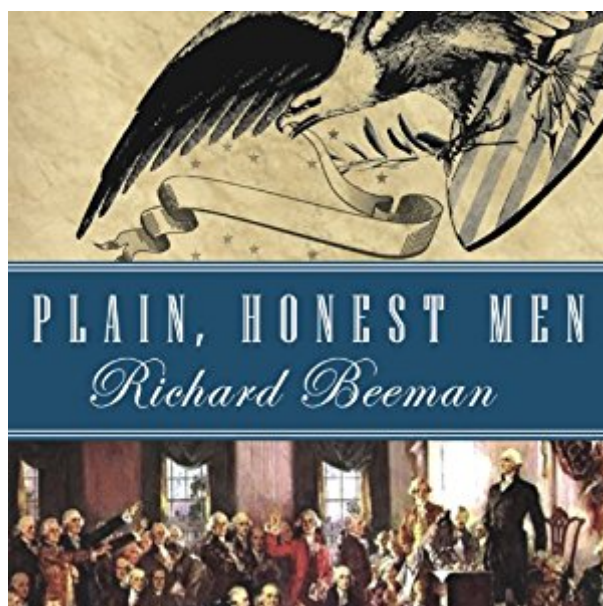


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# Plain, Honest Men: The Making Of The American Constitution



## Synopsis

The Constitutional Convention affected nothing less than a revolution in the nature of the American government. Led by James Madison, a small cohort of delegates devised a plan that would radically alter the balance of power between state and national governments, and then sprung that idea on a largely unsuspecting convention. The success of this bold and brilliant strategy was, however, far from assured, and the ultimate outcome of the delegates' labors—the creation of a frame of government that would enable the fragile American union to flourish—turned out to be very different from that which Madison had originally envisioned. In fact, there was very little agreement among the framers about the nature of the government they had just created. Audiences will come to appreciate the challenges that the Founding Fathers faced in creating a form of government that, while imperfect in many respects, nevertheless approaches, in the words of Benjamin Franklin, "so near to perfection as it does." --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There have been some excellent books written on the US Constitutional convention held in the summer of 1787. Three come to mind immediately: Catherine Drinker Bowen's *MIRACLE AT PHILADELPHIA*, 1966; Christopher Collier's *DECISION IN PHILADELPHIA*, 1986; and the more recent *THE SUMMER OF 1787* by David O. Stewart, 2007. This book yields nothing to any of them in its insight into the entire process of creating the Constitution. It is a highly readable, step-by-step account of the many issues that arose from the very start of the convention and the often very

drawn out efforts to resolve the complications. The author skillfully captures the personalities, concerns, and contributions of a great number of the delegates as they struggled to keep the convention on track and construct the Constitution. As the author notes, the Articles of Confederation was little more than a "league" of sovereign states, who after the Revolutionary War had very little incentive to cooperate. But many of the leading citizens of these states were quite worried about the states' vulnerabilities to a variety of threats, both foreign and domestic, including their own state legislatures which were, in their view, too democratic. It was a real dilemma: how to create a stronger central government while respecting the sovereignty of the states. James Madison of Virginia was by the far the leading advocate for a constitutional convention to resolve these weaknesses. In fact, he got a jump on all other attendees by proposing a new, powerful national government in his fifteen point Virginia Plan, which was the starting point for debate in the convention.

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