

4. JAMES MADISON MEETS WITH JOHN LELAND

James Madison, credited with being "the father of the Constitution," met John Leland at Gum Springs near Orange, Virginia, to secure Baptist support for the Constitution. He assured Leland that he would do all in his power to see that a Bill of Rights was added to the new Constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion.

John Leland, a champion of the rights of conscience, had led the forces in Virginia in their stand for religious liberty. He worked diligently for the disestablishment of the Anglican church in Virginia. Leland was a member of a delegation from the Baptist General Committee of Virginia which presented a memorial in this connection to the General Assembly in 1787.

The Artist says:

The moment captured in this painting, hopefully, was that instant when Madison having talked at length with Leland over the issue of ratification, finally convinces Leland. Leland then, with hand on chin is about to say he'll support Madison. The hand of Madison breaking the symbolic barrier of the line of the oak tree also connotes this feeling.

Putting Leland directly centered within the oak is an attempt to register the strong Christian character of Leland *standing like an oak* on his conviction.

The formation of the limbs of the oak trees in the shape of Gothic church windows, with the light shining through, once again is an attempt to symbolize the watch-care of God on the moment.

The snow on the ground, a late snow in March to be sure, is not historically documented, but used by the artist to portray the importance of an occasion which would have one man dismount his horse and engage in lengthy debate with another in such a temperature.

There was never any doubt but that within the mind and soul of John Leland he would trust in the Lord's direction, for most assuredly he was aware of Matthew 12:21.

In his name shall the Gentiles trust.