

Personal Background

You were born in Virginia in 1725. Your father died when you were ten, and you lived with your uncle, John Mercer. Your education was shaped by your uncle's huge library, one third of which concerned the law. One of the richest planters in Virginia, you became an important figure in your community, serving as a judge and in Virginia's House of Burgesses. During the Revolutionary War, you helped form a new government. By the early 1780s, you grew disgusted with politics and retired for a time from public life.

At the Constitutional Convention, you speak frequently. Your approach is cool and reasonable, free of personal attacks. You worry about protecting individual rights and ensuring that the national government is truly representative.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention

Issue 1: You believe that states should be represented in the national legislature based on their population. You think that the legislature should have two houses.

Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted only for determining a state's representation in the national legislature.

Issue 3: You believe that the executive should be chosen by the national legislature.

Sign the Constitution?

No. You want the Constitution to include a bill of rights, and you fear that the new government either will become a monarchy or will be controlled by the wealthy few.