

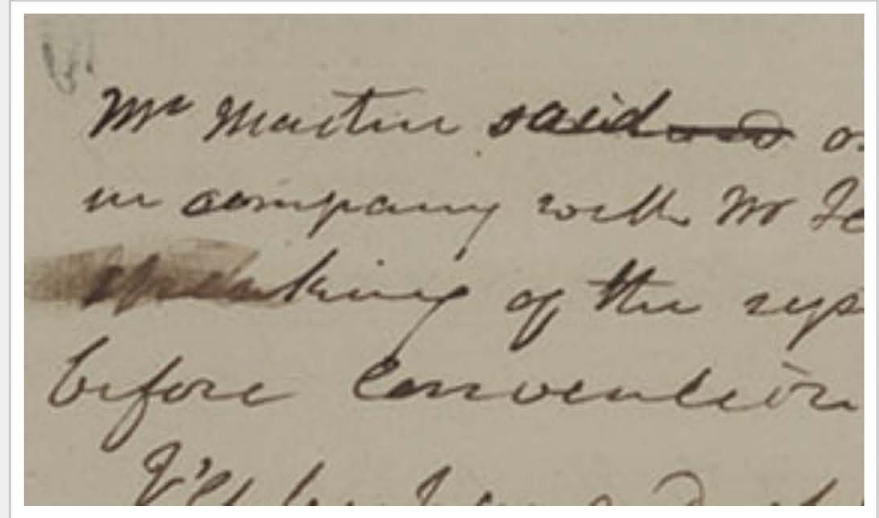
“Monarchy or a Republic?”

As the Constitutional Convention adjourned, “a woman [Mrs. Eliza Powell] asks Dr. Franklin well Doctor what have we got a republic or a monarchy? A republic replied the Doctor if you can keep it.” Although this story recorded by James McHenry (1753–1816), a delegate from Maryland, is probably fictitious, people wondered just what kind of government was called for in the new constitution.

[James McHenry. (Sep. 18, 1787). Diary re. Benjamin Franklin, Mrs. Powel, monarchy or republic, James McHenry Papers, Manuscript Division, LOC (63.02.00) [Digital ID# us0063_02p1. Library of Congress.]

Source: https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-states/Constitution/Ratification/Assets/us0063_02p1_enlarge.jpg

<https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/creating-the-united-states/convention-and-ratification.html#obj8>



James McHenry. Diary, September 18, 1787. Manuscript. James McHenry Papers, [Manuscript Division](#), Library of Congress (63.02.00) [Digital ID# us0063_02p1]

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Mr. Mather said ~~to~~ one day
in company with Mr. Penifer
speaking of the system
before Convention -

I'll be hanged if ever
the people of Maryland
agree to it. ~~Then~~ I advise
you send Mr. Penifer to
stay in Philadelphia
lest you should be
hanged -

Henry to carry it to Congress -
Impunction of money taken
off - Members to be
provided with printed
copies - adjourned some day

- Gent^l of Law. desired by
together at the City Tavern

18-

+ A lady asked Dr. Franklin
well Doctor what have we got
a republic or a monarchy -
A republic replied the Doctor
if you can keep it.

+ The lady here alluded to as a
Mrs. Powell of Philad^a

with

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPTION

Literal:

& A lady asked Dr. Franklin Well Doctor what have we got a republic or a monarchy —A republic replied the Doctor if you can keep it.

[horizontal line break]

+ The lady here alluded to was Mrs. Powel of Philadelphia.

With 21st century punctuation added:

“A lady asked Dr. Franklin: 'Well Doctor, what have we got, a republic or a monarchy' —'A republic,' replied the Doctor, 'if you can keep it.'
'The lady here alluded to was Mrs. Powel of Philadelphia.'”

Sources:

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