



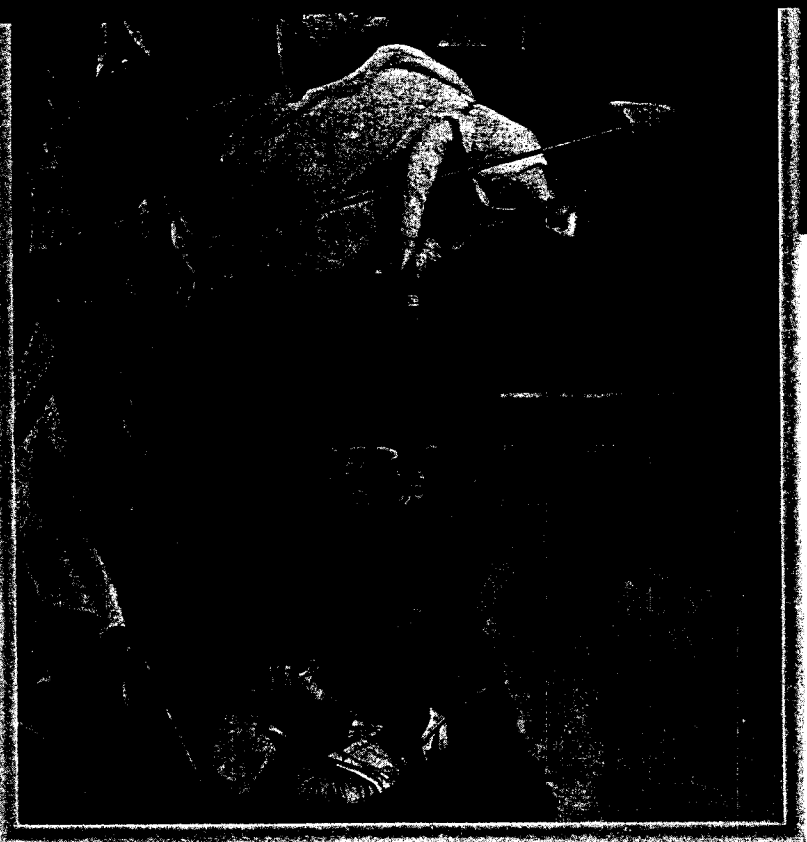


PART II ACTION-INTELLECTUALS

Scholarly Impact on the Nation's Past

by Theodore H. White

PENNSYLVANIA ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS



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From the moment they dropped anchor in the shelter of the bay, they knew it was to be different. There was the winter forest of New England in its darkness, hiding God-knew-what savages, beasts and dangers; and beyond, more wilderness ridged by mountains, folded with more wilderness running to unknown oceans; a geography written on by no one, a history unmade—an entire land to be filled with people in a pattern that ideas could shape. What ideas they did not yet know, except that those of the old country would not do. So in the captain's cabin of the *Mayflower* the Pilgrims signed their Compact: to let themselves be governed by whatever new ideas should seem wisest to them once ashore.

It was a century and a half before they had educated the men and fashioned the ideas which created the phenomenon of the United States. The skies were high, the king in London was far away, and the colonial thinkers had to work out for themselves the problems of man, government, frontier and environment by rubbing education against reality. In colonial Williamsburg, a young

One great philosophical
work from the Founding



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One great philosophical issue facing the Founding Fathers was slavery. The framers of the Constitution compromised, but the hope of many Americans was expressed in this 1792 painting by Samuel Jennings, Genius of America Encouraging the Emancipation of the Blacks.

George Washington

Washington sat for Charles Wilson Peale in 1787, when he was presiding over the assembly of scholars, lawyers and politicians met to frame the Constitution.

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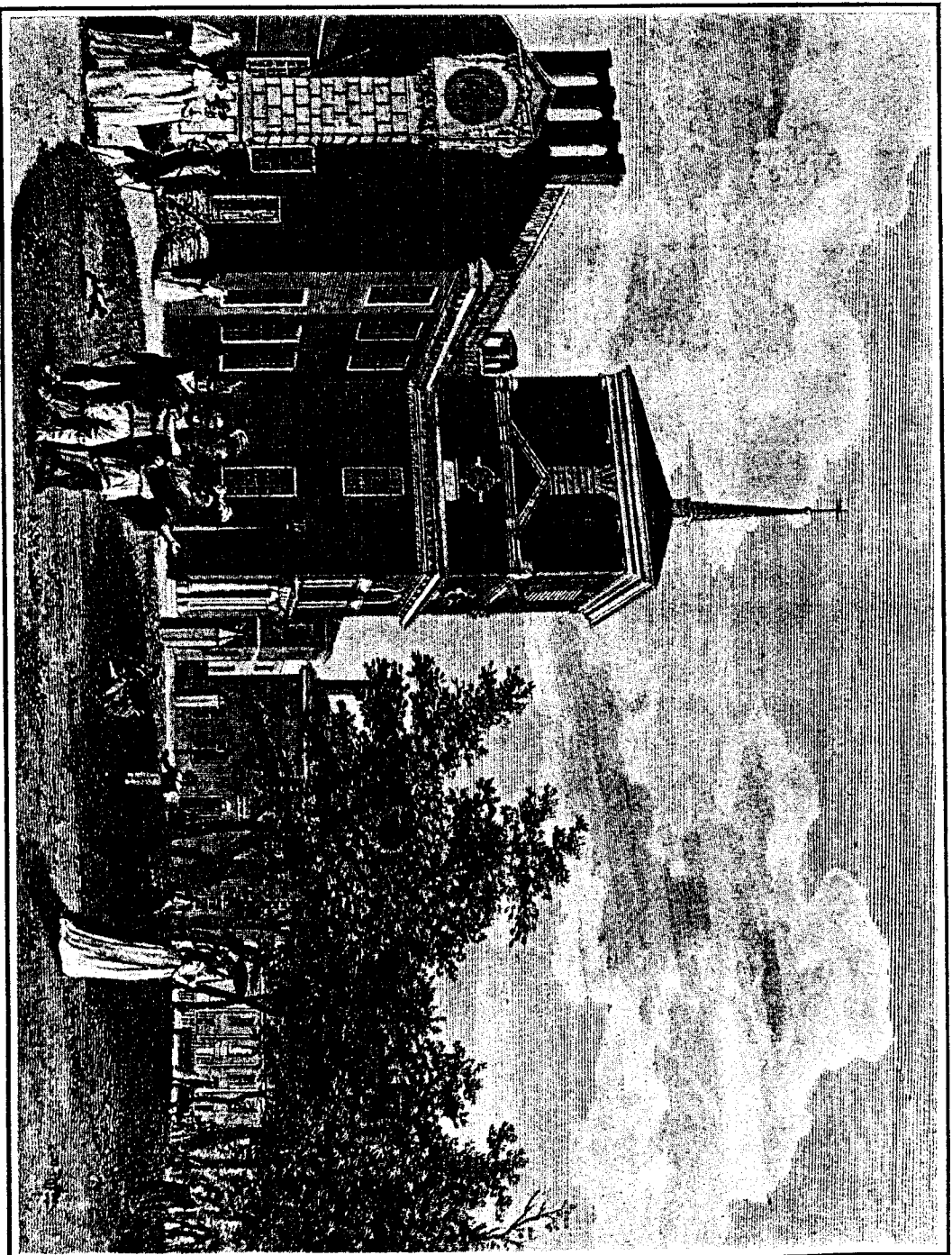
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Protest was in their blood; their grandfathers had left England after a century of war when the word "Protestant" meant exactly what it said. For them, ideas involved action. Yet ideas and learning had always to be tested against the experience of free men in a new land. Thus, in a collective burst of genius, their thinkers came to fashion a new invention: the Constitution of the United States.



TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

During the hot Philadelphia summer, the gardens behind Independence Hall—then called the State House—gave pleasant relief to the delegates who met through the morning and afternoon each day in the east wing behind the clock. William and Thomas Birch made this engraving in 1799.



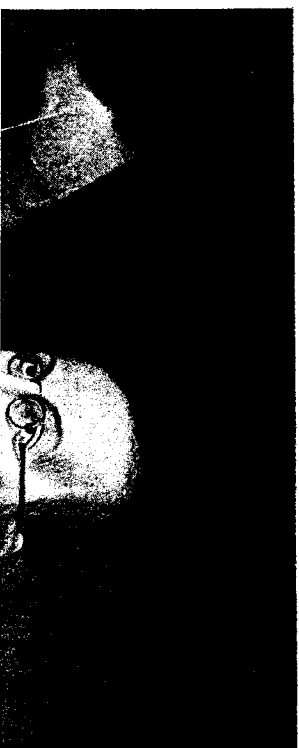
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We will never have seen, even in Europe," wrote a French diplomat in Philadelphia in the spring of 1787, "an assembly more respectable for the talents, knowledge, disinterestedness and patriotism of those who compose it." This assembly was the first crucial act of the United States after In-

dependence. "I have outshone him in intellect, without his presence there probably would have been no Constitution in 1787. Franklin, then 81, watched the proceedings with benevolence, usefully dispensing wisdom and dispelling tensions." The most dazzling intellect was a college dropout. Alexander Ham-

Benjamin Franklin

Peale did this 1789 portrait 10 months before Franklin died.



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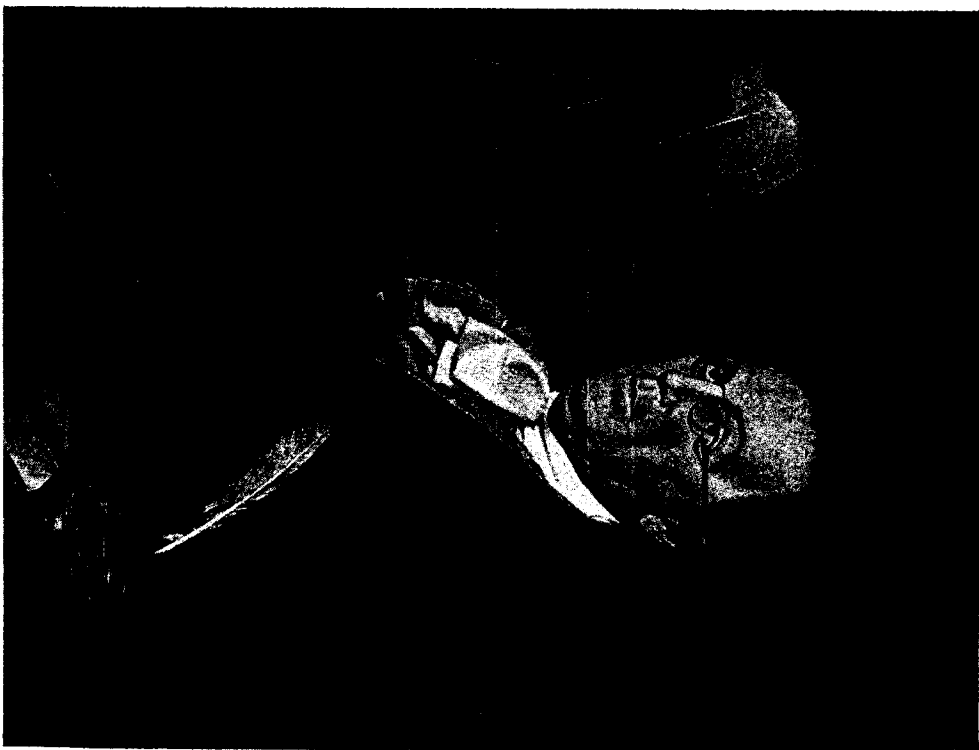
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This assembly was the first crucial act of the United States after Independence: the Federal Convention from which came one of the world's great political documents, the U.S. Constitution. To the task of framing it the delegates to the convention brought a wealth of intellect. Though few men of the time went to college, there were among the 55 delegates 31 college graduates (nine from Princeton), four earned graduate degrees and two honorary doctorates. Six of the delegates were or had been college professors or tutors, three dozen were lawyers, one was chief justice of his state's supreme court.

Foremost among the framers were George Washington (LL.D. Harvard, 1776), the most respected man in the country, and Benjamin Franklin (LL.D. Edinburgh, 1759), the most widely admired intellectual of his time both here and in Europe. Washington presided at the Convention, and although many men there might

have outshone him in intellect, without his presence there probably would have been no Constitution in 1787. Franklin, then 81, watched the proceedings with benevolence, usefully dispensing wisdom and dispelling tensions.

The most dazzling intellect was a college dropout. Alexander Hamilton had left King's College (later Columbia) to fight in the Revolution. He was now reckoned to be the most brilliant lawyer in America. Hamilton believed profoundly in the idea of centralized government. The *Federalist* papers, which he wrote with Madison and John Jay, still stand as a classic of political thought. The star of the Convention, however, was James Madison—"no bigger than half a piece of soap." He worked harder, as floor manager of the strong government group, than anyone else, and he came better prepared intellectually. He had studied ethics after graduating from Princeton and became a deep student of political theory. Madison had strong ideas about what kind of government the United States now needed.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA

Assembly of rare minds for

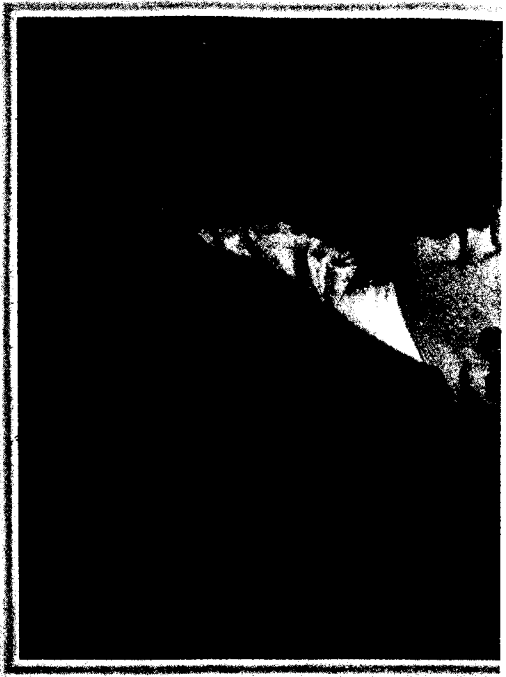
CITY ART GALLERY, BRISTOL, ENGLAND

Alexander Hamilton

*Hamilton was Secretary of
Treasury when James Sharples
did this pasted in 1795.*



GILCREASE MUSEUM, TULSA



James Madison

*Madison's enormous intensity
illuminates this portrait
painted by Peale in 1792.*



a Constitution

Two philosophies of man and government

Two towering figures and rivals from Revolutionary days were not at the Philadelphia Convention, though their differing ideas on government and its proper relationship to man were very much alive in the minds of the delegates. Both were abroad: John Adams was the U.S. minister in London; Thomas Jefferson was our envoy in Paris. Adams, Harvard-educated and with a speculative mind, had developed his ideas from the same basic sources on which all American political thinkers of the day drew. They were the English philosophers Locke, Hume, and Hobbes. Their system of ideas held that man had both natural rights and basic impulses and concluded that government should respect the rights while restraining the impulses. Accepting these ideas, Adams became an apostle of the idea that the powers of government should be divided among several branches which would act as checks and balances on one another. His most recent work, a comparative analysis of constitutions, had been published in London and was widely read

by the delegates at Philadelphia. Jefferson, on the other hand, was more optimistic about man's nature and was mostly concerned with protecting his rights. He had grown up in the Virginia plantation country, learning Greek and Latin and was graduated from William and Mary. He had arrived early at the idea that government is always at war with natural freedom, a notion that came from the 18th Century French philosophers Quesnay, Condorcet and Rousseau. His phrase in the Declaration of Independence—"life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"—was woven into the philosophy of the Convention delegates, and his concern about too much government influenced many of them.

The delegates came to Philadelphia because the Articles of Confederation were not working, and most of them were already persuaded that a stronger government was necessary. A few thought the Articles might still be patched up. Men like Madison, however, saw the Convention as an opportunity to build an entirely new structure.

BOSTON ATHENAEUM



John Adams

Painted in 1788 in London by Bostonian Mather Brown

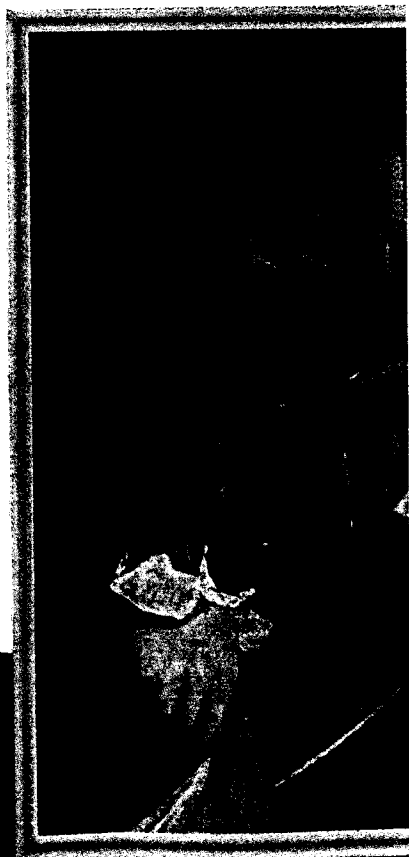
INDEPENDENCE HALL COLLECTION

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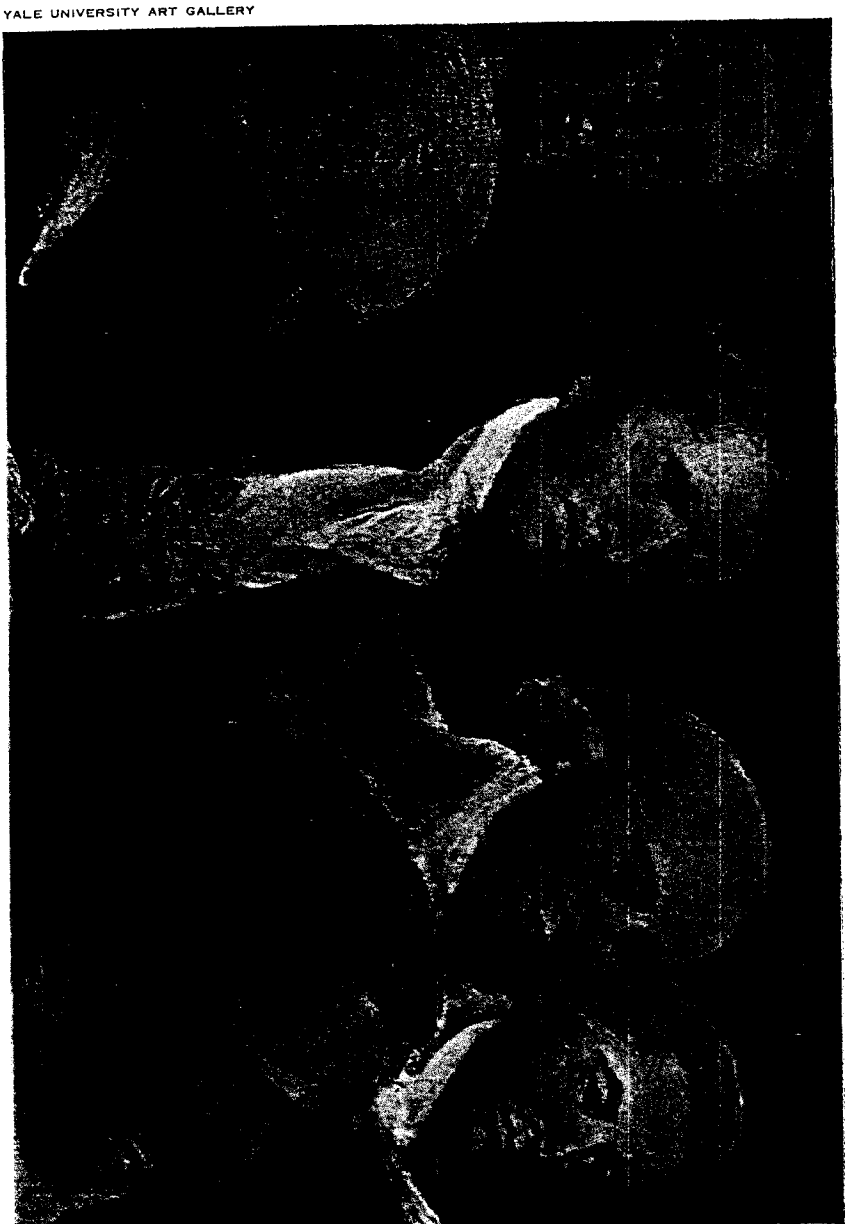
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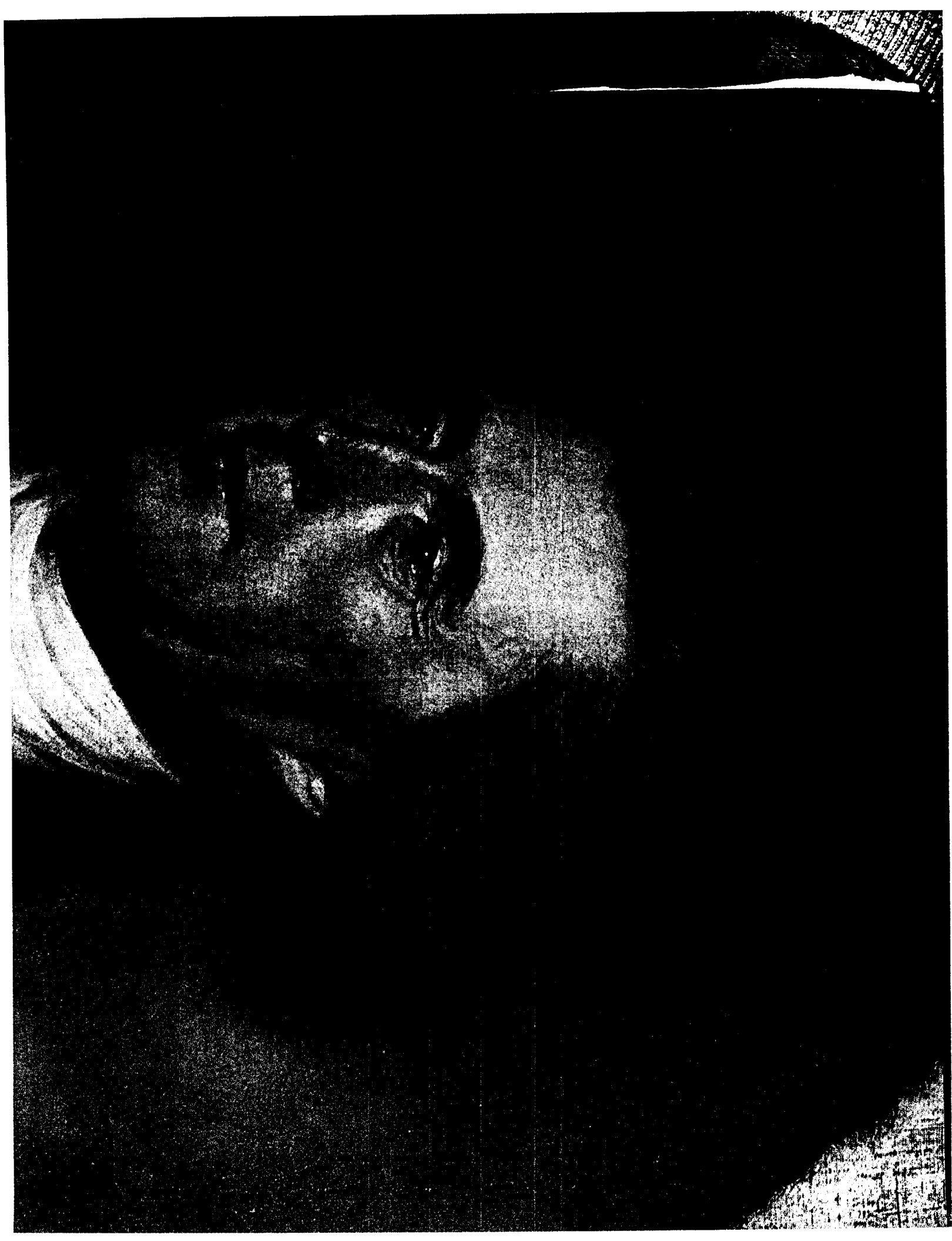
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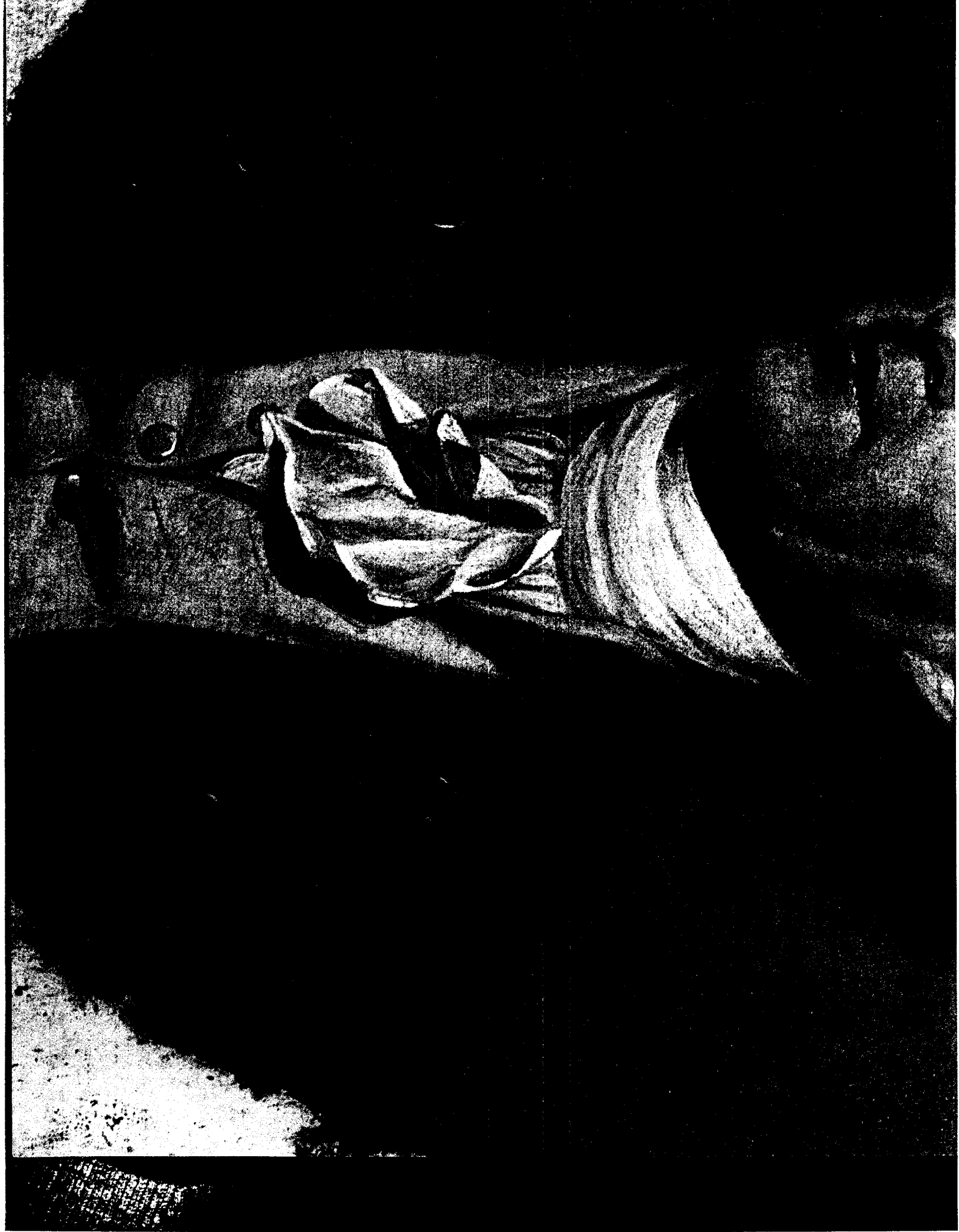


A detail from an oil sketch by John Trumbull shows Jefferson (second from left) with Arthur Lee (next right), also a Virginian but an opponent of the Constitution in the ratification fight.

Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson was Secretary of State when Peale painted this portrait in 1791.







Rufus King

Trumbull's miniature is from 1792, when King was a senator.



YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY—THIS PAGE



Rufus King

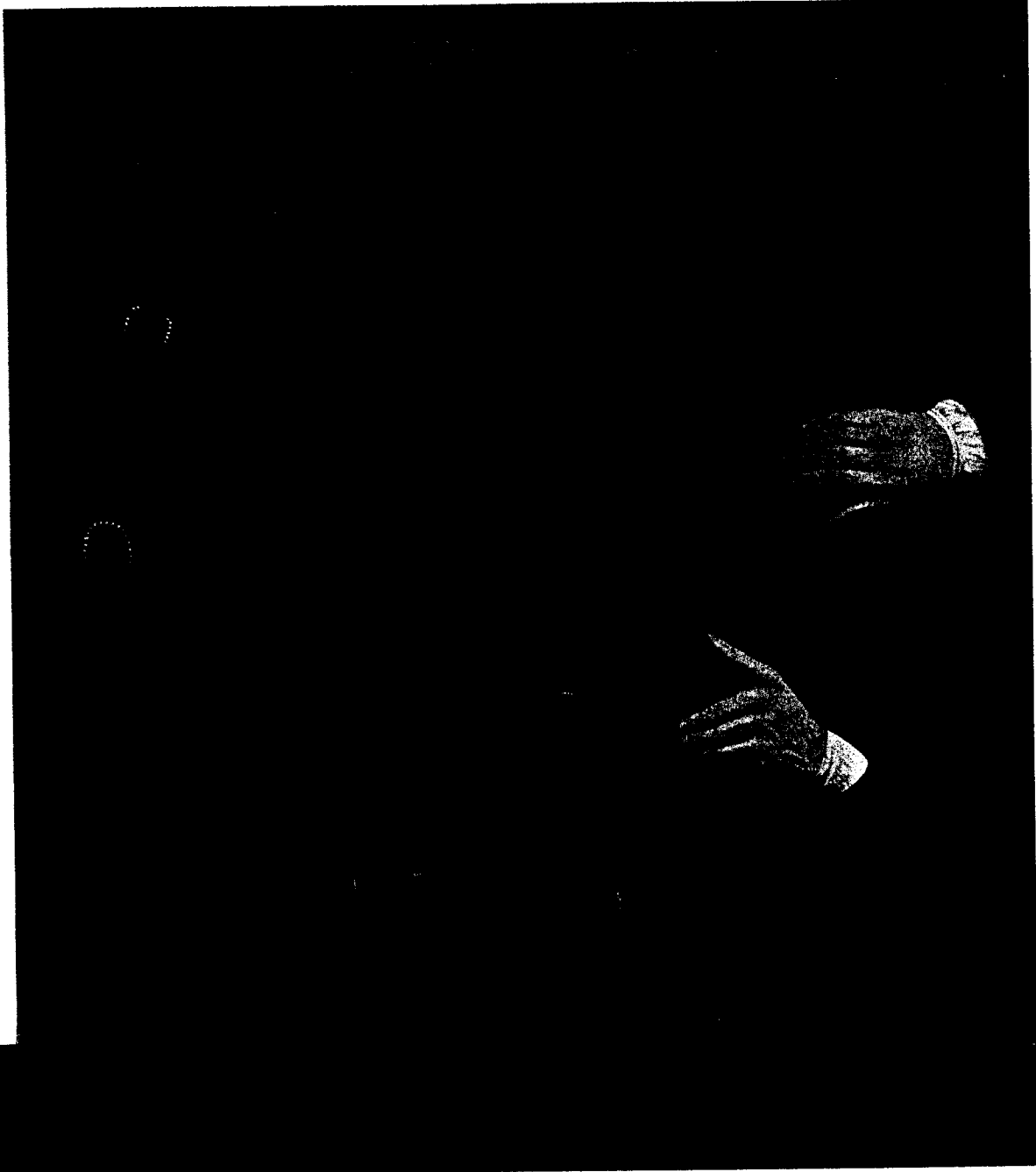
Trumbull's miniature is from 1792, when King was a senator.



Charles C. Pinckney

Trumbull painted the South Carolinian in 1791.

YALE UNIVERSITY ART GALLERY



A dispute on principle and a thoughtful compromise

The dimensions of Madison's idea were quickly made clear. The Virginia delegation put forward a series of 15 resolves outlining a national system of government, including two legislative houses and an executive and a judicial branch. Two rather startling ideas were enfolded in the plan. For one thing, it clearly envisaged scrapping the Articles. More important, it proposed that the national government operate on a wholly new basis—directly on the individual citizen rather than indirectly through the states, as was the case under the Confederation. The scheme for a national government led to the major impasse of the Convention and, ultimately, to a resolution which combined political horse trading and philosophical understanding.

Under Madison's plan, states would be represented in both houses of the national legislature according to population. New Jersey was a small state and its spokesman, William Paterson—a tiny man with an M.A. from Princeton and a taste for poetry and the classics—feared that this would strip small states of their influ-





UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT

William Paterson

Pastel was done about 1795 by James Sharples or wife Ellen.

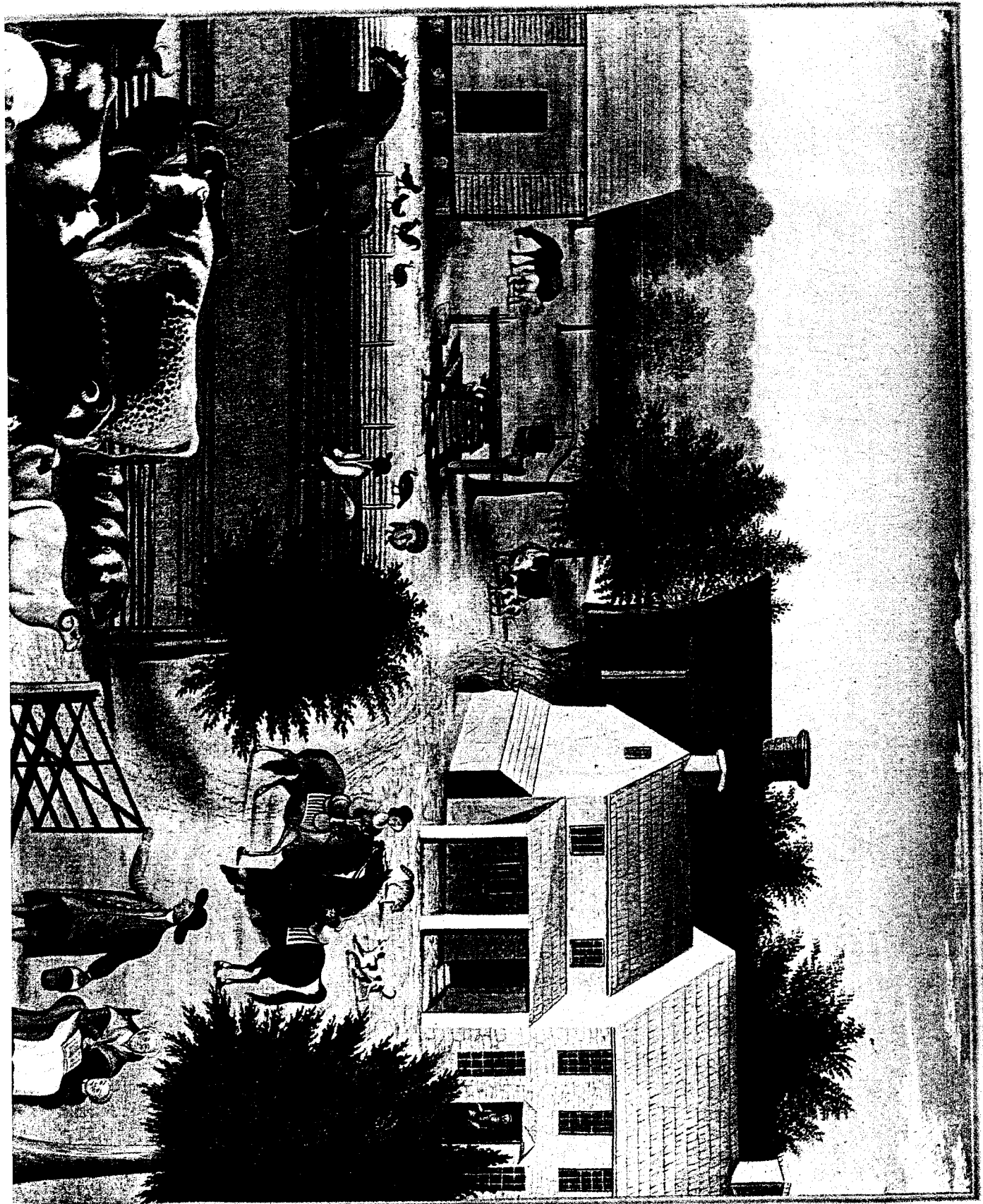
Roger Sherman

Ralph Earl painted Sherman in all his awkward honesty.

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Roger Sherman of Connecticut was self-educated but widely-read. He had been treasurer of Yale, published almanacs using his own astronomical calculations, and been a drafter and signer of both the Declaration and the Articles. The compromise he evolved is now familiar: representation to be by population in the lower house, by states in the upper. Later on, the same spirit of practical compromise settled a dispute on the slave trade, in which two of the most vocal antagonists were Rufus King, a Massachusetts-born Harvard graduate, and Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, an Oxford graduate from South Carolina.





The people of the U.S. for whom the farmers spoke lived in a rural America recalled by Edward Hicks in *The Residence of David Twining*, 1787.

James Wilson

This life portrait (right) was done by an unknown artist about the time of the Convention.



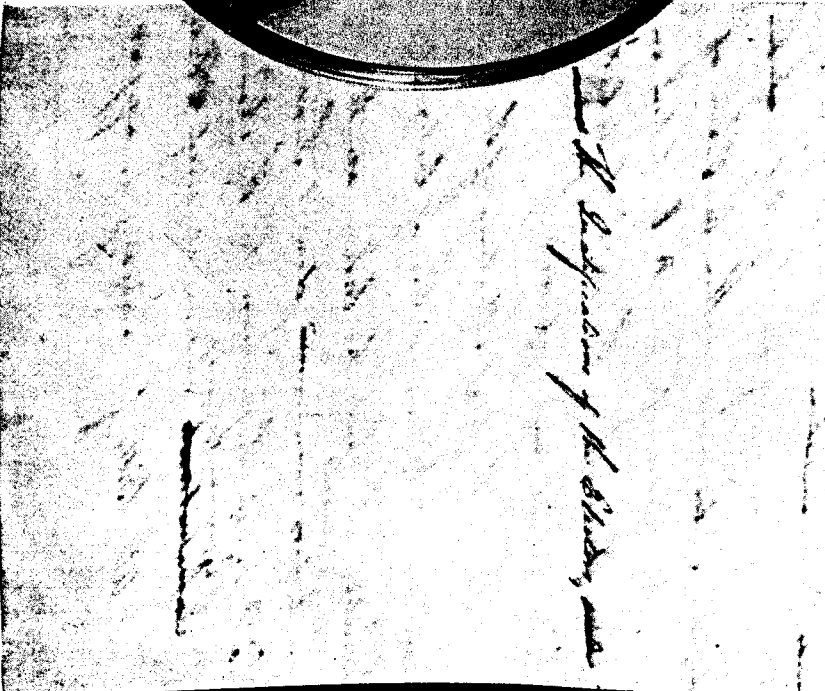
INDEPENDENCE HALL COLLECTION

Elbridge Gerry

This likeness was based on a drawing done in 1798 while Gerry was on mission in Paris.



NATIONAL COLLECTION OF FINE ARTS



Gouverneur Morris

Thomas Sully painted Morris in 1808, when he had all but retired from public life.



HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA—THIS PAGE

Working over the fateful words

After the Sherman compromise, the Convention was basically committed to the idea of a constitution

gates clause by clause. The job of editing and polishing was then handed to the "Committee of Style

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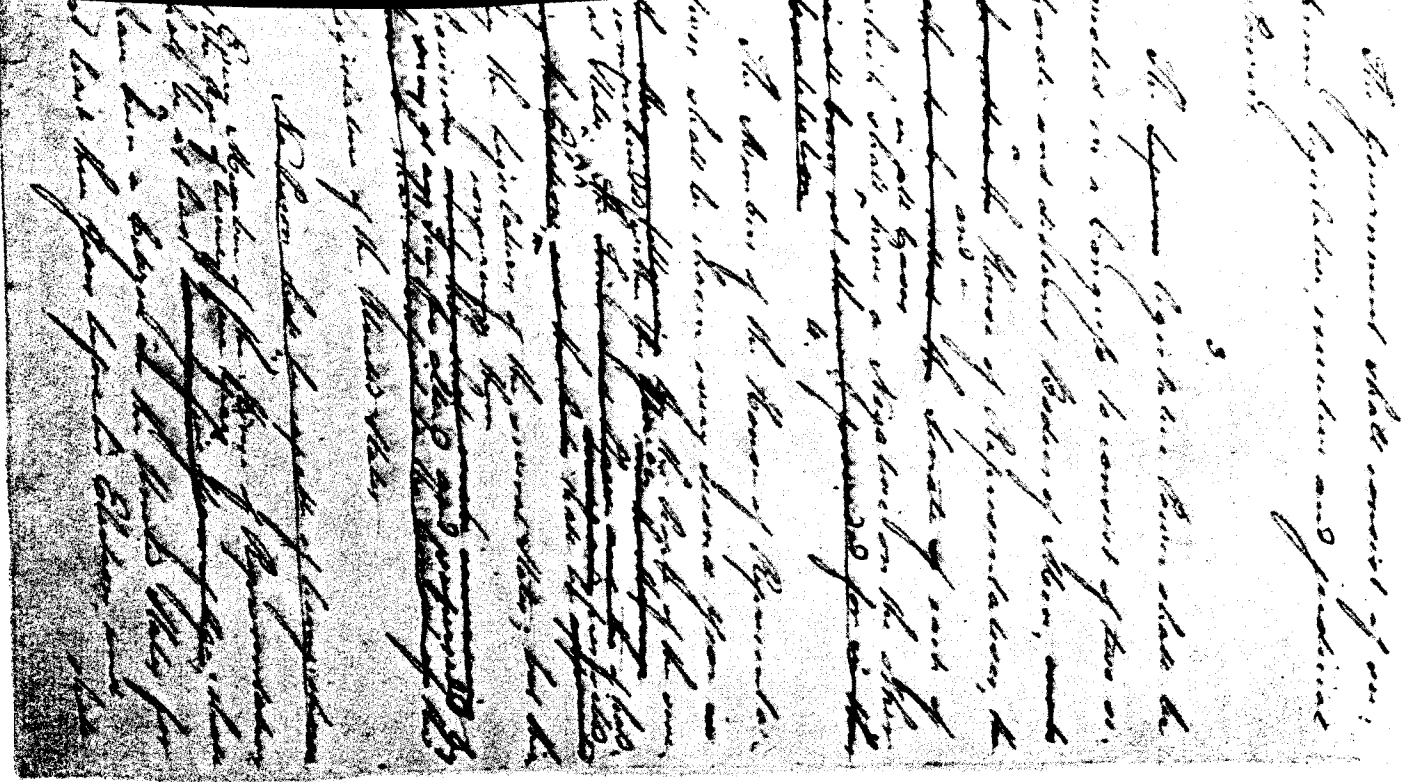
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Working over the fateful words

After the Sherman compromise, the Convention was basically committed to the idea of a constitution along the lines Madison had proposed. In the final two months, two delegates became increasingly important. One of them was James Wilson, a Scotsman who had attended the University of St. Andrews, had an honorary M.A. from the College of Philadelphia, had studied law, had signed the Declaration, was currently a member of the Continental Congress and still spoke with a burr. He was one of the leading students of jurisprudence in the country and in his political thinking was closely aligned with Madison. At the halfway point in the Convention, Wilson was a member of the Committee of Detail that organized and prepared a draft of the Constitution as the delegates had agreed on it to date, which appears in Wilson's hand at left. In the last weeks this was picked over by the dele-

gates clause by clause. The job of editing and polishing was then handed to the "Committee of Style and Arrangement," of which Gouverneur Morris, from Pennsylvania, was a principal member. Morris was a Columbia graduate and a lawyer who had a peg leg as the result of a riding accident. He had a graceful style and a fondness for strong national government. Both are evident in the familiar final version of the Preamble: "We the people of the states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island . . ." the draft of the Committee of Detail had read. "We the people of the United States . . ." is what Morris wrote. A little more tinkering and the delegates were done. Three delegates (one was Massachusetts' Elbridge Gerry, an unpredictable Harvard man who said the scheme was anti-republican) refused to sign. But the rest did, and the Constitution was sent on to the states for ratification.



Wilson's draft of the Constitution from the Committee of Detail.

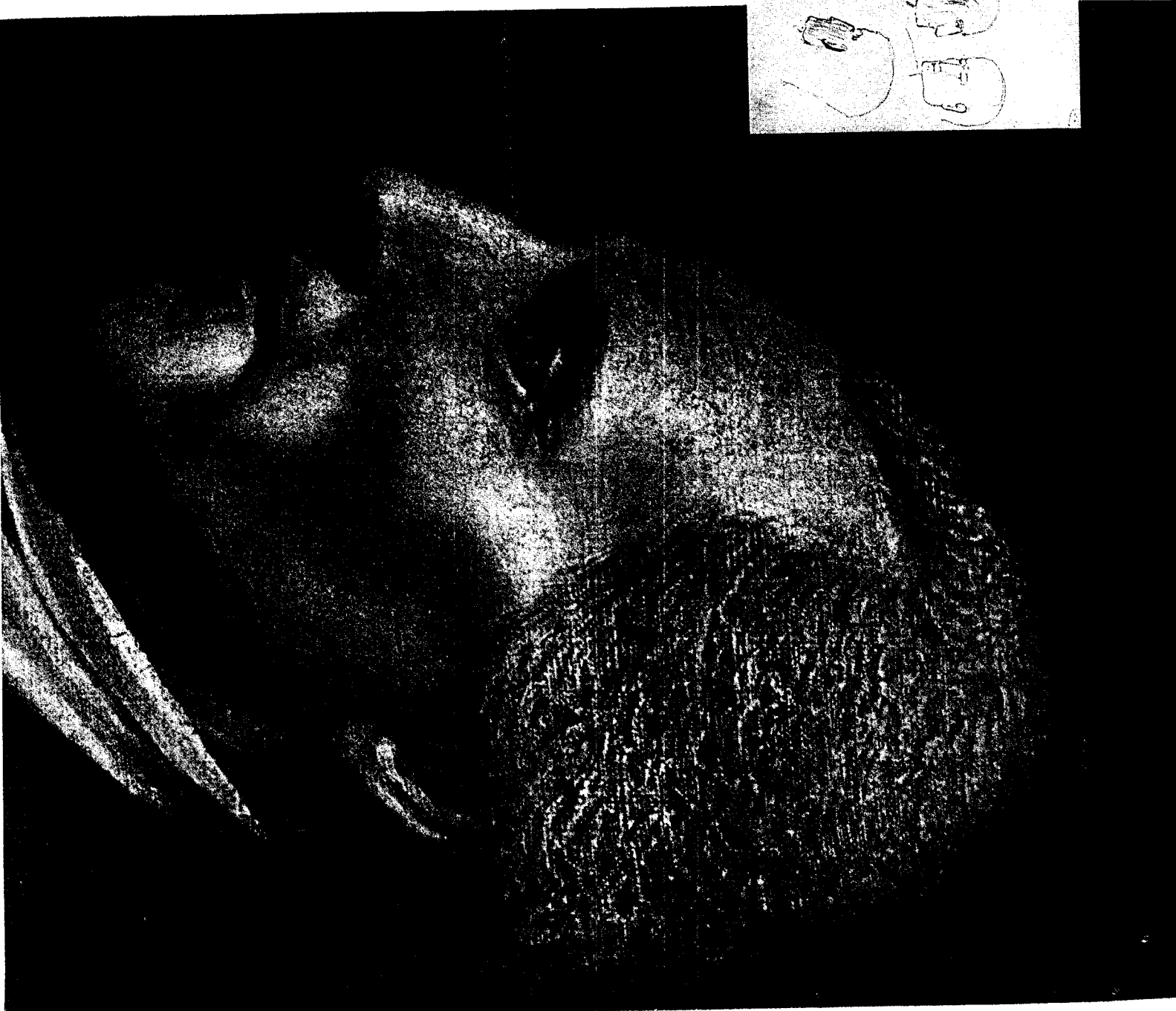


Patrick Henry

Sketches of Henry were done from life by Benjamin Latrobe in 1797, when the forehead of the Revolution was 61.

Fights over ratification developed in many states but the fiercest took place in Virginia. The attack there was led by Patrick Henry, who saw in the new Constitution republicanism betrayed. "An awful squinting . . . towards monarchy," he said of the proposed Presidency. Another who spoke firmly but more reasonably against ratification was Richard Henry Lee, who had produced an influential body of anti-Federalist writing called *Letters of a Federal Farmer*, in which he lamented the "transfer of power from the many to the few." But in the end, Virginia narrowly ratified.

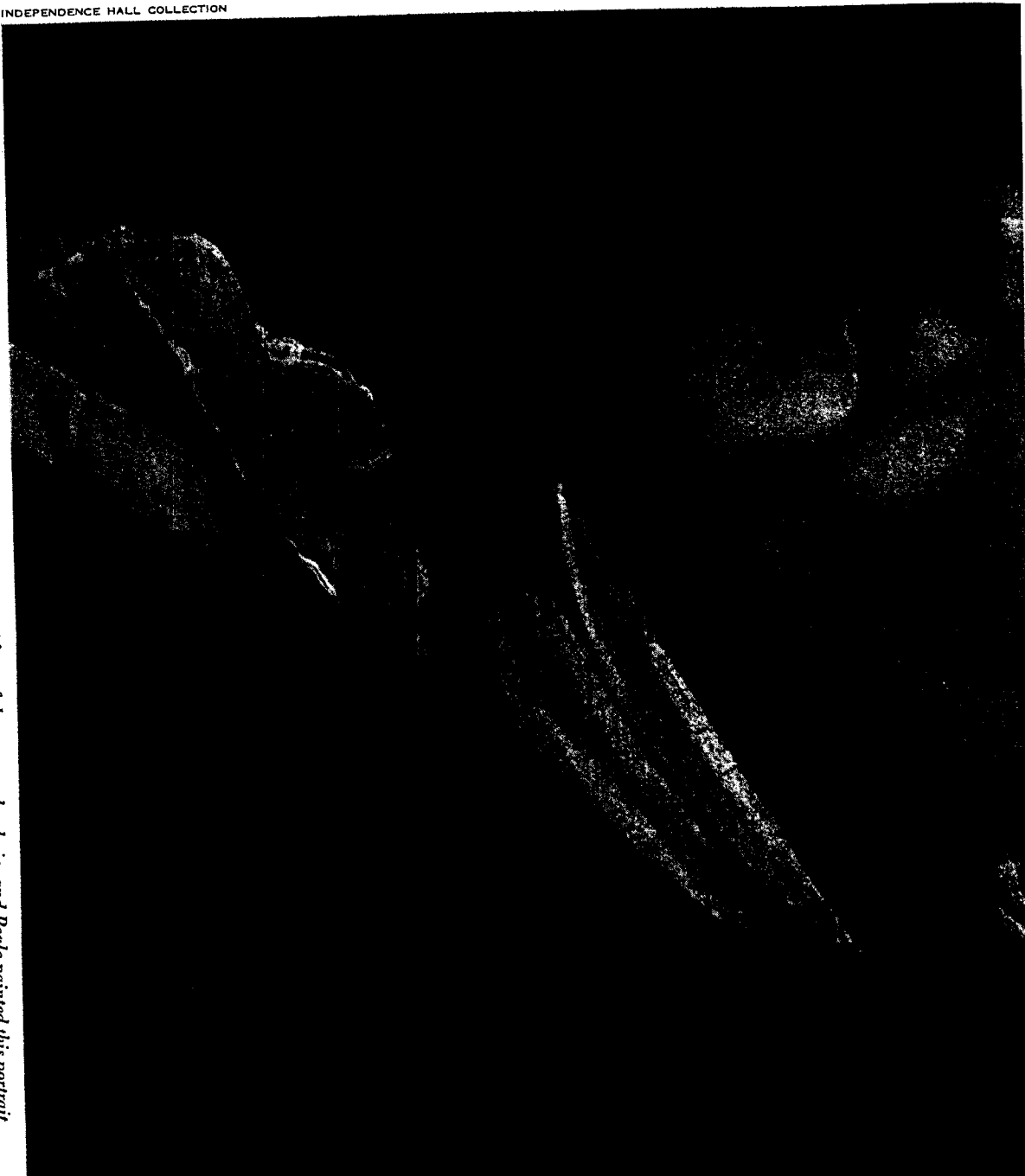
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Two adjustments still had to be made to the Constitution. A Bill of Rights was added in 1791, protecting the individual against excesses of government. The other adjustment had to wait for a man who grew up reading Horace and Livy and the English poet Pope. John Marshall, said a contemporary, had the "almost supernatural faculty of developing a subject by a single glance of his mind." He was appointed Chief Justice of the U.S. in 1801 and remained in the Supreme Court for 34 years. Under Marshall and his philosophy of "judicial review," the power of the federal government was affirmed along with the position of the Court as co-equal with the executive and legislative branches in the system of checks and balances devised in Philadelphia by that remarkable assembly of intellects.

INDEPENDENCE HALL COLLECTION

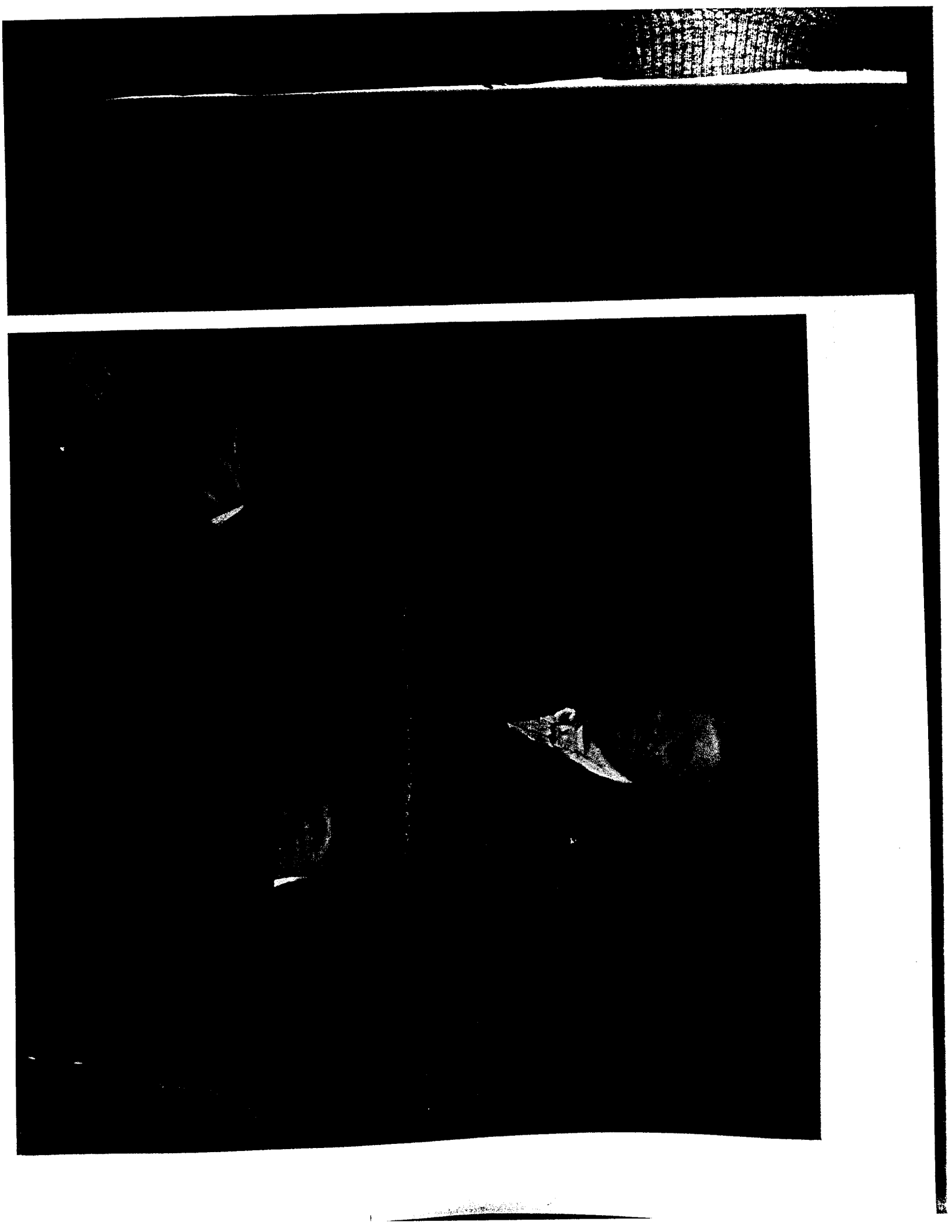


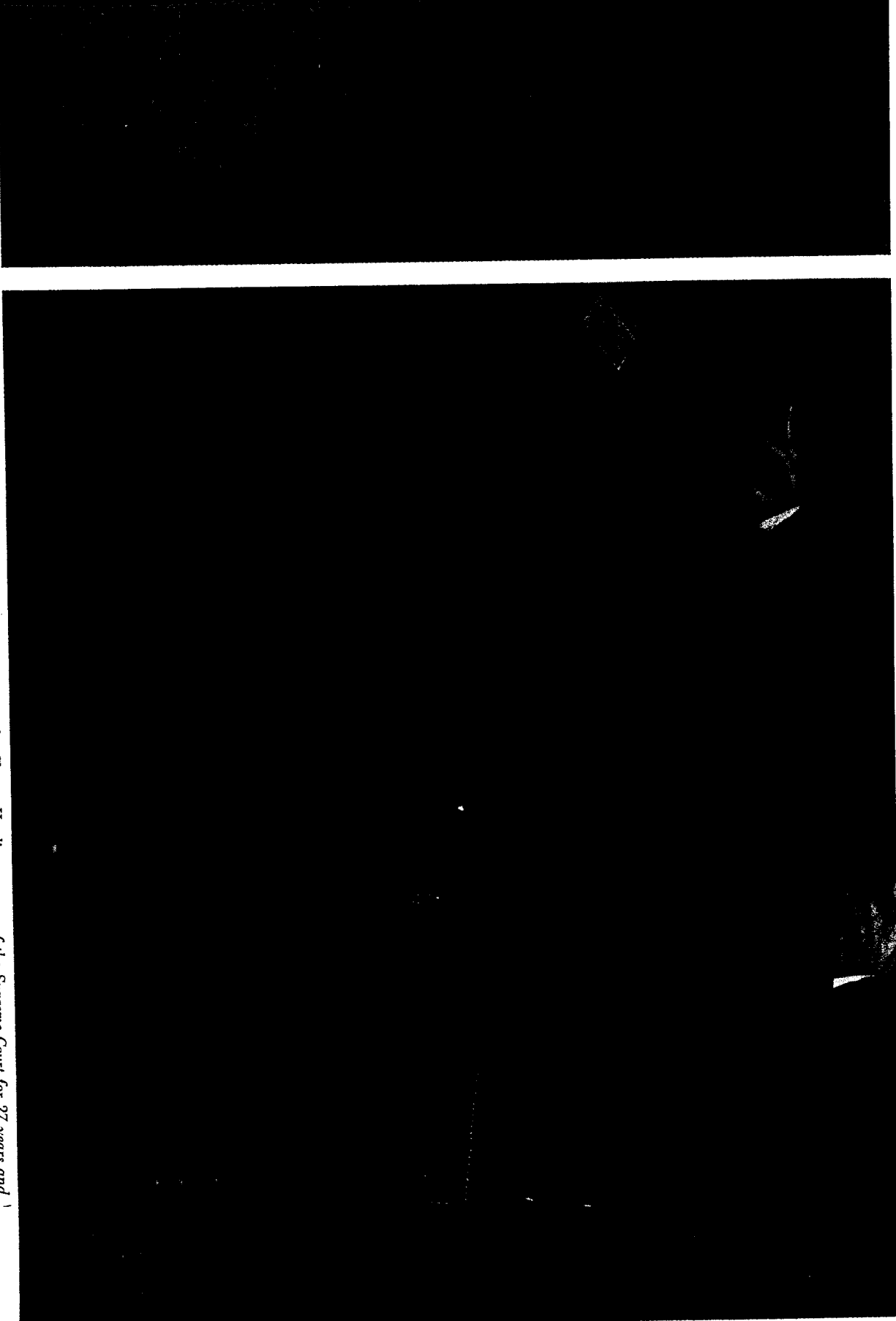
Richard Henry Lee

In 1794 Lee was the president of the Continental Congress, a body he believed

deeply in, and Peale painted this portrait for his own "collection of great men."

Sharp dissents, then a well-honed mind





BOSTON ATHENAEUM

John Marshall

*Painted in 1828 by Chester Harding,
Marshall had already been Chief Justice*

*of the Supreme Court for 27 years and
had rendered many landmark decisions.*

to give the charter final shape

A Yankee merchant's giveaway triggered the academic penetration

CONTINUED

This Federal Constitution was something totally new on earth—a theorist's dream which, for the first time, freed men from imposed authority and made power the instrument of man's will, not the King's. Its stubbornest problem was the demand of Order for a strong central government, contradicted by Freedom's demand for liberty of the individual. The constitution-makers neatly settled the question by dividing power between a federal government and state governments in a balance sufficient for their own generation, yet leaving the precarious balance for other generations to debate in the future.

The best scientific thought of the day colored the making of the American system; and science at the time was based on Newtonian mechanics, a clockwork view of a universe checked and balanced by invisible wheels and pulleys. The core idea, the mainspring, of the early American theorists was that free men, acting each in his own best interests, would by some magic law of politics always find the right solution. When tried, the idea seemed to work like clockwork, too.

founders' dream. Trappers penetrated the wilderness, gunslingers followed them to make a frontier, pioneers cleared the land, immigrant hordes poured in after them knowing that what one worked for or got or grabbed might, in this country, be held. In the process, they created at once the world's most effective get-things-done civilization and system of politics of unmatched squalor and vulgarity.

By the middle '80s of the last century, greed and grabbing, spoils and corruption soiled Washington, where florid and baroque men of action used the national government simply as an instrument of their appetites. The greatest American historian of his day, Henry Adams, a sensitive dandy, grandson and great-grandson of Presidents, mourned: "No period so thoroughly ordinary had been known in American politics since Christopher Columbus first disturbed the balance of American Society. . . ."

It was the mid-point of this era, a century ago, that Justin Morrill, a Vermont storekeeper-merchant-financier, unknowingly triggered what was to become the present blast of academic penetration into government. The

Morrill, a spare-framed Yankee with trim side whiskers, was a "sound dollar" man whose thorough-going conservatism was unblemished except for a delightful and aberrant interest in the beauties of Washington architecture. By 1890, Morrill could see the first flowering of his dreams. Railways criss-crossed the continent, farmers filled the land, and the census of that year reported that, at last, no man could draw any frontier line between settled America and the wilderness. And Morrill's land-grant colleges were truly beginning to serve the farmers, teaching them in each state the best seeds for each climate and soil, increasing yield per acre and poundage on the rumps of beeves. But some of the colleges had developed an astonishing vitality and would go even further in exploring what "service" meant. In particular, the University of Wisconsin.

later wordsmiths would say, his "sociosphere."

In 1892 the university set up its first department of economics and began to assemble a most remarkable energy-cluster of early social scientists whose professorial studies—of the social problems the strong and organized might cause the weak and unorganized—were causing fever in the blood of the state's politics. And when, in 1900, this fever produced a political tribune, Governor Robert La Follette, it was natural that he should turn to his old school, the University of Wisconsin, for guidance on writing its professors' ideas into law. "Professors on University Hill" in Madison, one historian was to observe, "were only a mile away from the politicians on Capitol Hill."

What happened in Wisconsin between 1900 and 1906 was viewed by the established Eastern order as revolution, socialism, or just plain tom-foolery. The university's scholars researched, then helped draft for La Follette, laws that limited the railways' ability to discriminate on rates, that made industry bear the same property-burden in taxes as individuals; they went further and intruded into politics with laws that set an direct-election pri-

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Historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. points out that revolutions are always made by intellectuals, who sooner or later are always replaced by practical men. Intellectuals see new problems first, they are gifted with the words to write manifestos and speeches, can inflame the passions of ordinary men with visions of what may be or what ought to be. And then the pragmatists take over as revolutions dispense with their theorists. In America it took a full generation, until the election of rough-hewn Andrew Jackson in 1828, for the practical men to take over—men who simply wound and re-wound the clockwork mechanism the Founding Fathers had devised.

The vitality of the system is best demonstrated by what followed Andrew Jackson. For 70 years, with the brief moral interruption of the Civil War, men seeking their private interests worked within the frame of the

government simply as an instrument of their appetites. The greatest American historian of his day, Henry Adams, a sensitive dandy, grandson and great-grandson of Presidents, mourned: "No period so thoroughly ordinary had been known in American politics since Christopher Columbus first disturbed the balance of American Society. . . ."

It was the mid-point of this era, a century ago, that Justin Morrill, a Vermont storekeeper-merchant-financier, unknowingly triggered what was to become the present blast of academic penetration into government. The wartime Congress of the '60s was swept by what we would call a giveaway mood—free land for homesteaders to fill the empty map, free land for the railroads to build tracks to get them there. Thus in 1862 Congressman Morrill achieved another giveaway—free land to endow state colleges whose leading purpose would be "to teach . . . agriculture and the mechanic arts. . . ."

America was then the land of the farmer—and whatever could be done to help him would help business and railways, too. Morrill's "land-grant colleges" were to be "service institutions," offering higher education to ordinary people for the first time. They were a complete break with the European tradition of the university as an institution for training a young elite, to govern empires, to serve God, or to be clerks for those who did. After prolonged debate Congress acted on his idea and approved.

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It seemed to the academics gathered at Madison, Wisconsin, that the farmer had other problems besides insects, hail, frost and the sterility of his prize boar. For example: railways whose rates gouged him, banks and money-lenders that cheated him. The University of Wisconsin had begun to study such other problems, too, as part of the human ecology of the farmer's life—or, as



Vermont's Representative Justin Morrill was responsible in 1862 for the establishment and funding of land grant colleges in the U.S.

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Within a decade, the word "progressive" was the label on a ferment that ran from coast to coast—but the yeast in that ferment came from the campus at Madison, Wisconsin, and could be traced directly back to such professors as Commons, Ely, Ross, Meyer. From that original ferment were to come, much later, Social Security, TVA, Unemployment Insurance and regulation of the stock market.

The large consequences of the new ideas bubbling among American scholars were not immediately visible, however, in the early 1900s; for no historical development proceeds in a straight line from given point of origin to final

CONTINUED

Your soups' getting cold!



T.R. welcomed scholars
but Wilson turned them away



CONTINUED

climax. Periodically the stream of academic penetration in American politics was to broaden, then choke to a trickle—but never entirely to dry up in modern times. Mostly, it fluctuated in force with the nature and style of the man who sat in the White House.

Thus, it was entirely natural for a patrician Theodore Roosevelt—author, historian and adventurer—to invite scholars to his White House. His elegant taste could summon Cellist Pablo Casals to play there, enjoy the table-talk of Sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens, make a companion of historian Henry Adams. And as Progressive demands rose in politics, it was natural for him to invite Professor John R. Commons (Wisconsin) to discuss labor laws, Professor Richard T. Ely (Wisconsin) to discuss tax law, Professor William Z. Ripley (Harvard) to discuss railway legislation, and Nicholas Murray Butler (Columbia) as a generalist, much as Kennedy later used Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

The influence of scholars on government was, however, not always predictable by the background of the Chief Executive.

quired America to make contact with and thrust itself upon an outside world in which the nation had previously been only an observer. War required the first-modern mobilization of men—in vast numbers and aggregates under a logical, central direction. And for this, it required academic participation—but within precisely defined limits. Businessmen (under Bernard Baruch) organized the war economy—but book-bearing economists and professors were also needed to sift and pattern the figures. Above all, war brought America face to face with strange people speaking strange languages. Thus came about the first specialized task-force, then called The Inquiry, to prepare our positions for the ultimate peace gathering at Versailles.

The professors and academicians who largely staffed this committee could trace boundaries in Central Europe back to the Byzantine Empire, and they could indicate the documents in Greek or Latin that supported or contradicted what Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House thought



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What makes them so different is what makes them so good

Saint-Gaudens, make a companion of historian Henry Adams. And as Progressive demands rose in politics, it was natural for him to invite Professor John R. Commons (Wisconsin) to discuss labor laws, Professor Richard T. Ely (Wisconsin) to discuss tax law, Professor William Z. Ripley (Harvard) to discuss railway legislation, and Nicholas Murray Butler (Columbia) as a generalist, much as Kennedy later used Arthur Schlesinger Jr.

The influence of scholars on government was, however, not always predictable by the background of the Chief Executive. Woodrow Wilson, himself a professor of government and university president, displayed to other scholars the attitude of a country-school superintendent toward apprentice-teachers. His administration reflected this paternalism. When, for example, the U.S. entered the First World War, the American Chemical Society sent a deputation to visit Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, and offered the full mobilization of their resources to prepare for the violence that might come. Baker thanked them, asked them to return the next day after he had contemplated, received them again and dismissed them. He had, he said, made an inquiry; he did not need them; the War Department, he had learned, already had a chemist.

But Woodrow Wilson's First World War was, in American history, a climactic trauma—the hour of loss of innocence. It re-

America face to face with strange people speaking strange languages. Thus came about the first specialized task-force, then called The Inquiry, to prepare our positions for the ultimate peace gathering at Versailles.

The professors and academicians who largely staffed this committee could trace boundaries in Central Europe back to the Byzantine Empire, and they could indicate the documents in Greek or Latin that supported or contradicted what Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House thought might be proper borders in the Danube Valley. Such professors were, however, only specialists, technicians—not policy-makers; American statesmen paid as little heed to them as did the British delegation to the wisdom of John Maynard Keynes of Cambridge.

Nevertheless, the national innocence lost in the First World War could never be recovered. A succession of three presidents—Harding, Coolidge, Hoover—tried to bring America home to live on the simple straight-way of Sinclair Lewis' Main Street. But Main Street was doomed, as were the ideas it had sprung from, outworn by time. Though Main Street businessmen still swore by the theories of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, that simple faith was already obsolete.

Smith and Mill had shattered Pharaonic economics with their belief that the invisible hand of private interest would always

CONTINUED

Harvard lawyers were called to fight the Depression

CONTINUED

guide free-enterprisers in their own selfish interests, to produce what society needed most. By the early '30s, this idea had run its day and failed—America humpered, industry had collapsed, farmers burned crops and pitchforked sheriffs, 13 million unemployed shuffled in the desolate streets, and the greatest of all depressions in history had begun.

Thus entered Franklin D. Roosevelt and the first brain-trust.

Today it is accepted as entirely normal that scholars should contribute ideas during political campaigns. But the use of scholars in coarse, active campaigning was fresh when, in January of 1932, Franklin D. Roosevelt set out to run for president. His obvious issue had to be the Depression. Yet, what would he say? His confidant, Samuel Rosenman, replied they could best learn what to say by talking with the scholars of the universities, where economists, lawyers and thinkers abounded. Enthusiastically, Professor Raymond C. Moley became captain of a Columbia University task force to provide ideas.

"We were," says Professor Adolf Berle, reminiscing, "freaks—like phrenologists. A politician

view of professors. "Economists," remarked Charley Michelson, the Democrats' chief speech-writer of the 1932 campaign, "economists are like the buttons on the sleeve of a man's jacket. They're useless, but they look good. You have to have them."

Roosevelt, of course, would have won his election had he been advised by Aimee Semple McPherson or Karl Marx rather than the professorial brain-trust. It was what these men contributed to the nature of American government *after* the election, however, that marked a watershed; and it is important to measure the development of their ideas: how far and in what stages they stretched through the years of American life to their present triumph; and why, perhaps, these ideas will, like Adam Smith's, now stretch no longer to meet the problems of our times.

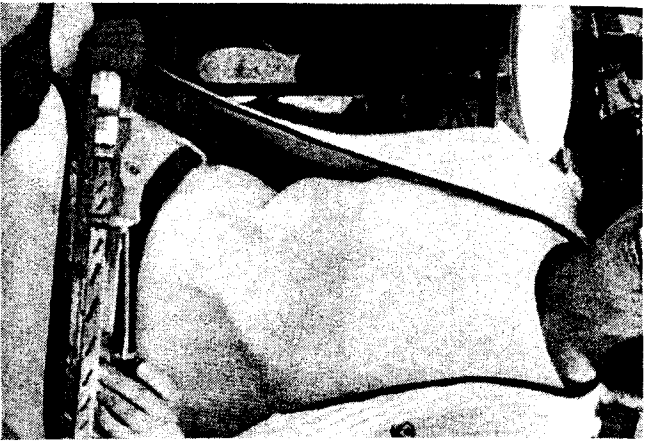
The early academic brain-trusters were merely a corporal's guard during the campaign—Moley, Berle, Trugwell. But they could recruit—they were webbed into the intellectual underground of the nation at all the great campuses where ideas, untapped, had been accumulating. Universities were places where scholarly discipline required men to study the

"These were all senior idea men. But beneath them was a janizariat of younger men, mostly lawyers, all fresh from the classrooms, with no practical experience to cramp them, in whom burned theories taken fresh from professors' lips or books. One catches the flavor of the period best from a young Harvard Law School lawyer, James Rowe, since grown to be one of the authentically great men of American politics, adviser to Presidents from Roosevelt to Johnson.

"Tommy Corcoran sent me up to Harvard Law School in 1935," Rowe recalls, "to bring back 20 graduates. Times were hard then; even the brightest young men couldn't find jobs. We came in as lawyers, on working jobs; then we brought in the economists; then we coalesced and spread out. We were a community.

"At parties we brought our girls or our wives and we'd sit debating until 2 o'clock in the morning—no dancing, 10 guys all sitting on the floor arguing. The question then was whether people were going to eat or not. Back in Montana, where I came from, in Rosebud County, 90% of our people were on relief. We had leaders and gods, men like Ickes and Corcoran. Cohen and Jim





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"We were," says Professor Adolf Berle, reminiscing, "freaks—like phenologists. A politician who talked to a professor in those days kept it a deep, dark secret. And you couldn't get the best professors into politics—politics were dirty and squalid, they thought." Others took a dinner

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The idea that knit this community, professors and law clerks

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Wisconsin professors had a national impact on progressive tax and labor legislation in the early 1900s. John R. Commons (left) and Richard T. Ely (center)

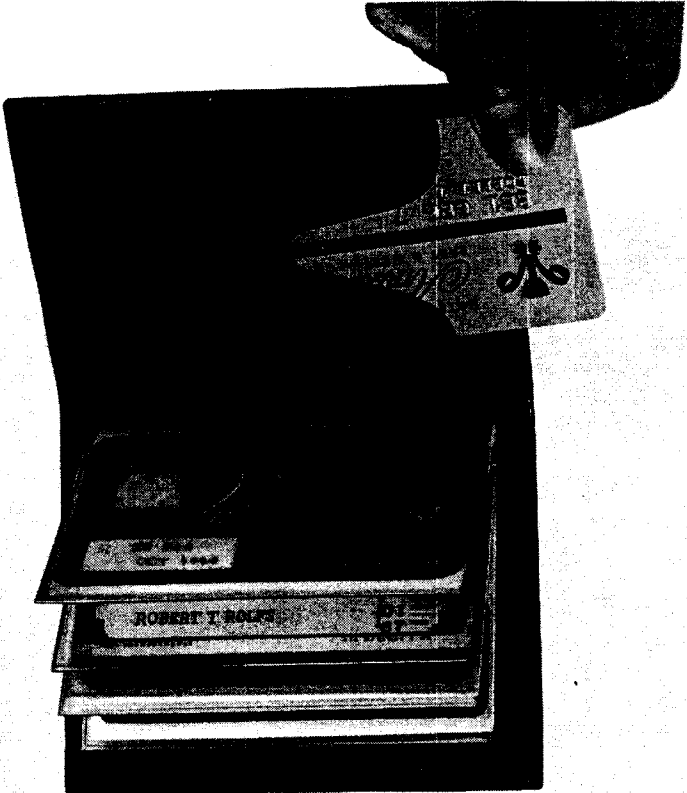


were economists. Edward A. Ross (right) was a sociologist. As governor of Wisconsin and U.S. senator, Robert La Follette relied heavily on their ideas.



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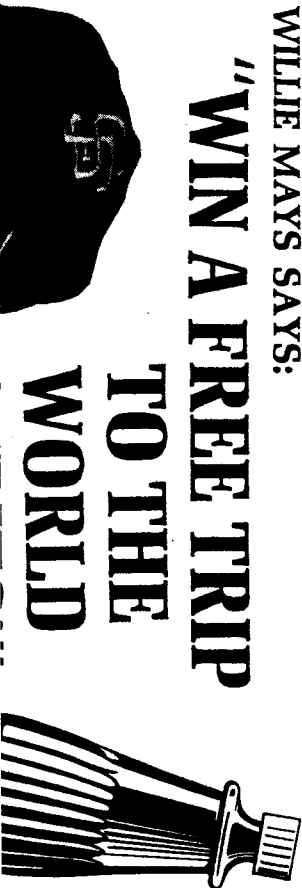


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War brought the academics to terms with the businessmen

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alike, was a simple one. It was that the invisible hand which Adam Smith had seen directing all economic affairs was now dead. People starved because the theory required them to starve. So the hand of government, from Washington, must replace the invisible hand. The young lawyers had clients who, though anonymous, were real: the hungry and unemployed; workmen trying to organize unions; farmers dispossessed of land; little investors cheated of savings by Wall Street bucket-shop operators. And for such client groups they were the intermediaries between ideas that could save them and politicians who could enact ideas into law. Crudely and blunderingly, they went to work.

Two emotions infused these young thinkers. The first was an optimism about achieving direct social change through the instruments of central government. The second was a disquiet, in some a disgust, with the underlying premises and foundations of American society as it was.

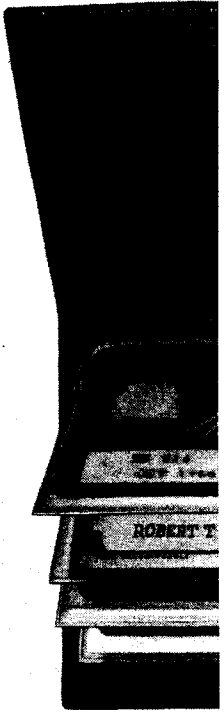
It was the experience of World War II that separated these two emotions, subtly dividing the activist American intellectual from

society. They found we didn't need to shatter the premises of our society to make progress." The distrust had disappeared; the belief in direct government action remained; and in such wartime agencies as OSS (Office of Strategic Services), OWI (Office of War Information), OPA (Office of Price Administration) scores of younger scholars were beginning to learn the thrill of government action, all sharing a new, unworded philosophy; that men of ideas and theories were almost a Fifth Estate of government. Recognizing the Lords Temporal of political power, they were to be the Lords Spiritual of theory.

World War II amplified the influence of academics further, with a new and genuinely revolutionary development—the organization of American science for war by scholar-leaders. For, in the late '30s and early '40s, scholars began to foresee, long before the military, what modern war would require. And it was the Harvard-M.I.T. center of scholars that led the invasion of the war effort by American learning.

Harvard President James Bry-

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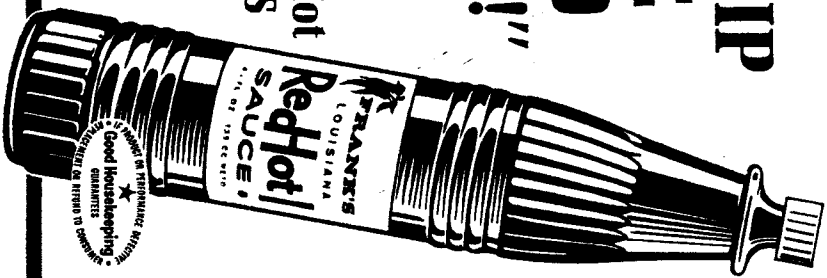


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such elite groups they were true intermediaries between ideas that could save them and politicians who could enact ideas into law. Crudely and blunderingly, they went to work.

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It was the experience of World War II that separated these two emotions, subtly dividing the activist American intellectual from the alienated and the ivory-tower intellectual, a cleavage that persists to this day. By the time the war broke out, the Harvard Law School graduates held almost every general-counsel post in the government's cabinet-level departments; and the young men had matured. They had, in the early '30s, seriously debated whether to nationalize all America's banks and business. But the war-effort made them partners with American industry, bringing them into contact with men like Harriman and Hoffman, Lovett and McCloy, Forrestal and Patterson—the best in American business.

"There was this growth of understanding in the war," recalls Kennit Gordon, the new head of the Brookings Institution, "between academics and business. They came to terms with the foundations of our industrial

izing the nation's temporary political power, they were to be the Lords Spiritual of theory.

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Harvard President James Bryant Conant and M.I.T. Vice President Vannevar Bush had both recognized early that the war was coming; both had had junior experience with the bungling organization of American science in World War I; and both now had access to the court of Harvard-man Franklin D. Roosevelt. Their idea, which Roosevelt accepted so enthusiastically, was that scientists and scholars could best serve government if they skipped all military or other bureaucratic and were organized independently in what came to be known as the Office of Scientific Research and Development. The hardware inventions and developments that came from this office are history: atom bombs and radar, antibiotics and sonar, explosives and napalm. Yet their greatest invention was, perhaps, political: a new way of using brains. For the OSRD decided

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Government took on a \$15 billion liaison with learning



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not to centralize or mobilize brain-power within government, but to build on existing strength outside government—and to do so by the novel method of subcontracting thought. M.I.T. was to develop radar; California Tech was to study rockets; the University of Chicago was to explore sustained nuclear reaction; the University of California was responsible for developing the bomb; and the large industrial corporations—Du Pont, General Electric, Union Carbide—were to machine, as hardware subcontractors, what the scientists dreamed of.

What they produced dazzled Congress, the world, even the military. Professors were in. "We ran around after the war," says a Pentagon general, "collecting professors like butterflies. Everyone wanted the flashiest collection of butterflies for his branch." Congress had been so impressed that, in an outburst of enthusiasm, it wanted professors to solve everything—from cancer to the common cold—by creating one enormous, centralized government department to oversee all scientific effort.

seized on an idea remotely describable as of national concern knew where it could be financed. The defense scientists had the first finger in the pie—but social scientists, students of foreign affairs, mathematicians, linguists could follow their lead. Government money, then foundation money, enriched the imagination and enlarged the ambition of scholars to totally new dimensions. The ability to sell explorations or ideas to government became a fundamental disturbance in academic life as many professors swiftly learned that a good promoter advanced as quickly as, or more quickly than, a good scholar.

"All you have to do is call yourself an 'Interdisciplinary Center' or, better yet, an 'Institute,' to qualify for a national defense grant. And all you need for a center is one warm body, a good idea, a couple of assistants—and you're in business," said one rueful professor recently. Thus, those who knew best the ways of Washington and the routes to the money-spigots of the various government agencies entered into a bizarre new world where they were, at once, supplicants

Conant and Bush scotched this

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Conant and Bush scotched this effort and, departing, left behind what, to the administrative eye, seemed like the most wasteful, confusing and overlapping system of government aid to learning ever devised. When asked one day many years later about its apparent confusion, Conant replied, "We planned it that way so that the NSF, the AEC, the NIH, the Army, the Air Force would all have independent funds for science—so that no one government agency could turn off all the spigots at once."

The breakthrough had been made; government was now to intertwine itself through American learning—through its universities, laboratories, social research centers and science—in a complexity never approached by any other country, in a lavishness which now runs at some \$15 billion a year. By corollary, any university where a group of professors

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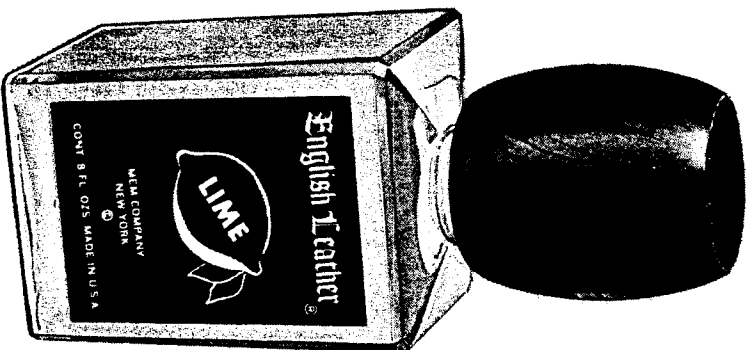
No hard-and-fast generalization can cover the 15 years between the end of the war and the advent of John F. Kennedy, but the orthodoxies of the era can be roughly summarized:

► The governing conviction of the action-intellectual held, unquestionably, that Washington was where the action was, that the central government alone was staffed with the quality personnel needed to launch great new programs. Washington also conferred a matchless campus prestige on those it summoned to its use ("There's nothing that impresses a seminar—or the faculty—more than to be called from the room because the White House is on the phone," said a Princeton professor not long ago). State

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Intellectuals finally found a place in Congress

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and city politics bored the scholars. Washington was The Scene. If a man had influence in a Washington agency, his ideas might someday run as writ across the country.

► Professors fundamentally were still advisers rather than policymakers. The great Robert Oppenheimer was never once invited to meet Franklin D. Roosevelt or talk with him all the while his mind directed the shaping of the first A-bomb; Oppenheimer met Harry Truman, in a group conference led by Secretary Henry L. Stimson, only once before the bomb dropped.

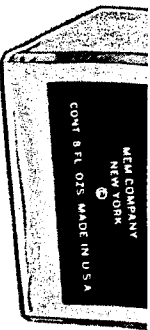
► Overwhelmingly, the activists were Democrats. The older men had learned the ways of government under Roosevelt, the Democrat, during the war. They passed their lessons on to younger men. An occasional Kingman Brewster (now president of Yale) could and did serve government (in the Marshall Plan) and remained a Yankee Republican; as did James Bryant Conant, president of Harvard. A scholar like Malcolm Moos might serve Eisenhower in the White House (Eisenhower's brain-trust was once described as "Mac Moos

ence on the Supreme Court's historic desegregation decision of 1954 as all the NAACP's mobilization of legal talent. Overseas, the familiar globe histered with the names of new, independent nations about whom tradition gave us no knowledge or understanding—but at home, old universities had already incubated an array of interdisciplinary centers to study the developing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America. Where else could government go for guidance in an increasingly complicated world except to the scholars who graphed the complications?

It is common and quite easy to draw a sharp distinction in technique and style between the Kennedy and Johnson administrations—and the contrast cuts.

But what binds them together historically is more important—for the continuum of their administrations was to close the Rooseveltian phase of American history, to see the triumph of one set of ideas and to force the groping search for another set still undefined.

Revolution had swept around the outer world since World War



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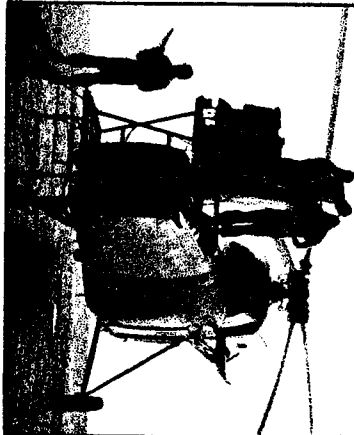
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► All through this period, moreover, knowledge was exploding as research quickened—not only in defense science and nuclear energy, or in astrophysics and space. There were the grating new problems of men in changing communities—new inner and outer frontiers which only scholars, now so generously funded, explored and from which they brought back first reports to influence policy.

Scholars began to illuminate the condition of the Negro. A solitary child psychologist, Kenneth B. Clark, by his research on the psychological crippling of child minds by segregation was probably as important an influ-

complications?

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Revolution had swept around the outer world since World War II; but the world of Americans-at-home had changed almost as dramatically. Mass education had altered the climate of the nation. During Franklin Roosevelt's second term, in 1938, only 1,350,000 college students strolled the campuses. And they were then outnumbered by the union proletariat of two industries alone—the railways (958,000) and the coal miners (538,000). A generation later there were six million college students in the country; and this campus proletariat had reversed the numerical proportion to a staggering 8 to 1 over the diminished handful of 782,000 laborers who still worked automated mines and railways.

Intellectuals had worked their way into the fabric of government itself. From the New Deal on, the increasing receptivity to ideas of the Executive Depart-

CONTINUED

'Power these days is brains, and President Johnson goes for it'

CONTINUED

ments had magnified the intellectuals' influence. But by 1960, education had begun to change Congress itself and create a receptivity there, too.

"We used to look at Congress as a bunch of C-plus students," says one professor-in-government. By 1960 the Senate boasted no less than five ex-professors—Douglas, McGee, Mansfield, McCarthy, Fulbright. (It has since added three more, Miller, Tower and McGovern; by 1966 the House, in addition to 226 law degrees, held 19 members with advanced academic degrees.) Both Executive and Congress were on the right frequencies to pick up new messages.

It remained for Kennedy, entering this changing scene, to make brains fully operational by wiring his Washington senatorial office directly to his natural political base in Massachusetts. As early as 1958, he dispatched his chief-of-staff, Ted Sorensen, to an evening meeting at the Commodore Hotel off Harvard Square in Cambridge to set up an Academic Advisory Committee. A year later, formed up in ranks by Professors Arthur Schlesinger and John Kenneth Galbraith, the campus corps could deliver to Kennedy not only speech material,

late last fall, his intellectual score as against Kennedy's and come up with this incomplete yet flattering Executive nose-count: five Rhodes scholars at top level, 77 intellectuals badged with a Phi Beta Kappa key (five in the Cabinet, one in the White House, one in the legislative branch, 13 ambassadors, 23 in sub-Cabinet positions, 29 appointed in independent or regulatory agencies, five as bureau chiefs), plus 33 major appointments fresh from professorships and 40 more with other specific scholarly background.

A reporter, visiting Washington again and again in the Kennedy-Johnson era, gradually found his old political sources of information being rivaled, then outmatched, by his academic

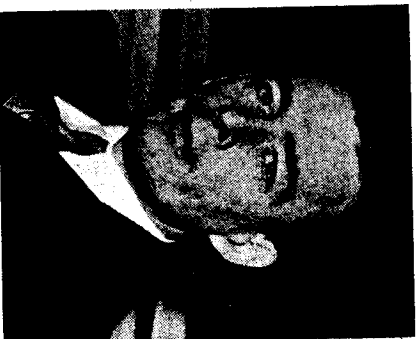
sources of information. On reflection this, too, seemed natural; for the windows the academicians offered a reporter to look through were the same windows through which the Chief Executive himself peered. A new syllogism could be made, embracing all politics from Platonic root to American experience:

Men always have the choice between chaos and order, and generally prefer order. But order requires power, and all power is exercised, in final analysis, by individual men. Every President is subject to the traditional danger of the prince-in-his-court—that he will be suffocated by the flatery of his servants, his information choked by what his bureaucrats report. The leader thus des-

perately needs an independent check. A free press once provided this check. But knowledge now increases at such speed, with such complexity, that the press is inadequate to the responsibility. Only in the universities or the foundations are men paid to study, year after year, all those issues which a Chief Executive must grasp. Thus, without scholars, an American Chief Executive can no longer operate, or supervise, his bureaucracies.

In any one of the last three administrations one can reach into the record to see the Chief Executive turn to scholars for help in judging his bureaucracies, then see the scholars slowly changing roles from specialist or medieval wise man to operator, and then policy-maker. One can trace it best, however, in the life of an individual like, say Professor Jerome Wiesner of M.I.T., whose service to the nation spans all the administrations from F.D.R.'s through Eisenhower's to Kennedy's and Johnson's.

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new messages.

It remained for Kennedy, entering this changing scene, to make brains fully operational by wiring his Washington senatorial office directly to his natural political base in Massachusetts. As early as 1958, he dispatched his chief-of-staff, Ted Sorensen, to an evening meeting at the Commander Hotel off Harvard Square in Cambridge to set up an Academic Advisory Committee. A year later, formed up in ranks by Professors Arthur Schlesinger and John Kenneth Galbraith, the campus corps could deliver to Kennedy not only speech material, position papers, guidance, but also personalities such as Wiesner and Bundy, Cox and Keppel, Chayes and Rostow, Kaysen and Hilsman, Tobin and Nitze, who would go on with him to Washington, not just as advisers to policymakers but as policy-makers themselves, *their hands on the levers of power.*

What Kennedy began with his volunteer study groups in 1959, Johnson lifted to a new level with his task forces. The Johnson task forces of 1964 and 1965 were government groups in which scholars were paid for their time and bracketed with budget officers and bureaucrats, so that ideas might come off the line ready for shaping into law. "Johnson has a talent for power," observes Bill Moyers, once his closest personal aide. "Power these days is brains, and he goes for it." Only a man with such a taste for power could have his White House check out,

found his old political sources of information being rivaled, then outmatched, by his academic

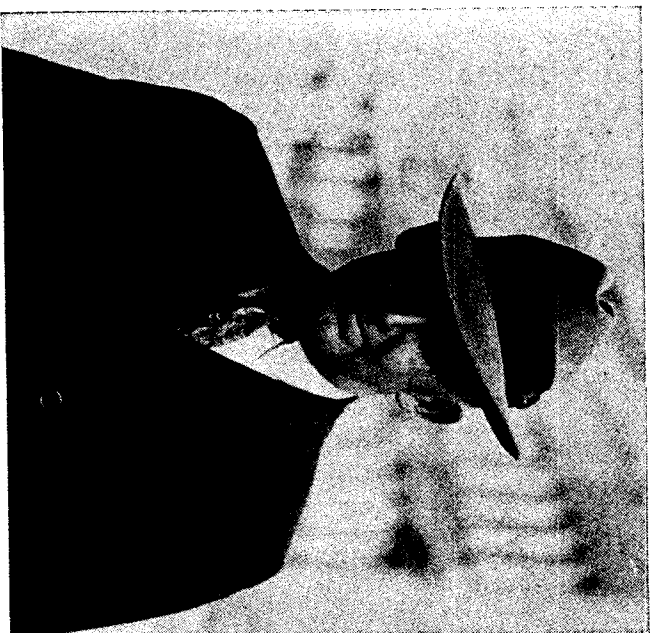


In his first campaign in 1932, Roosevelt's Brain Trust was made up of three academic and three political members. The academics—all recruited from the Columbia faculty—were Reesford Guy Tugwell

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and Adolf A. Berle Jr., (left and right above) and Raymond Moley (below). As a formal group, the Trust broke up after the election, though the three stayed with F.D.R. longer as individual advisers.



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Wiesner, now provost at M.I.T., is by profession a student of electronics and by repute a genius in the field of communications theory. Like so many young engineers and physicists of the time, the suction of the Manhattan Project in World War II drew him to Los Alamos, where he worked on what he now vaguely describes as "the electronic guts of the bomb." He went on to supervise the electronic monitoring of the first postwar Bikini bomb tests, then masterminded the Lincoln Laboratory's security-shrouded communications breakthrough which linked computational science and electronic relays in the DEW (Distant Early Warning) network and is now the backbone of the American field communications in Vietnam. Occasionally in the period of the late '40s, back at Cambridge, he would meet on Sunday mornings with a group of Harvard and M.I.T. professors at the Irving Street home of Professor Arthur Schlesinger to discuss problems of peace and war. Yet, officially, Wiesner was only a consultant and specialist.

CONTINUED

A danger ahead: the intellectual imperialism of the economists

CONTINUED

During the '50s, however, came the spectacular series of scientific breakthroughs—computorial control of military systems, the thermonuclear warhead, the development of rockets—which revolutionized intercontinental war. Yet the scientists, like Wiesner, who created these wonders still operated as directed by the bureaucracies in patterns framed by the political information of other men. In 1957, for the first time, Wiesner graduated to a higher level, as scientific member of the Gaither Committee, whose presidential commission from Eisenhower empowered it to examine all national defense. National defense at this level meant total and rigorous examination of the motivations, the facts, the planning of all the bureaucracies serving the President in defense.

"I live in a radioactive desert." The only personality in government who seemed to share Wiesner's overwhelming concern was the President, who had to think for all the people. Eisenhower, profoundly tormented by the possible accident of nuclear warfare, was a man of peace. He sought arms control. But he was surrounded by a court where his military bureaucracy, as it had to, sought maximum strength; and his diplomatic bureaucracy was frozen by the concept of "massive retaliation."

Wiesner vividly recalls visiting Eisenhower at the White House in the fall of 1957 and hearing him talk about the need for arms control. "If we have a war," said the President, "there won't be enough bulldozers to scrape the bodies off the streets. But I can't get them to understand it. They won't help me. I need help."

There was very little help that Wiesner could give Eisenhower beyond his electronic competence and advice. But already the original Harvard-M.I.T. defense study group had acquired a throbbing vitality of its own (see PART I). By 1960, they were wired into Kennedy's campaign, and Wiesner's passion for peace could be voiced in the Democratic platform of 1960 as a promise

vital work of the New Deal and provided the take-off line for the new, uncharted era of the present, one would have to seek it in the work of the Keynesian economists, and not only in their impact on national affairs but on national thinking.

In the 25 years since Roosevelt's New Deal had mandated control of the economy away from New York's complex of bankers and brought it back to the capital, economists had learned much. Economists are scholars who like to think in terms of "aggregates." Through statistics, they grope for reality; elaborate symbolic formulae parade through their dreams costumed as truth and promising abundance.

were rather gentle men, but James Tobin, handsome and silver-haired at 50, expresses their feeling best. His mother had been a Depression social worker in Illinois and, he says, "My childhood house was full of talk of unemployment and relief, and people suffering. I went into economics because I thought it would save the world. People like me thought that the application of intelligence to government was the only way of doing good."

All three men were fortunate in being connected with a President who sought to do good and knew enough history to realize that politics, to do good, have to serve ideas rather than ideas serve politics. When, in January 1961, President-elect Kennedy telephoned Tobin at Yale from Palm Beach to invite him to be a member of his Council of Economic Advisers, Tobin demurred. "I'm an ivory-tower economist," he said. To which, according to Tobin's recollection, the President-elect replied, "That's fine. That's the best kind. I'm going to be an ivory-tower President." To which Tobin, in turn, replied, "That's fine—that's the best kind, too," and accepted.

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ense at uns ever meant total and rigorous examination of the motivations, the facts, the planning of all the bureaucracies serving the President in defense.

The President, for example, had declared officially to all the world that the U.S. would never strike first with nuclear bombs; but at SAC headquarters Wiesner was told by generals that, of course, Americans had to strike first, and any president who didn't was out of his mind. The President had been informed, and believed, that he had 400 massive bombers on 15-minute alert; Wiesner found that only 20 to 40 of the big bombers could get off the ground in any hour.

"I was shocked," he recalls, "by how ill-informed the President, the Department of Defense, even the Secretary of the Air Force were about our country." Even more was he shocked by looking, for the first time as a supreme policy-adviser, at the outer fringe of the terror he had helped create. America was certainly able to destroy all Russia; but if the Russians were capable of even 50% of the American effort (which they were), they could so punish America as to end its civilization. At the most optimistic estimate, 30 million Americans would die in the counterstroke, 150 million in the most pessimistic estimate—and those who survived would

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There was very little help that Wiesner could give Eisenhower beyond his electronic competence and advice. But already the original Harvard-M.I.T. defense study group had acquired a throbbing vitality of its own (see PART I). By 1960, they were wired into Kennedy's campaign, and Wiesner's passion for peace could be voiced in the Democratic platform of 1960 as a promise to set up an arms control agency. By 1961, as chief scientific adviser to Kennedy, Wiesner, no longer a consultant, could impose such an agency on the old bureaucracy, and negotiate, then push through the test ban treaty he had long dreamed of.

If one is to try to trace, however, through both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, the uncertain line along which the scholars brought to a close the

parade through their dreams, counted as truth and promising abundance.

In the generation since Roosevelt, they had devised elegant new tools of statistical measurement, precise gauges of national produce and income, survey techniques for probing consumer impulse and demand. They had tamed and made useful the high theories of John Maynard Keynes. They were compulsively eager to test such theories on the American economy and thus, when John F. Kennedy gave them their chance, the door was open to that spectacular quantum jump of activity which introduced the new Era of Abundance.

All three original members of the Kennedy Council of Economic Advisers, the high command of the New Frontier's adventure in economics, were children of the Depression, moved by compassion—Water Heller of the University of Minnesota, James Tobin of Yale, Kermit Gordon of Williams. All three

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The ideas these Kennedy economists fed into the bloodstream of government were to change all the perspectives of American business activity. Lifting the gross national product by 50%, in the longest continuing boom in our history, these ideas were to gorge the American system with an abundance it has not yet learned how to absorb. This triumph was to lead to what one of their number calls "the intellectual imperialism of the economists"—a desire on the part of many scholars to apply the aggregate techniques and arithmetical methods of the economists to the entire range of national problems. And it also has led to the belief, on the part of too many of them, that figures and statistics can illuminate the wordless aspirations and perplexities of American life.

NEXT WEEK PART 3

Chartmakers of Our Troubled Future