



Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

# *John Dickinson*

1732 - 1808

Delaware Delegate to the  
Philadelphia Convention

**Occupation:** Landowner and lawyer in Delaware and Pennsylvania

**Education:** Educated by private tutors; studied law in Philadelphia and London

**Political Accomplishments:** Served in Delaware and Pennsylvania colonial assemblies during the 1760s, wrote essays about colonial grievances against Great Britain prior to the American Revolution, and wrote the original draft of the Articles of Confederation. Though the General Assembly selected Dickinson as President of Delaware in 1781, he resigned in order to become President of Pennsylvania in 1782. Dickinson served as chairman of the Annapolis Convention in 1786 and was elected by Delaware's General Assembly as one of the state's five delegates to attend the federal convention in Philadelphia in 1787 where he served on a variety of committees, supported the interests of small states, and proposed several ideas which were incorporated into the Constitution. As a supporter of ratification, he authored a series of letters signed "Fabius" which urged states to ratify the Constitution in 1788. In 1791, Dickinson was selected to preside over the rewriting of Delaware's State Constitution.

References:

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Bushman, Claudia L., Harold B. Hancock, and Elizabeth Moyne Homsey. Proceedings of the House of Assembly of the Delaware State 1781 - 1792 and the Constitutional Convention of 1792. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1988.

Madison, James. Notes of Debates in the Federal Convention of 1787. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1987.