

The American Founding Documents

Major Funding for THE AMERICAN FOUNDING DOCUMENTS exhibit was provided by AMERICA250MI.

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Ann Arbor
District Library
aadl.org



Dexter Area
Historical Society
dexterhistory.org



Genealogical Society
of Washtenaw Co.
washtenawgenealogy.org



Salem Area
Historical Society
sahshistory.org



Salem-South Lyon
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About America250MI

In 2026, the United States will commemorate 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the development of a new country dedicated to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". The founding of the United States of America was an experiment, and in the ensuing years, the country has experienced many successes and challenges. To observe this momentous occasion, the U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission was established by Congress (P.L. 114-196) to encourage Americans to remember our past, mark the present, and build towards a promising future. America250MI is Michigan's official committee for the commemoration of the history of our state and its relation to the development of the United States of America.

America250MI's generous funding is enabling us to provide this project to our communities. We are proud to partner with America250MI to celebrate the 250th Anniversary of Our Nation Exhibit Project. This initiative is a testament to America250MI's commitment to fostering community engagement and promoting education.



For more information about dates and locations of this exhibit

as well as the content of this exhibit, go to: wchconsortium.org click on The American Founding Documents Exhibit or scan the QR code



Washtenaw County Historical Consortium's 250th Anniversary of Our Nation Exhibit Project

The American Founding Documents

To celebrate the 250th Anniversary of America's founding, the Washtenaw County Historical Consortium would like to introduce five seminal documents from our nation's history:



This series will explore the historical context, authors, text, and effects of each document, and show how each has affected American governance and law into the modern day.

Posters researched and designed with the assistance of Hillsdale College students

To celebrate the 250th Anniversary of America's founding, the Washtenaw County Historical Consortium would like to introduce five seminal documents from our nation's history:

- The Declaration of Independence (1776)
- The Northwest Ordinances (1787)
- The Federalist Papers (1787 - 1788)
- The Constitution (1787)
- The Bill of Rights (1791)

This series will explore the historical context, authors, text, and effects of each document, and show how each has affected American governance and law into the modern day.

[illegible]

Since the British government failed to protect these rights, the colonists established their own government to better protect themselves.

For more information, scan the QR code



FEDERALIST;
A COLLECTION
OF
ESSAYS,
WRITTEN IN FAVOUR OF THE
NEW CONSTITUTION,
AS AGREED UPON BY THE FEDERAL CONVENTION,
SEPTEMBER 17, 1787.
[by Alexander Hamilton]
IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. I.
NEW-YORK:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY J. AND A. McLEAN,

The Federalists Papers, collectively referred to as “The Federalist,” were written in response to the ratification debates after the Constitutional Convention. Several prominent Anti-Federalists published articles opposing the Constitution. Alexander Hamilton wrote responses and enlisted John Jay and James Madison, who collectively published under the pseudonym of “Publius”. In total, they wrote 85 essays during and after New York’s debates about ratifying the Constitution.

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[illegible]

The Bill of Rights was to guarantee against tyrannical government and against political unrest and violence like the atrocities that occurred during the French Revolution's Reign of Terror. On September 25, 1789, twelve amendments to the Constitution were proposed and debated. Ten of the proposed twelve amendments were ratified on December 15, 1791. These are now known as the Bill of Rights.

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The legislative council shall consist of five members, to continue in office five years, unless sooner removed by Congress, any three of whom to be a quorum, and the members of the council shall be nominated and appointed in the following manner, to wit: As soon as representatives shall be elected, the governor shall appoint a time and place for them to meet together, and, when met, they shall nominate ten persons, residents in the district, and each possessed of a freehold of five hundred acres of land, and return their names to Congress; five of whom Congress shall appoint and commission to serve as aforesaid; and whenever a vacancy shall happen in the council, by death or removal from office, the house of representatives shall nominate two persons qualified as aforesaid, for each vacancy, and return their names to Congress.

The Congress of the Confederation acquired land from the British in the 1783 Treaty of Paris which ended the Revolutionary War, gaining Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and parts of Minnesota. The sale of lands in these territories provided money to the country's fledgling government. The Northwest Ordinances are Constitutional law in the U.S., despite pre-dating the Constitution.

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[illegible]

Creating the Document

With deliberations resolved, the Constitution was put into writing. Over a period of four days, the Committee of Style and Arrangement narrowed twenty-three articles into just seven in the final draft. On September 15, 1787, the draft Constitution was approved and signed by 39 delegates.

George Washington was the first man to sign.
The signing began the process of ratification, which would continue for several years.

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The purpose of the Washtenaw County Historical Consortium is to meet and share information and ideas about the organization and operation of historically significant locations in Michigan's Washtenaw County, to raise public awareness about the value of local history, and to undertake joint projects to further the goals of participating agencies. Membership is open to representatives of historical organizations, institutions, and agencies throughout Washtenaw County including historic homes, farms, depots, mills, churches, schoolhouses, observatories, museums, and libraries with historical collections.

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