



Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs

Richard Bassett

1745 - 1815

Delaware Delegate to
the Philadelphia Convention

Occupation: Lawyer, planter, and landowner of property in Delaware and Maryland

Education: Read law with Judge Robert Goldsborough of Dorchester County, Maryland

Political Accomplishments: During the American Revolution, he served as a captain in the state's cavalry unit and functioned as a member of Kent County's Committee of Correspondence and the Council of Safety. Though he opposed proposals to reorganize state government in 1776, Bassett served as a member of Delaware's state constitutional conventions of 1776 and 1791. He was elected to serve as a member of Delaware's House of Assembly during the 1780s. Delaware's General Assembly selected Mr. Bassett to serve as one of the state's delegates at the federal convention in 1787 and was among the representatives from the first seven states who assembled in Philadelphia on Friday, May 25, 1787. Kent Countians elected Mr. Bassett as a deputy to attend the state's Ratification Convention in 1787. Following the ratification of the Constitution, Delaware's General Assembly selected Mr. Bassett to serve as one of the state's first U.S. Senators in 1788. He continued a political career by serving as Governor of Delaware in 1799, Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas between 1793 and 1799, and was appointed U. S. Circuit Court Judge by President John Adams.

References:

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