

## = Pennsylvania Mutiny of 1783 =

The Pennsylvania Mutiny of 1783 ( also known as the Philadelphia Mutiny ) was an anti @-@ government protest by nearly 400 soldiers of the Continental Army in June 1783 . The mutiny , and the refusal of the Executive Council of Pennsylvania to stop it , ultimately resulted in Congress vacating Philadelphia and the creation of a federal district to serve as the national capital .

## = = Background = =

From March 1781 , the Congress of the Confederation and the Supreme Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania were situated at the Pennsylvania State House ( now known as Independence Hall ) in Philadelphia . Under the authority of the Articles of Confederation , the national government did not have direct control over the military , except in times of war , and was largely reliant on the use of state militias to enforce laws and keep order .

On June 17 , 1783 , Congress received a message from soldiers of the Continental Army stationed in Philadelphia , which demanded payment for their service during the American Revolutionary War . The soldiers threatened to take action that day if their complaints were not addressed . Congress ignored their message , but the soldiers did not act on their threat . Two days later , however , the Congress received word that a group of about 80 soldiers had left their post at Lancaster , Pennsylvania , approximately 60 miles ( 97 km ) west of Philadelphia , and had joined with the soldiers stationed at the city barracks . The group of approximately 500 men had effective control over the weapons stores and munition depot .

## = = = Protests = = =

The next morning on June 20 , the State House was mobbed by as many as 400 soldiers demanding payment . The soldiers blocked the door and initially refused to allow the delegates to leave . Alexander Hamilton , then a delegate from New York , persuaded the soldiers to allow Congress to meet later to address their concerns . The soldiers did allow the members of Congress to peacefully adjourn that afternoon . That evening , a small Congressional committee , headed by Hamilton , met in secret to draft a message to the Pennsylvania Council , asking them to protect Congress from the mutineers . The letter threatened that Congress would be forced to move elsewhere if the Council did not act .

On June 21 , the Congressional committee met again at the State House with members of the Pennsylvania Executive Council , including its president , John Dickinson . The members of Congress asked the council to do more to protect the federal government . Dickinson and the council agreed to consult with the militia commanders and reply to Congress the next day . The following morning , the Pennsylvania Council again refused Congress ' request . Lacking sufficient assurances that the state would be willing to protect Congress , the members left Philadelphia that day for Princeton , New Jersey .

## = = Effect = =

There are three reasons put forth as to why Dickinson and the Pennsylvania Council did not act . The Council 's official reasoning was that they were unsure that the local militiamen would actually protect Congress from their fellow soldiers . Further , the council may have thought that the conflict was not as serious as Congress believed and that the mutiny could be resolved peacefully . The second theory put forth is that Dickinson , having been an officer in the militia , was sympathetic to the soldiers ' grievances . The third theory is that the Council refused to allow Pennsylvania , a sovereign state , to be subjugated by the demands of a few members of Congress .

After Congress completed its business at Princeton in early November 1783 , the capital was moved later that month to Annapolis , Maryland , then to Trenton , New Jersey in November 1784 , and finally to New York City in January 1785 . It was not until the Constitutional Convention in 1787

that delegates decided to meet again in Philadelphia . Pennsylvania 's failure to protect the institutions of the national government , however , was a primary reason why the framers of the Constitution decided to create a federal district , distinct from the states , where Congress could provide for its own security . The delegates therefore agreed in Article One , Section 8 , of the United States Constitution to give the Congress the power " to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever , over such District ( not exceeding ten miles square ) as may , by cession of particular states , and the acceptance of Congress , become the seat of the government of the United States " .

Following the ratification of the United States Constitution by the state of New York in 1788 , the delegates agreed to keep New York City as the temporary federal capital . In 1790 , Congress passed the Residence Act , which created the District of Columbia , located on the banks of the Potomac River from land belonging until that time to the states of Maryland and Virginia , to serve as the new federal capital . Robert Morris , a representative from Pennsylvania , convinced Congress to return to Philadelphia while the new permanent capital was being built . As a result , the Residence Act also declared Philadelphia to be the temporary capital for a period of 10 years . In a final attempt to convince Congress to keep the capital in Philadelphia , the city began construction on a new Presidential palace and an expansion to Congress Hall . However , their efforts failed , and the national government relocated from Philadelphia for the final time on May 14 , 1800 .