

- ***May 17, 1792 - The beginnings of the New York Stock Exchange is established with the signing of the Buttonwood agreement.*
- ***August 17, 1793 - Dr. Benjamin Rush confers with two Philadelphia doctors about an epidemic of disease along the docks of Philadelphia over the preceding two weeks. By November, over 10% of the population of the city had succumbed, nearly 5,000 people. The disease had been brought to the city by refugees from Haiti, then coupled with a wet spring and swamps that became an incubator for mosquitos.*
- ***March 14, 1794 - Eli Whitney patents the cotton gin, which could do the work of fifty men when cleaning cotton by hand.*
- ***September 28, 1820 - To prove that a tomato is not poisonous, Colonel Robert Gibbon Johnson eats one in public in Salem, New Jersey.*
- ****December 2, 1824 - When the Electoral College vote yielded no majority, John Quincy Adams would be elected president by the House of Representatives on February 9, 1825, outpolling fellow Democrat Republicans, now a loose coalition of competing factions, including Andrew Jackson, who had actually received a higher number of Electoral College votes, 99, than Adams, 84. It was not a majority due to votes for Henry Clay, 37, and William Crawford, 41. In the first election with popular vote totals, Adams garnered less votes there as well, with 105,321 to 155,872 to Jackson.*
- ***October 26, 1825 - Use of the Erie Canal began in Buffalo, New York with the first boat departing for New York City. This opened up the Great Lakes region by cutting the travel time between the two cities one third and shipping costs nine tenths. Cost of the canal was \$7 million. On November 4, 1825, the first boat navigating the Erie Canal arrived in New York City. The opening of the Erie Canal contributed to making the city of New York a chief Atlantic port.*

James Madison, Note on Suffrage

1829 Letters 4:28--30

The right of suffrage (*voting*) being of vital importance, and approving an extension of it to housekeepers and heads of families, I will suggest a few considerations which govern my judgment on the subject.

(During this period, the Constitution was now in effect for 40 years. The discussions during the Convention of '87 were highly charged in respect to who should have a right to vote as well as a clear insight that the nation would expand in population, commerce, manufactures and property acquisition.)

Were the Constitution on hand to be adapted to the present circumstances of our country, without taking into view the changes which time is rapidly producing, an unlimited extension of the right would probably vary little the character of our public councils or measures. But as we are to prepare a system of government for a period which it is hoped will be a long one, we must look to the prospective changes in the condition and composition of the society on which it is to act.

It is a law of nature, now well understood, that the earth under a civilized cultivation is capable of yielding subsistence for a large surplus of consumers beyond those having an immediate interest in the soil; a surplus which must increase with the increasing improvements in agriculture, and the labour-saving arts applied to it. And it is a lot of humanity, that of this surplus a large proportion is necessarily reduced by a competition for employment to wages which afford them the bare necessities of life. The proportion being without property, or the hope of acquiring it, cannot be expected to sympathize sufficiently with its rights to be safe depositories of power over them.

(As he wrote about in his 1821 paper included here, there is a significant consideration in the arguments of the Convention of 87 with the concerns for those who are not property owners and that at some point they would be the greater number of voters that impute laws and taxation on those that pay the property tax - Freeholders = permanent and absolute tenure of land or property with freedom to dispose of it at will..)

What is to be done with this unfavoured class of the community? If it be, on one hand, unsafe to admit them to a full share of political power, it must be recollected, on the other, that it cannot be expedient to rest a republican government on a portion of the society having a numerical and physical force excluded from, and liable to be turned against it, and which would lead to a standing military force, dangerous to all parties and to liberty itself. This view of the subject makes it proper to embrace in the partnership of power every description of citizens having a sufficient stake in the public order and the stable administration of the laws, and particularly the housekeepers and heads of families, most of whom, "having given hostages to fortune," will have given them to their country also.

(The

*****This portion of the community, added to those who, although not possessed of a share of the soil, are deeply interested in other species of property, and both of them added to the territorial proprietors, who in a certain sense may be regarded as the owners of the country itself, form the safest

basis of free government. To the security for such a government, afforded by these combined members, may be farther added the political and moral influence emanating from the actual possession of authority, and a just and beneficial exercise of it.

It would be happy if a state of society could be found or framed in which an equal voice in making the laws might be allowed to every individual bound to obey them. But this is a theory which, like most theories, confessedly requires limitations and modifications. And the only question to be decided in this, as in other cases, turns on the particular degree of departure in practice required by the essence and object of the theory itself.

(The theory of democracy is not practicable.)

It must not be supposed that a crowded state of population, of which we have no example here, and which we know only by the image reflected from examples elsewhere, is too remote to claim attention.

***** August 7, 1820 - Population in America continues to rise. The census of 1820 now includes 9,638,453 people living in the United States, 33% more than in 1810. The most populated state is New York, with 1,372,812 residents. The center of U.S. population now reaches 16 miles east of Moorefield, West Virginia.**

The ratio of increase in the United States [makes it probable] that the present

12 millions will in	25 years be	24 millions
24 "	50 "	48 "
48 "	75 "	96 "
96 "	100 "	192 "

(A very interesting correlation of population growth to that of agriculture growth)

There may be a gradual decrease of the ratio of increase, but it will be small as long as the agriculture shall yield its abundance. Great Britain has doubled her population in the last fifty years, notwithstanding its amount in proportion to its territory at the commencement of that period; and Ireland is a much stronger proof of the effect of an increasing product of food in multiplying the consumers.

***** Madison on economic theory that is still relevant today)**

How far this view of the subject will be affected by the republican laws of descent and distribution, in equalizing the property of the citizens and in reducing to the minimum mutual surpluses for mutual supplies, cannot be inferred from any direct and adequate experiment. One result would seem to be a deficiency of the capital for the expensive establishments which facilitate labour and cheapen its products on one hand; and on the other, of the capacity to purchase the costly and ornamental articles consumed by the wealthy alone, who must cease to be idlers and become labourers. Another, the increased mass of labourers added to the production of necessaries by the withdrawal for this object, of a part of those now employed in producing luxuries, and the addition to the labourers from the class of present consumers of luxuries. **To the effect of these changes, intellectual, moral, and**

social, the institutions and laws of the country must be adapted; and it will require for the task all the wisdom of the wisest patriots.

Supposing the estimate of the growing population of the United States to be nearly correct, and the extent of their territory to be eight or nine hundred millions of acres, and one-fourth of it to consist of arable surface, there will, in a century or a little more, be nearly as crowded a population in the United States as in Great Britain or France; and if the present Constitution, (of Virginia,) with all its flaws, has lasted more than half a century, **it is not an unreasonable hope that an amended one will last more than a century.**

If these observations be just, every mind will be able to develop and apply them.

James Madison, Note to His Speech on the Right of Suffrage

1821 Documentary History 5:440--49

These observations (in the Speech of J. M. **See debates in the Convention of 1787.** on the [7th] day of [August]) do not convey the speaker's more full & matured view of the subject, which is subjoined. He felt too much at the time the example of Virginia

The right of suffrage (*voting*) is a fundamental Article in Republican Constitutions. The regulation of it is, at the same time, a task of peculiar delicacy. Allow the right exclusively to property, and the rights of persons may be oppressed. The feudal polity (*a form or process of civil government or constitution.*) alone sufficiently proves it. Extend it equally to all, and the rights of property or the claims of justice **may be overruled by a majority without property**, or interested in measures of injustice. Of this abundant proof is afforded by other popular Govts. and is not without examples in our own, particularly in the laws impairing the obligation of contracts.

^ In civilized communities, property as well as personal rights is an essential object of the laws, which encourage industry by securing the enjoyment of its fruits: that industry from which property results, & that enjoyment which consists not merely in its immediate use, but in its posthumous destination to objects of choice and of kindred affection.

In a just & a free, Government, therefore, the rights both of property & of persons ought to be effectually guarded. Will the former be so in case of a universal & equal suffrage? Will the latter be so in case of a suffrage confined to the holders of property?

As the holders of property have at stake all the other rights common to those without property, they

may be the more restrained from infringing, as well as the less tempted to infringe the rights of the latter. It is nevertheless certain, that there are various ways in which the rich may oppress the poor; in which property may oppress liberty; and that the world is filled with examples. It is necessary that the poor should have a defence against the danger.

On the other hand, the danger to the holders of property can not be disguised, if they be undefended against a majority without property. Bodies of men are not less swayed by interest than individuals, and are less controlled by the dread of reproach and the other motives felt by individuals. Hence the liability of the rights of property, and of the impartiality of laws affecting it, to be violated by Legislative majorities having an interest real or supposed in the injustice: Hence agrarian laws, and other leveling schemes: Hence the cancelling or evading of debts, and other violations of contracts. We must not shut our eyes to the nature of man, nor to the light of experience. Who would rely on a fair decision from three individuals if two had an interest in the case opposed to the rights of the third? Make the number as great as you please, the impartiality will not be increased, nor any further security against injustice be obtained, than what may result from the greater difficulty of uniting the wills of a greater number.

In all Govts. there is a power which is capable of oppressive exercise. In Monarchies and Aristocracies oppression proceeds from a want of sympathy & responsibility in the Govt. towards the people. In popular Governments the danger lies in an undue sympathy among individuals composing a majority, and a want of responsibility in the majority to the minority. The characteristic excellence of the political System of the U. S. arises from a distribution and organization of its powers, which at the same time that they secure the dependence of the Govt. on the will of the nation, provides better guards than are found in any other popular Govt. against interested combinations of a Majority against the rights of a Minority.

The U. States have a precious advantage also in the actual distribution of property particularly the landed property; and in the universal hope of acquiring property. This latter peculiarity is among the happiest contrasts in their situation to that of the old world, where no anticipated change in this respect, can generally inspire a like sympathy with the rights of property. There may be at present, a Majority of the Nation, who are even freeholders, or the heirs, or aspirants to Freeholds. And the day may not be very near when such will cease to make up a Majority of the community. But they cannot always so continue. With every admissible subdivision of the Arable lands, a populousness not greater than that of England or France, will reduce the holders to a Minority. And whenever the Majority shall be without landed or other equivalent property and without the means or hope of acquiring it, what is to secure the rights of property agst. the danger from an equality & universality of suffrage, vesting compleat power over property in hands without a share in it: not to speak of a danger in the mean time from a dependence of an increasing number on the wealth of a few? In other Countries this dependence results in some from the relations between Landlords & Tenants in other both from that source, & from the relations between wealthy capitalists & indigent labourers. In the U. S. the occurrence must happen from the last source; from the connection between the great Capitalists in Manufactures & Commerce and the members employed by them. Nor will accumulations of Capital for a certain time be precluded by our laws of descent & of distribution; such being the

enterprise inspired by free Institutions, that great wealth in the hands of individuals and associations, may not be unfrequent. But it may be observed, that the opportunities, may be diminished, and the permanency defeated by the equalizing tendency of the laws.

No free Country has ever been without parties, which are a natural offspring of Freedom. An obvious and permanent division of every people is into the owners of the Soil, and the other inhabitants. In a certain sense the Country may be said to belong to the former. If each landholder has an exclusive property in his share, the Body of Landholders have an exclusive property in the whole. As the Soil becomes subdivided, and actually cultivated by the owners, this view of the subject derives force from the principle of natural law, which vests in individuals an exclusive right to the portions of ground with which he has incorporated his labour & improvements. Whatever may be the rights of others derived from their birth in the Country, from their interest in the high ways & other parcels left open for common use as well, as in the national Edifices and monuments; from their share in the public defence, and from their concurrent support of the Govt., it would seem unreasonable to extend the right so far as to give them when become the majority, a power of Legislation over the landed property without the consent of the proprietors. Some barrier agst the invasion of their rights would not be out of place in a just & provident System of Govt. The principle of such an arrangement has prevailed in all Govts. where peculiar privileges or interests held by a part were to be secured agst. violation, and in the various associations where pecuniary or other property forms the stake. In the former case a defensive right has been allowed; and if the arrangement be wrong, it is not in the defense, but in the kind of privilege to be defended. In the latter case, the shares of suffrage allotted to individuals, have been with acknowledged justice apportioned more or less to their respective interests in the Common Stock.

These reflections suggest the expediency of such a modification of Govt. as would give security to the part of the Society having most at stake and being most exposed to danger. Three modifications present themselves.

1. Confining the right of suffrage to freeholders, & to such as hold an equivalent property, convertible of course into freeholds. The objection to this regulation is obvious. It violates the vital principle of free Govt. that those who are to be bound by laws, ought to have a voice in making them. And the violation wd. be more strikingly unjust as the lawmakers become the minority: The regulation would be as unpropitious also as it would be unjust. It would engage the numerical & physical force in a constant struggle agst. the public authority; unless kept down by a standing army fatal to all parties.

2. Confining the right of suffrage for one Branch to the holders of property, and for the other Branch to those without property. This arrangement which wd. give a mutual defence, where there might be mutual danger of encroachment, has an aspect of equality & fairness. But it wd. not be in fact either equal or fair, because the rights to be defended would be unequal, being on one side those of property as well as of persons, and on the other those of persons only. The temptation also to encroach tho' in a certain degree mutual, wd. be felt more strongly on one side than on the other; It wd. be more likely to beget an abuse of the Legislative Negative in extorting concessions at the expence of property, than

the reverse. The division of the State into the two Classes, with distinct & independt. Organs of power, and without any intermingled Agency whatever, might lead to contests & antipathies not dissimilar to those between the Patricians & Plebeians at Rome.

3. Confining the right of electing one Branch of the Legislature to freeholders, and admitting all others to a common right with holders of property, in electing the other Branch. This wd. give a defensive power to holders of property, and to the class also without property when becoming a majority of electors, without depriving them in the mean time of a participation in the public Councils. If the holders of property would thus have a twofold share of representation, they wd. have at the same time a twofold stake in it, the rights of property as well as of persons the twofold object of political Institutions. And if no exact & safe equilibrium can be introduced, it is more reasonable that a preponderating weight shd. be allowed to the greater interest than to the lesser. Experience alone can decide how far the practice in this case would correspond with the Theory. Such a distribution of the right of suffrage was tried in N. York and has been abandoned whether from experienced evils, or party calculations, may possibly be a question. It is still on trial in N. Carolina, with what practical indications is not known. It is certain that the trial, to be satisfactory ought to be continued for no inconsiderable period; untill in fact the non freeholders should be the majority.

4. Should Experience or public opinion require an equal & universal suffrage for each branch of the Govt., such as prevails generally in the U. S., a resource favorable to the rights of landed & other property, when its possessors become the Minority, may be found in an enlargement of the Election Districts for one branch of the Legislature, and an extension of its period of service. Large districts are manifestly favorable to the election of persons of general respectability, and of probable attachment to the rights of property, over competitors depending on the personal solicitations practicable on a contracted theatre. And altho' an ambitious candidate, of personal distinction, might occasionally recommend himself to popular choice by espousing a popular though unjust object, it might rarely happen to many districts at the same time. The tendency of a longer period of service would be, to render the Body more stable in its policy, and more capable of stemming popular currents taking a wrong direction, till reason & justice could regain their ascendancy.

5. Should even such a modification as the last be deemed inadmissible, and universal suffrage and very short periods of elections within contracted spheres be required for each branch of the Govt., the security for the holders of property when the minority, can only be derived from the ordinary influence possessed by property, & the superior information incident to its holders; from the popular sense of justice enlightened & enlarged by a diffusive education; and from the difficulty of combining & effectuating unjust purposes throughout an extensive country; a difficulty essentially distinguishing the U. S. and even most of the individual States, from the small communities where a mistaken interest or contagious passion, could readily unite a majority of the whole under a factious leader, in trampling on the rights of the Minor party.

Under every view of the subject, it seems indispensable that the Mass of Citizens should not be without a voice, in making the laws which they are to obey, & in chusing the Magistrates, who are to

administer them, and if the only alternative be between an equal & universal right of suffrage for each branch of the Govt. and a confinement of the entire right to a part of the Citizens, it is better that those having the greater interest at stake namely that of property & persons both, should be deprived of half their share in the Govt.; than, that those having the lesser interest, that of personal rights only, should be deprived of the whole.

Constitution Convention Debate August 7 regarding Suffrage (Voting)

Article 4, Sect. 1, was taken up.

Mr. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS moved to strike out the last member of the section, beginning with the words, "qualifications of Electors," in order that some other provision might be substituted which would restrain the right of suffrage to freeholders.

Mr. FITZSIMONS seconded the motion.

Mr. WILLIAMSON was opposed to it.

Mr. WILSON. This part of the Report was well considered by the Committee, and he did not think it could be changed for the better. It was difficult to form any uniform rule of qualifications for all the States. Unnecessary innovations, he thought, too, should be avoided. It would be very hard and disagreeable for the same persons, at the same time, to vote for representatives in the State Legislature, and to be excluded from a vote for those in the National Legislature.

Mr. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS. Such a hardship would be neither great nor novel. The people are accustomed to it, and not dissatisfied with it, in several of the States. In some, the qualifications are different for the choice of the Governor and of the Representatives; in others, for different houses of the Legislature. Another objection against the clause, as it stands, is, that it makes the qualifications of the National Legislature depend on the will of the States, which he thought not proper.

Mr. ELLSWORTH thought the qualifications of the electors stood on the most proper footing. The right of suffrage was a tender point, and strongly guarded by most of the State Constitutions. The people will not readily subscribe to the National Constitution if it should subject them to be disfranchised. The States are the best judges of the circumstances and temper of their own people.

Colonel MASON. The force of habit is certainly not attended to by those gentlemen who wish for innovations on this point. Eight or nine States have extended the right of suffrage beyond the freeholders. What will the people there say, if they should be disfranchised? A power to alter the qualifications would be a dangerous power in the hands of the Legislature.

Mr. BUTLER. There is no right of which the people are more jealous than that of suffrage. Abridgments of it tend to the same revolution as in Holland, where they have at length thrown all power into the hands of the Senates, who fill up vacancies themselves, and form a rank aristocracy.

Mr. DICKINSON had a very different idea of the tendency of vesting the right of suffrage in the freeholders of the country. He considered them as the best guardians of liberty; and the restriction of the right to them as a necessary defence against the dangerous influence of those multitudes without property and without principle, with which our country, like all others, will in time abound. As to the unpopularity of the innovation, it was, in his opinion, chimerical. The great mass of our citizens is composed at this time of freeholders, and will be pleased with it.

Mr. ELLSWORTH. How shall the freehold be defined? Ought not every man who pays a tax, to vote for the representative who is to levy and dispose of his money? Shall the wealthy merchants and manufacturers, who will bear a full share of the public burdens, be not allowed a voice in the

imposition of them? Taxation and representation ought to go together.

Mr. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS. He had long learned not to be the dupe of words. The sound of aristocracy, therefore, had no effect upon him. It was the thing, not the name, to which he was opposed; and one of his principal objections to the Constitution, as it is now before us, is, that it threatens the country with an aristocracy. The aristocracy will grow out of the House of Representatives. Give the votes to people who have no property, and they will sell them to the rich, who will be able to buy them. We should not confine our attention to the present moment. The time is not distant when this country will abound with mechanics and manufacturers, who will receive their bread from their employers. Will such men be the secure and faithful guardians of liberty? Will they be the impregnable barrier against aristocracy? He was as little duped by the association of the words, "taxation and representation." The man who does not give his vote freely, is not represented. It is the man who dictates the vote. Children do not vote. Why? Because they want prudence; because they have no will of their own. The ignorant and the dependent can be as little trusted with the public interest. He did not conceive the difficulty of defining "freeholders" to be insuperable. Still less that the restriction could be unpopular. Nine tenths of the people are at present freeholders, and these will certainly be pleased with it. As to merchants, &c., if they have wealth, and value the right, they can acquire it. If not, they don't deserve it.

Colonel MASON. We all feel too strongly the remains of ancient prejudices, and view things too much through a British medium. A freehold is the qualification in England, and hence it is imagined to be the only proper one. The true idea, in his opinion, was, that every man having evidence of attachment to, and permanent common interest with, the society, ought to share in all its rights and privileges. Was this qualification restrained to freeholders? Does no other kind of property but land evidence a common interest in the proprietor? Does nothing besides property mark a permanent attachment? Ought the merchant, the moneyed man, the parent of a number of children whose fortunes are to be pursued in his own country, to be viewed as suspicious characters, and unworthy to be trusted with the common rights of their fellow citizens?

Mr. MADISON. The right of suffrage is certainly one of the fundamental articles of republican government, and ought not to be left to be regulated by the Legislature. A gradual abridgment of this right has been the mode in which aristocracies have been built on the ruins of popular forms. Whether the constitutional qualification ought to be a freehold, would with him depend much on the probable reception such a change would meet with in the States where the right was now exercised by every description of people. In several of the States a freehold was now the qualification. Viewing the subject in its merits alone, the freeholders of the country would be the safest depositories of republican liberty. In future times, a great majority of the people will not only be without landed, but any other sort of property. These will either combine, under the influence of their common situation, — in which case the rights of property and the public liberty will not be secure in their hands, — or, what is more probable, they will become the tools of opulence and ambition; in which case, there will be equal danger on another side. The example of England has been misconceived (by Colonel MASON.) A very small proportion of the Representatives are there chosen by freeholders. The greatest part are chosen by the cities and boroughs, in many of which the qualification of suffrage is as low as it is in any one of the United States; and it was in the boroughs and cities, rather than the counties, that bribery most prevailed and the influence of the Crown on elections was most dangerously exerted.

Doctor FRANKLIN. It is of great consequence that we should not depress the virtue and public spirit of our common people; of which they displayed a great deal during the war, and which contributed principally to the favorable issue of it. He related the honorable refusal of the American seamen, who were carried in great numbers into the British prisons during the war, to redeem themselves from misery or to seek their fortunes, by entering on board the ships of the enemies to their country; contrasting their patriotism with a contemporary instance, in which the British seamen made

prisoners by the Americans readily entered on the ships of the latter, on being promised a share of the prizes that might be made out of their own country. This proceeded, he said, from the different manner in which the common people were treated in America and Great Britain. He did not think that the elected had any right in any case, to narrow the privileges of the electors. He quoted, as arbitrary, the British statute setting forth the danger of tumultuous meetings, and, under that pretext, narrowing the right of suffrage to persons having freeholds of a certain value; observing that this statute was soon followed by another, under the succeeding parliament, subjecting the people who had no votes to peculiar labors and hardships. He was persuaded, also, that such a restriction as was proposed would give great uneasiness in the populous States. The sons of a substantial farmer, not being themselves freeholders, would not be pleased at being disfranchised, and there are a great many persons of that description.

Mr. MERCER. The Constitution is objectionable in many points, but in none more than the present. He objected to the footing on which the qualification was put, but particularly to the *mode of election* by the people. The people cannot know and judge of the characters of candidates. The worst possible choice will be made. He quoted the case of the Senate in Virginia, as an example in point. The people in towns can unite their votes in favor of one favorite; and by that means always prevail over the people of the country; who being dispersed, will scatter their votes among a variety of candidates.

Mr. RUTLEDGE thought the idea of restraining the right of suffrage to the freeholders a very unadvised one. It would create division among the people; and make enemies of all those who should be excluded.

On the question for striking out, as moved by Mr. GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, from the word "qualifications" to the end of the third article, — Delaware, aye, — 1; New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, no, — 7; Maryland, divided; Georgia, not present.
