farmer (Federalist)

This article, printed in the Poughkeepsie Country Journal on February 26, 1788, criticized Robert Yates and John Lansing, Jr.—the two New York delegates who had left the Constitutional Convention early and who had published a letter explaining why they had done so. A Dutchess County Farmer accused them of being influenced by Cato (i.e., Governor George Clinton). Evidently, the writer's use of the description "farmer," was an effort to demonstrate that not all farmers were Antifederalists. (See A Dutchess County Rifleman, below.)

A Dutchess County Rifleman (Antifederalist)

Printed in the Poughkeepsie Country Journal on April 8, 1788, this article defended Robert Yates and John Lansing, Jr., against the attack
of **A Dutchess County Farmer** (above). The writer possibly used "rif­­leman" as a synonym for "militiaman," the citizen soldier. Antifed­­eralists often criticized the Constitution because it gave the central gov­­ernment control over the state militias. State control over their militias was a precious right to the Antifederalists and not one to be relinquished.

**The Examiner (Federalist)**

This series of five essays was published in the *New York Journal* between December 11, 1787, and January 4, 1788. The author was physician Charles McKnight who used a variety of medical terms in the essays and who was given to personal invective. A physician is, of course, one who examines or looks into the nature and condition of a person's body. McKnight, then, does not appear to have tried very hard to hide his identity. In his first essay, **The Examiner** announced his intention to examine or investigate the writings of several Antifederalists. Among others, **The Examiner** attacked Cato, Brutus, and Democritus (all above).

**Democritus** (above) knew the identity of **The Examiner** because he referred to him as "Dr. Sawney M'Foolish." "Sawney" was a derisive name for a Scotsman, and McKnight was Scotch-Irish. **The Examiner** was also called a poor man's Jonathan Swift. (See **A Friend to Com­­mon Sense**, below.)

**Expositor (Antifederalist)**

This series of two articles, written by Hugh Hughes, was published in the *New York Journal* on January 24 and 31, and February 7 and 28, 1788. These "expositions" or explanations of the Constitution were written with a strong sense of irony. Antifederalist leader John Lamb personally oversaw their publication. Lamb divided up the essays so as to excite "the curiosity of People to see the Remainder." Hughes was also **A Countryman** (above). (See also **A Son of Liberty**, below.)

**Fabius (Federalist)**

Several articles signed **Fabius** appeared in these two newspapers: *Albany Journal*, February 9, 11, 18, and 23, 1788; and *Albany Federal Herald*, March 17, 1788. The reference is to Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus who was variously consul, censor, dictator, pontifex, and augur of Rome in the third century B.C. He is best known for his ac­­tions against Hannibal in the second Punic War. Fabius avoided pitched
battles with Hannibal and tried to wear him down. He became known as Cunctator, "the delayer," and the Shield of Rome. A patrician of the old order, he was also noted for his courage. Americans often referred to George Washington as the American Fabius.

**Federal Farmer (Antifederalist)**

This writer published two pamphlets, in the form of letters, that were first advertised for sale on November 8, 1787, and on May 2, 1788. The first set of five letters, addressed to the "Republican," was entitled *Observations Leading to a Fair Examination of the System of Government Proposed by the Late Convention*. . . . , while the second set, consisting of thirteen letters, was called *An Additional Number of Letters from the Federal Farmer*. . . . The "Republican" was probably Governor George Clinton, who was known to some Antifederalists under that sobriquet. It is also believed that Clinton used the pseudonym The Republican in his own defense in the *New York Journal* on September 6, 1787, against charges made by Alexander Hamilton (New York *Daily Advertiser*, July 21) that he was an opponent of the Constitutional Convention.

The *Letters* are perhaps the best expression of Antifederalist thought printed in America. In particular, the Federal Farmer attacked the Constitutional Convention for establishing a consolidated or national government and for failing to provide for a bill of rights. The Federal Farmer supported what he considered to be a truly "federal" government, a government in which the power of the states was paramount. By describing himself as a "farmer," he was appealing to the group from which Antifederalists drew their greatest strength. The Federal Farmer was himself too erudite to have been a simple yeoman farmer.

For a long time, historians believed that Richard Henry Lee, a Virginia congressman in New York City when the first set of letters was written, was the author, but recently several scholars have seriously challenged this attribution. These scholars have not suggested someone in Lee's place, although it appears from comments made by New York Antifederalist Hugh Hughes in a private letter that the writer was probably a New Yorker. Certainly, the arguments employed by the Federal Farmer were popular in New York Antifederalist circles at the time.

**A Federalist (Federalist)**

This writer published an article in the Poughkeepsie *Country Journal* on April 22, 1788, supporting a strong energetic government. (For the meaning of the term "federalist," see the *Introduction*.)
The Federalist

See Publius (below).

A Friend to Common Sense (Antifederalist)

This article, published in the New York Journal on December 19, 1787, criticized The Examiner (above) for trying to be an American Jonathan Swift. Swift, a supremely gifted satirist, had written in support of the Tory ministry of Queen Anne (1702-1714).

A Friend to Good Government (Federalist)

This article, printed in the Poughkeepsie Country Journal on April 8 and 15, 1788, discussed both sides of the issue, but came down on the Federalist side.

Giles Hickory (Federalist)

This series of four articles was published in the monthly New York American Magazine in December 1787, and January, February, and March, 1788. The articles, the first of which denied the need for a bill of rights, were written by the Magazine’s editor, Noah Webster. Webster thought that a bill of rights was unnecessary against the encroachments of the elected representatives of the people. The people surrendered their sovereignty to their elected representatives who were drawn from the educated upper classes. Webster also wrote under the name America (above).

The name “Giles” is from the Greek aegis, meaning “goatskin”; in other words, “a shield that protects.” In Greek mythology, “aegis” was a shield or breastplate worn variously by Zeus, Athena, and Apollo. Hickory is a tough, elastic wood that was used in the making of canes and rods (switches). The hickory rod was an instrument of the schoolmaster. In his second essay, Webster used the analogy of the schoolmaster and the rod, stating that “A proper degree of respect for the man and his laws, would prevent a thousand hard knocks.” Webster himself had been a schoolmaster and, with his recently published grammars, readers, and spellers, was becoming the “schoolmaster to America.”
Honestus (Antifederalist)

This article, printed in the New York Journal on April 26, 1788, criticized a wide variety of mechanics and artisans who were in favor of the Constitution. They would do better to stick to business, not politics, said Honestus. In Latin, "honestus" means to be full of honor, or honorable; to be regarded with honor; distinguished, noble, virtuous.

Lather (Federalist)

This satire, published in the New York Daily Advertiser on October 24, 1787, ridiculed the Antifederalists who would leave office or the state because of the "new unconstitutional Constitution." Lather spoofed the Antifederalist notion of "State Sovereignty" and "Street Sovereignties." He also hoped that Congress would create the office of "Shaver General" in the Northwest Territory for "some worthy disgusted Patriot." Antifederalist leaders John Lamb and George Clinton both held the rank of brigadier general, and both (especially Lamb) had been patriots. (See also Roderick Razor, below.)

A Lover of Truth (Antifederalist)

This article was printed in the New York Packet on October 30, 1787, correcting a report that George Mason, a Virginia delegate to the Constitutional Convention, had been treated contemptuously by the mayor and corporation of the town of Alexandria, Va., for refusing to sign the Constitution.

A Lover of Truth and Decency (Antifederalist)

This item, published in the New York Journal on March 18, 1788, criticized Federalists for their criticisms of the Antifederalist, Rough-Hewer (below).

A Lunarian (Federalist)

The printer of the New York Daily Advertiser was asked to print this article from "a correspondent in the Moon." He did so on December 20, 1787. A Lunarian attacked Antifederalist writers because their articles lacked substance and were of such huge dimensions that they floated up to the moon like balloons. Moreover, these Antifederalist writers appear to have come under the influence of the moon.
Pseudonyms Used in the Newspaper Debate

A Man of No Party (Impartial)

These two articles, printed in the New York Daily Advertiser on October 19 and 20, 1787, attacked both Federalist and Antifederalist authors.

Marcus (Federalist)

This item was printed in the New York Daily Advertiser on October 15, 1787. Marcus listed, in a format resembling the verse form, the principal occupations and classes in society and explained why it was in the "interest" of each to support the Constitution.

The pseudonym is perhaps taken from Marcius, the Roman seer whose prophetic verses were discovered in 213 B.C. The verses were preserved in the Capitol (i.e., temple) along with the prophetic Sibylline Books.

Medium (Impartial)

This writer, whose article appeared in the New York Journal on November 21, 1787, criticized both Federalists and Antifederalists for intemperance and obstinacy. True to his name, Medium took a moderate, or middle course. (See A Citizen, above.)

Observer (Federalist)

This article, printed in the New York Journal on January 1, 1788, attacked Democritus (above), who had criticized Observer’s friend, The Examiner (above). Observer admitted that Dr. Charles McKnight was The Examiner. For another Federalist article signed An Observer, see the Lansingburgh Northern Centinel, October 22, 1787.

One of the Nobility (Antifederalist)

This Antifederalist satire, published in the New York Journal on December 12, 1787, spoofed Federalists and their principles. Federalists were attacked for opposing liberties and for not trusting the people. One of the Nobility used the term ""Republican or Anti-federal pieces," implying that Federalists were not republicans.

P. Valerius Agricola (Federalist)

This article, a Federalist statement on why the Constitution should be ratified, was printed in the Albany Gazette on November 8 and De-
November 6, 1787. The writer prefaced his essay with this quotation from Joseph Addison's *Cato, A Tragedy*: "My BANE and ANTIDOTE are both before me!" He planned to continue the essay after December 6, but no continuation has been found in the extant issues of the *Albany Gazette*. (It may have appeared on December 27, an issue that is not extant.) The first part of P. Valerius Agricola was printed in the *Albany Gazette* the week before that newspaper reprinted the first number of *The Federalist* by Publius (Valerius Poplicola) (below).

No person with the name P. Valerius Agricola appears to have existed. The name is a contrived one; the Valerian clan did not use the cognomen "Agricola." Valerius was an ancient and celebrated patrician clan in Rome. Publius Valerius Poplicola (see Publius, below) was of this clan. In early times under the republic, this clan was at the forefront in advocating the rights of plebeians. Agricola means peasant, or farmer, or countryman. There is the possibility that Agricola may also have referred to Gnaeus Julius Agricola, the father-in-law of the historian, Tacitus. Agricola, as governor of Britain, was noted for his moderation and equity and for bringing the Latin language and civilization to Britain. He became so famous for his public and private virtues that a jealous Domitian, Emperor of the Roman Empire, ordered him to return to Rome and probably had him poisoned in A.D. 93.

*Philopoemen (Impartial)*

This article, printed in the New York *Daily Advertiser* on November 16, 1787, was critical of James Wilson's speech of October 6 before a Philadelphia public meeting and of the critics of that speech. Both sides, it said, were excessive. *Philopoemen* called for a "cool, disinterested and discreet examination" of the Constitution. He wanted his readers to come up with as "peaceable and unanimous a determination as the subject admits, and our situation requires." (For Wilson, see *Cincinnatus*, above.)

The name was perhaps taken from Philopoemen of Megalopolis who lived in the second and third centuries B.C. He was a distinguished soldier who loved agriculture and the country life, living simply and prudently. Philopoemen was hipparch and general of the Achaean Confederacy; he restored the military efficiency of the Confederacy. Philopoemen killed the tyrant of Sparta and made that powerful military state tributary to the league. When the league came under the control of Rome, he did not resist Rome militarily, but fought all encroachments on the liberties of the people. After his defeat and death at the hands
of Dinocrates of the Messenians, he became a great hero to his people and statues were erected to him throughout the cities of the league. He was known as "the last of the Greeks."

**Philo-Publius (Federalist)**

*Philo-Publius* (an admirer of *Publius*, below) was William Duer, the secretary of the Confederation Board of Treasury, a New York businessman, and a close friend of Alexander Hamilton. Duer wrote four brief articles that were originally intended to be part of *The Federalist*. Duer's lackluster efforts were printed in the New York *Daily Advertiser*, October 30 and December 1; *New York Packet*, November 16; and New York *Independent Journal*, November 28.

**Plain Truth (Federalist)**

Published in the Albany *Federal Herald* on March 31, 1788, this article tried to set the record straight on some alleged misrepresentations made by Antifederalists.

**A Plebeian (Antifederalist)**

*A Plebeian*, one of the common people, was the author of a pamphlet entitled *An Address to the People of the State of New York: Showing the Necessity of Making Amendments to the Constitution, Proposed for the United States, Previous to Its Adoption*. The pamphlet appeared in New York City on April 17, 1788. *A Plebeian* is generally believed to be Melancton Smith; there is no hard contemporary evidence indicating that Smith was the author, although some historians have compared the pamphlet to other things that Smith wrote or said. Melancton Smith was a man of considerable property, hardly a plebeian, but he knew that many of the opponents of the Constitution in New York could be classified plebeian. In fact, he addressed himself to "the common people, the yeomanry of the country," who would be the biggest losers if the Constitution was adopted without amendments. *A Plebeian* dismissed most of the Federalist arguments in favor of the Constitution and reviewed many of the Antifederalist arguments for amendments. The pamphlet contains a postscript attacking John Jay's *A Citizen of New-York* (above), which had appeared a couple of days earlier.
Poor S——m (Federalist)

This article, printed in the New York Packet on February 12, 1788, complained about the hard times which the adoption of the new Constitution would alleviate.

A Public Creditor (Federalist)

Writing for the New York Daily Advertiser on December 20, 1787, A Public Creditor posed numerous questions to Brutus and Cato (both above) concerning finances. He insisted that the Constitution would protect public creditors and private property.

Publius (Federalist)

The Federalist, written by Publius and addressed to the people of the state of New York, was published in eighty-five numbers between October 27, 1787, and May 28, 1788. All but the last eight first appeared in one or the other of these New York City newspapers—the Independent Journal, the New York Packet, the Daily Advertiser, and the New York Journal. The Independent Journal and the New York Packet eventually published every essay. On March 22, 1788, a volume was printed with the first thirty-six essays, and on May 28, a second volume contained the remaining essays, including the last eight which appeared for the first time.

The Federalist was written by Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison (of Virginia). The authorship of sixty-nine of the eighty-five essays is definite. Hamilton wrote fifty—Nos. 1, 6-9, 11-13, 15-17, 21-36, 59-61, and 65-85; Madison, fourteen—Nos. 10, 14, 37-48; and Jay, five—Nos. 2-5, 64. The most recent scholarship has concluded persuasively that Madison apparently wrote the remaining disputed essays—Nos. 18-20, 49-58, and 62-63.

The first number, written by Hamilton, announced the purposes of the series: to demonstrate the necessity of "UNION," to outline the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, and to enumerate the nature and benefits of the new Constitution. Publius also answered the objections of Antifederalists, especially Brutus (above). But The Federalist was more than just a series of superlative political documents designed to convince the people of New York that the Constitution should be ratified. In November, 1788, Thomas Jefferson described The Federalist as "the best commentary on the principles of government which ever
was written," and in May 1790 he was moved to say that "descending from theory to practice there is no better book than the Federalist."

Alexander Hamilton, who initiated the series, had first employed the pseudonym Publius in the fall of 1778. At that time, he wrote three newspaper articles attacking Samuel Chase of Maryland for using secret congressional information in order to corner the flour market because Congress was planning to buy flour for the French fleet.

The pseudonym was taken from Publius Valerius Poplicola (or Publicola), who in the sixth century B.C. led a successful revolt (along with Lucius Junius Brutus) against the monarchy of Tarquin, the last king of Rome, and established a republic in its place. One of the first consuls of the Republic, Publius is credited with establishing a stable and just government. He adopted laws that supported the Republic and the liberties of the people. One law stated that anyone who tried to make himself king could be killed. Another gave both patricians and plebeians the right to appeal decisions of magistrates. The Roman cognomen, Publicica, or Poplicola, means "one who courts the people," hence, "a friend of the people." The historian Plutarch says that Publicola means "people-lover.

The projection of men like Hamilton, Madison, and Jay (especially Hamilton who chose the pseudonym) as "people-lovers" was clearly a misrepresentation. The government created by the Constitutional Convention was an attempt to curb the "excesses of democracy," to place restraints upon the people and their principal protectors—the state governments. The misrepresentation was compounded by entitling the series The Federalist. The essays probably should have been called The Nationalist, or to use one of Hamilton's earlier pseudonyms, The Continentalist.

A Querist (Antifederalist)

This article, printed in the New York Journal on November 24, 1787, asked questions about the meaning of certain provisions of the Constitution.

A Real Federalist (Antifederalist)

This writer, whose article was printed in the Poughkeepsie Country Journal on March 11, 1788, attacked Federalists (supporters of the Constitution) for wrongfully applying that label to themselves. He said that the supporters of the Constitution were out to destroy "the federal
"league" established by the Articles of Confederation in which the sovereignty of the states was paramount. The supporters of the Constitution, he inferred, were really nationalists because the Constitution destroyed the power of the states. Antifederalists, the opponents of the Constitution, believed they were the true federalists. (For more on the term "federalist," see the Introduction.)

A Republican (Antifederalist)

This item, a criticism of James Wilson's October 6 speech before a Philadelphia public meeting, was printed in the New York Journal on October 25, 1787. (See Cincinnatus, above, for Wilson's speech.) The author is unknown, but George Clinton was referred to as the "Republican." (See Federal Farmer, above.) Republican, according to some opponents of the Constitution, was also a synonym for Antifederalist. Antifederalists often insisted that they, not the Federalists, were the true republicans. Another article, which was critical of the Constitution for not having a bill of rights, appeared under this pseudonym in the New York Journal on December 27, 1787.

Roderick Razor (Federalist)

This Federalist satire, printed in the New York Daily Advertiser on December 11, 1787, attacked Antifederalists who would lose their state offices when the Constitution was adopted. Roderick Razor was willing to accept a "snug birth" [sic] in one of Lather's (above) "Street Sovereignties." He also ridiculed the major Antifederalist arguments on the Constitution (i.e., bill of rights, standing armies, etc.) and the Antifederalist reliance on Montesquieu.

It is possible that the pseudonym was taken from Englishman Tobias Smollett's picaresque novel, The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748).

Rough-Hewer (Antifederalist)

Rough-Hewer was Abraham Yates, Jr., of Albany, but no articles about the Constitution have been found under this pseudonym. Yates often published articles in the Albany newspapers, and a number of issues of those papers are no longer extant. However, he may have written some essays on the Constitution under that name because several Federalist writers attacked Rough-Hewer. The pseudonym definitely fits Yates's aggressive and passionate style; he was forever trying to cut things
down, or to hack them to pieces. The pseudonym may also have been an attempt to convince people that he was a man of humble origins, like most Antifederalists. Such was not the case, however, despite his apprenticeship to a shoemaker as a boy. Yates also used the pseudonym Sidney (below).

**Rusticus (Antifederalist)**

This article, published in the *New York Journal* on May 23, 1788, was written by someone who lived in the small town of Goshen in Orange County. In Latin, “rusticus” means someone who lives in the country. Another possibility is L. Junius Arulenus Rusticus, who was tribune of the plebeians in A.D. 66. *Rusticus* attacked the Revolutionary War records of some members of the Constitutional Convention.

**Senex (Federalist)**

This item was found in the *Pennsylvania Journal* of March 12, 1788, which reprinted it from a no longer extant issue of the *Albany Journal*. *Senex* attacked Rough-Hewer (and others like him) for abusing the freedom of the press. In Latin, “senex” means an aged man or a gentleman.

**Sidney (or Sydney) (Antifederalist)**

*Sidney* was Abraham Yates, Jr., of Albany. Because some issues of the *Albany Gazette* are missing, we may not have all of the articles that he printed in opposition to the Constitution. Those essays signed *Sidney* that do exist are in the Poughkeepsie *Country Journal*, February 5 and March 11, 1788 (both reprinted from the *Albany Gazette*), and in the *Albany Gazette*, February 21 and March 13, 1788. While the New York convention was meeting, the *New York Journal*, on June 13 and 14, published a lengthy article (signed *Sydney*) comparing the New York State Constitution with the United States Constitution paragraph by paragraph, concluding that the latter absorbed all of the state’s powers. (On October 18, 1787, the *New York Journal*, in an extraordinary issue, published a brief item signed *Sidney* that was clearly in Yates’s style.) Yates also used the pseudonym Rough-Hewer (above).

The pseudonym was a reference to Algernon Sidney (or Sydney) (1622–83), one of the principal republican thinkers in England. His magnum opus, *Discourses on Government*, was published after his death. According to Caroline Robbins, the *Discourses* became a “text-
book of revolution” in colonial America. Sidney was executed for plotting to overthrow Charles II in order to restore a republic. He met death like a martyr and was looked upon as such by later generations. Sidney fixed sole power in Parliament and the people; he preached that men had a right and a duty to rebel if their liberties and rights were threatened, and that tyrants had to be destroyed. Like Yates, Sidney was an aggressive and passionate man.

_A Slave (Federalist)_

This article was printed in the *New York Journal* on October 25, 1787. It was a response to an Antifederalist satire printed in the Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer* on October 6. The writer in the Gazetteer had itemized what was wrong with the Constitution, under the heading “blessings of the new-proposed government.” A Slave, in turn, drew up a list of what he thought was right with it. A Slave was answered by _A Son of Liberty_ (below).

_A Son of Liberty (Antifederalist)_

This article, printed in the *New York Journal* on November 8, 1787, answered A Slave (above) point-by-point. A Son of Liberty signed his article from Orange County, where Hugh Hughes, a former Son of Liberty, had once lived. The Sons of Liberty were secret political organizations that resisted British imperial policy before the American Revolution. The organization in the colony of New York, led by (among others) John Lamb, was among the most radical and violent of all of these organizations. According to Alfred Young, the leaders were “upstart” merchants and mechanics, while the rank and file consisted of mechanics, journeymen, laborers, and sailors. In New York City, the principal supporters of Governor George Clinton during the 1780s were the remnants of the leadership of the Sons of Liberty. Most of the Liberty Boys went over to the Federalists; they needed the Constitution to rescue them economically.

_A Spectator (Antifederalist)_

This essay, printed in the *New York Journal* on May 2, 1788, asserted that only nine states would ratify the Constitution; the other four would not. Therefore, it would be impossible to put the new government into operation unless amendments were added to the Constitution.
Suiibup (Antifederalist)

This article, printed in the *Albany Gazette* on February 21, 1788, was an Antifederalist satire that praised Rough-Hewer (above) and his allies. Suiibup, which is Publius (above) spelled backwards, attacked the great and the well-born as well as the Constitution for favoring aristocratic government.

Timoleon (Antifederalist)

This article was published in an extraordinary issue of the *New York Journal* on November 1, 1787. The writer attacked the excessive powers of Congress and the lack of a bill of rights. The pseudonym is taken from Timoleon, a Corinthian who liberated Syracuse (in Greek Sicily) from the tyrant Dionysius II in the fourth century B.C. After this victory, he began a program of political and social reconstruction and a crusade against the tyrants of other Sicilian states whom he eventually crushed. Timoleon brought peace and prosperity to Sicily.

Timon (Federalist)

This article, addressed to the farmers of the state of New York, was published in the *New York Daily Advertiser* on March 22, 1788. The writer said that the Constitution would give America respect at home and abroad. The pseudonym was possibly taken from Timon of Athens, a famous misanthrope who secluded himself almost entirely from the world. Plutarch mentioned him in his life of Mark Antony, and Shakespeare wrote a play entitled *Timon of Athens*. Another possibility is the Greek philosopher who lived in the third and fourth centuries B.C. This Timon expressed bitter satire in his poems and plays and was a skeptic in his philosophy.

A True Federalist (Antifederalist)

This item, printed in the *New York Journal* on March 25, 1788, was supposedly written by Eleazer Oswald, the publisher of the Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*. The article was addressed to Postmaster General Ebenezer Hazard, stationed in New York City, attacking him for disallowing newspapers postage-free delivery so that they could be exchanged by printers. In particular, this practice hurt the dissemination of Antifederalist material. (For this Antifederalist writer’s use of the term “federalist,” see the *Introduction*.)


*The Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution. Volumes XIII–XVI. Commentaries: Public and Private, 21 February 1787 to 31 March 1788*. Edited by John P. Kaminski and Gaspare J. Saladino. Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1981–1987. The fifth and last volume is forthcoming. In addition to containing many of the articles discussed in this list, these volumes include the evidence used to identify some of the writers who used the pseudonyms.


*Lempriere's Classical Dictionary of Proper Names Mentioned in Ancient Authors Writ Large*. Edited by F.A. Wright. 3rd. ed. London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan, 1984. This volume, based upon many earlier classical and mythological dictionaries, was published at the end of 1788.


[Plutarch], Plutarch: The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans. Translated by John Dryden and revised by Arthur Hugh Clough. New York: The Modern Library, [1932]. According to Meyer Reinhold, "no other Classical author was as popular [as Plutarch] in seventeenth and eighteenth century America. . . . Copies of his works, especially the Lives, were to be found everywhere in early American libraries." Plutarch discussed, in glowing terms, many of the characters described in this list of pseudonyms.


