

Good day. I am Benjamin Franklin

I am standing here by Independence Hall. I'd like to take you back to 1787, where the framers of our Constitution met here in what was then the Statehouse of Pennsylvania to form a new nation.

Standing here in front of the old Congress Hall in Philadelphia, which from 1790-1800 was the Capital of the United States. There were incredible obstacles we faced in framing the Constitution, one of which was the matter of representation particularly referring to the small states and large states and a compromise was reached. We were to have two houses. One house: a lower house which represented the people, and the upper house representing the states.

We met here in 1787 to frame our Constitution. We faced many obstacles

This country, as a country, was barely four years old. We had been working under the Articles of Confederation, which gave some control over the republic, but not complete control. There was no strong central government. Each state could print its own money, currency and rules of trade and commerce.

There were certain problems we needed to solve. For example the problem of slavery. Many of the New England states in particular were adamant about abolishing slavery. Of course, many of the southern states wanted nothing to do with getting rid of slavery. They depended on slavery for their economies. Slavery was not an issue we were going to agree on, so regretfully we put that aside.

As far as representation, slavery was a part of that as well. We came up with a plan that in states where slavery was permitted, slaves would count as three-fifths of a person as far as representation was concerned. As I said, we put off many things in framing the Constitution. But what we did come up with was a constitution that was changeable, that was flexible, and that contained only 4004 words...pretty short for a constitution...but perfect for a growing nation.

Given the problems that this young nation faced, we had no idea what our fate would be. As we sat in the Constitutional Convention, I looked at the chair in which General Washington sat as he presided over the convention. On the back of that chair was a sun on the horizon. I asked myself, if this was a rising or setting sun? And I know now that it was a rising sun.

As I left the Constitutional Convention, a woman came up to me and asked, "What kind of government have you given us?" And I told her "a republic for the people".