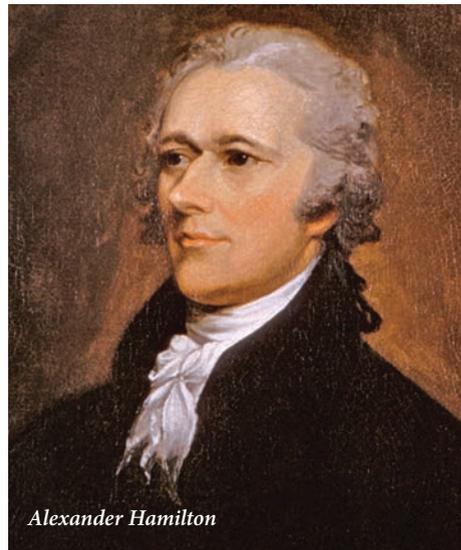


State travel expenses a bane for even a Founding Father

BY ADAM LEVINSON



Alexander Hamilton

WIKIMEDIA

Department of Taxation and Finance Journals, Ledgers, and Registers of Receipts and Payments by the State, a collection containing 442.2 cubic feet of records.

Virginia, the largest state in 1787, authorized the payment of \$6 per day for its delegates to attend the Constitutional Convention. New Jersey reimbursed \$4 per day, while Delaware paid 40 shillings per day. Maryland's delegates were paid based on the same rates used for Congress. We now know that Alexander Hamilton was reimbursed exactly 121 pounds, 12 shillings and 0 pence for his attendance in Philadelphia in May, June, August, and September of 1787.

With these discoveries we are also beginning to better understand the bookkeeping and reimbursement process used by New York. Journal entry 298 reflects a payment to Hamilton for attending the convention and demonstrates, among other things, that Hamilton in effect made an interest free loan to the State of the New York, since it took almost a year to be reimbursed. By contrast, some states paid their delegates in advance.

It is likely that the state treasurer would have approved the reimbursement, which would have been sworn to and subscribed by Hamilton. Once we found the May 1788 payment to Hamilton, we realized that we would likely also find the amount paid to Hamilton for attendance at the Annapolis Convention in 1786. And we did, among the 826 volumes of financial records dating back to 1775. Journal entry 296 reflects payment to "Benson & Hamilton [for] their expenses in attending a Convention in Anapolis [sic]." Of course, the Annapolis Convention laid the groundwork for the Constitutional Convention in 1787. Indeed, the Report of the Annapolis Convention was written by none other than Hamilton.

Even Alexander Hamilton had to deal with state travel expenses—and waiting to be reimbursed. During the summer of 1787, Hamilton was one of three delegates sent by New York to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia. Virginia's seven-member delegation was led by George Washington, who was unanimously selected to preside over the Convention. Pennsylvania sent an eight-member delegation headed by Benjamin Franklin. Over 230 years later, we are still learning new information about the process which led to the creation of the US Constitution.

Until recently, it was unclear if Hamilton had to pay his own way to the Constitutional Convention. The process of reimbursing delegates was also uncertain. Newly discovered journal entries in the New York State Archives shed light on this formative period. I recently unearthed these exciting discoveries, working with John Diefenderfer and Jamie Brinkman, archivists in the New York State Archives. The journal entries appear in the *New York State*

256
New York May 19. 1788

Brought Forward		\$1,296. 3	
206	To Montgomery County. Rec ^d . of Donat. Bonds. Trus.	15	
209	To Suffolk County P. Rec ^d . of Abol. Strong. Trus.	1,143. 5	
211	To New York County P. Rec ^d . of Abol. Keyman. Trus.	145. 5	2699 13
		21	
253	To State of New York		
298	To Cash p ^d . Alexander Hamilton for his attending the Convention at Phil. 1787.	121. 12	
		21	
58	To James Angles		
299	To Vendue duty on his sales to 29 th April last	11. 2	
		21	
297	To Cash		
58	To James Angles. in full	11. 2	
		21	
D. Custom House in New York To Sundry accounts			
242	To John Lasher Surveyor & Receiver	5373. 462. 10	
251	To William Hurten	5374. 15	
253	To Aaron Stockholm	5375. 15	
276	To William Lasher	5376. 15	
242	To Henry Bicker	5377. 15	
253	To William Ansham	5378	
213	To John Stephens	5379	
266	To Samuel Dodge Sen.	5381	
258	To Samuel Scudder	5382	
246	To Henry Dufour	5389	
213	To John Torje	5383	
257	To John Banks	5384	
257	To Judediah Metzger	5385	
		22	
298	To Sundry accounts To Cash		
242	John Lasher	5373	
251	William Hurten	5374	
253	Aaron Stockholm	5375	
276	William Lasher	5376	
242	Henry Bicker	5377	
		Carried forward	5377

More details about this ongoing research can be found on the free history website www.StatutesandStories.com. These topics, including a pending documentary about the Constitution's "Cover Letter," will be discussed during New York Archives magazine's Online Speaker Series on November 9. See page 13 for details.

Above: Journal entry 298 reflects a payment on May 19, 1788, to "Alexander Hamilton for his attending the Convention at Phil."

Below: Journal entry 296 reflects payment to Hamilton for attending the Annapolis Convention in 1786.

Interestingly, Hamilton's reimbursement for the Constitutional Convention was paid in May 1788, the month preceding the bitterly contested New York ratification convention in Poughkeepsie. New York narrowly ratified the Constitution by a vote of 30-27, becoming the eleventh state to join the union. The out-numbered Federalists were led by Hamilton. The Anti-federalists opposing ratification included New York Governor George Clinton and Hamilton's co-delegates in Philadelphia, John Lansing and Robert Yates. ■

202
New York May 5. 1787

30	To Annot Cannon		
299	To Vendue Duty on his sales to 29 th April last	6. 11. 9	
		5	
296	To Cash		
30	To Annot Cannon in full	6. 11. 9	
		7	
35	To James Delancey		
296	To Cash. Repaid Henry Broadwell for a building he erects on James Delancey's Land	2025	30
		7	
5	To Andrew Hoodie		
296	To Cash to enable him to collect Military Stores	1896	150
		2	
37	To John Fleming		
299	To Vendue Duty on his sales to 3 rd April last	1. 1	
		2	
298	To Cash		
37	To John Fleming in full	1. 1	
		2	
37	To Abraham Hardenbergh & William Morris		
296	To Cash. paid them as commissioners to complete the running out the Pennsylvania line	1827	600
		9	
296	To John Cochran (Commis ^r Sec ^y Office)		
296	To Cash. in part of the Requisition of August 2. 1786	1829	2600
		9	
D. Sundry accounts To Cash			
10	Ben Hunt an Amalid 2. Mar	427	19. 1
21	Robert Benson. Attorney Gen ^l	429	520
		669	4
		9	
297	To Sean Office fortificates (p ^d on April 25 th)		
22	To Nathan Whitney. Rec ^d of Henry Strong & Abraham Ready by the hands of Thomas Hazard for their Bond to pay Whiting dated July 2. 1787 for 265	230	91. 10

NEW YORK STATE ARCHIVES