

William Paterson

New Jersey (small state)

Personal Background

You were born in Ireland in 1745. When you were two years old, your family came to America and settled in New Jersey. Your father became a prosperous merchant and manufacturer of tin goods. You received a good education and graduated from the College of New Jersey. You studied law, and by the time of the Revolution you had become a lawyer. When war with Britain broke out, you became a leading Patriot in New Jersey, serving in government and as a militia officer. Beginning in 1776, you served for seven years as New Jersey's attorney general. You then spent your time practicing law until you were chosen to represent your state at the Constitutional Convention.

Hardworking, serious, and formal, you are a strong supporter of the rights of small states.

Views on Issues at the Constitutional Convention

Issue 1: You firmly believe that all states must have an equal vote in the national legislature. You think that the legislature should have one house.

Issue 2: You believe that three fifths of the slaves should be counted for determining the taxes paid by a state, but not for determining representation in the national legislature.

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

Sign the Constitution? Yes.