

**BIRTH OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION: A
HISTORY OF THE NEW HAMPSHIRE
CONVENTION FOR THE INVESTIGATION,
DISCUSSION, AND DECISION OF THE
FEDERAL CONSTITUTION**

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Birth of the Federal Constitution: A History of the New Hampshire Convention for the Investigation, Discussion, and Decision of the Federal Constitution by Joseph B. Walker

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JOSEPH B. WALKER

**BIRTH OF THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION: A
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FEDERAL CONSTITUTION**

THE
N. H. FEDERAL CONVENTION.
1788.



THE OLD NORTH MEETING-HOUSE.

© Sixty of the Federal Constitution.

A HISTORY
OF THE
New Hampshire Convention

FOR THE INVESTIGATION, DISCUSSION, AND DECISION

OF THE

FEDERAL CONSTITUTION:

AND OF THE

OLD NORTH MEETING-HOUSE

OF CONCORD,

IN WHICH IT WAS RATIFIED BY THE NINTH STATE, AND THUS
RENDERED OPERATIVE, AT ONE O'CLOCK P. M., ON
SATURDAY, THE 21ST DAY OF JUNE,

1788,

Barber

BY JOSEPH B. WALKER.

And sovereign law, that state's collected will,
O'er thrones and globes elate,
Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.

—*Sir William Jones.*

BOSTON:

Supples & Surd, Publishers.

1888.

TO THE
HONORABLE GEORGE W. NESMITH, LL. D.,
FOR SIXTY-THREE YEARS A MEMBER OF
THE NEW HAMPSHIRE BAR,
AND A LIFE-LONG FRIEND OF THE
GREAT EXPOUNDER
OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES,
THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE
N. H. FEDERAL CONVENTION
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY HIS SINCERE FRIEND,
JOSEPH B. WALKER.

Concord, N. H., Nov. 1, 1888.



PREFACE.

An interest awakened by the centennial anniversary of the ratification by New Hampshire of the Constitution of the United States prompted the preparation of this account of our Federal Convention.¹

Two facts render its proceedings particularly memorable, viz.,—

1. *In our Convention ratification received its first check.* A thorough knowledge of the former policy of British rule under the Georges, and of the selfish administrations of their provincial governors, had rendered our forefathers cautious, when asked to surrender to a superior central power a portion of the rights which they had acquired by a profuse expenditure of blood and treasure. Moreover, the public sentiment of the state was averse to slavery,² gradually dying out within its own limits, and any national provision conservative of that institution did not command a wide approval. Then, too, the inhabitants of New Hampshire were, at

¹The New Hampshire Historical Society celebrated this anniversary at Concord, on the 21st day of June, 1888, by an address by Hon. James W. Patterson, at the Opera House, in the forenoon, which was followed in the afternoon by a dinner

and appropriate post-prandial speeches, many of which were made by distinguished guests of the society from other states.

²Slavery died a natural death in New Hampshire. It was never formally abolished by statute.

this time, almost wholly an agricultural people. Its short coast line afforded but one harbor, and its important water-powers were still unimproved. Its virgin soil yielded to its hardy occupants a satisfactory support, and these felt but little the need of a stronger general government.

2. *But for this check New Hampshire would have been the seventh state to ratify the Federal Constitution, and the honor of being the ninth and thereby completing the number required to render operative its provisions would have attached to another.* Discouraging as this check at first proved to the Federalists throughout the country, it afterwards secured to New Hampshire a distinction which but one only of the thirteen states could possibly enjoy—a distinction which the citizens of New Hampshire ought always to appreciate and never undervalue.

Of the fact that the history of our Federal Convention is worthy of a more exhaustive examination than any which it has yet received, no one is more fully aware than the author of this volume. If its publication shall contribute in any degree to the attainment of this end, the most important object of its issue will have been accomplished.

