

WE the People of the united States, in order
and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and

Sect. 1
Sect. 2

THE
CONSTITUTION
OF THE
STATE
OF
NEW-YORK.

FISH-KILL:
PRINTED BY SAMUEL J. GUDON.
MDCCLXXVII.

LIMITED ENGAGEMENT EXHIBIT

THE PATH TO STATEHOOD

*Founding documents of
the Empire State from your New York State Archives*

NOVEMBER 8-27 | New York State Museum

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The University of the State of New York | State Education Department | Office of Cultural Education.

THE PATH TO STATEHOOD

NEW YORK'S FIRST CONSTITUTION (1777) and the UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION (1787) established stable governments after the turmoil of the American Revolution. Though Great Britain had no written constitution, its political system profoundly influenced the American constitutions.



Signing the Federal Constitution at Poughkeepsie
With Ward in U.S. Post Office, Poughkeepsie by Gerald S. Foster, 1938



THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

New Yorkers Alexander Hamilton and John Jay argued forcefully for the U.S. Constitution. Governor George Clinton expressed deep concerns about a too-strong federal government. New York's ratification of the U.S. Constitution at a convention in Poughkeepsie followed intense debates about government's powers and citizens' rights.



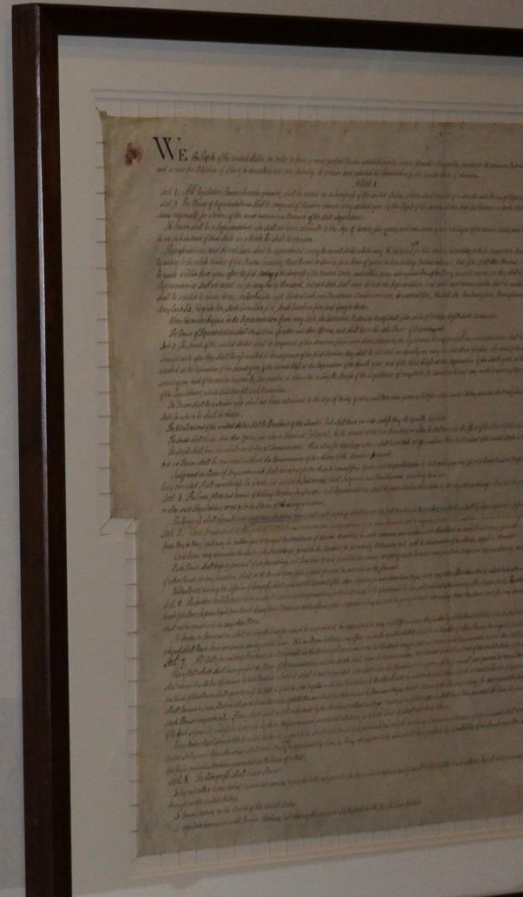
Journal of the Poughkeepsie Convention, 1788

Elected delegates meeting in Poughkeepsie in July 1788 considered whether New York should ratify the United States Constitution, adopted at Philadelphia in 1787. The Journal



First Constitution of the State of New York, 1777 (Final Draft)

New York's first constitution was adopted April 20, 1777. The constitutional convention met in Kingston because New York City, the seat of government, was occupied by the British army. Although the constitution was committed, John Jay is considered to



The manuscript texts of New York's constitutions are "treasure" documents owned by the New York State Archives.

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Signing the Federal Constitution at Poughkeepsie
1788. Mount Vernon, Paint Office, Poughkeepsie to General S. F. Felt, 1788.



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Journal of the Poughkeepsie Convention, 1788

Directed delegates meeting in Poughkeepsie in July 1788 considered whether New York should ratify the United States Constitution, adopted at a convention in Philadelphia in 1787. The Journal of the Poughkeepsie convention includes minutes of proceedings and votes of the delegates. The numerous resolutions and split votes reveal the intense debate over the powers of the proposed new federal government.

The signatures of the president of the convention, Governor George Clinton, and of the delegates, including John Jay and Alexander Hamilton, appear at the end of the Journal.

Collection New York State Archives, series 6282

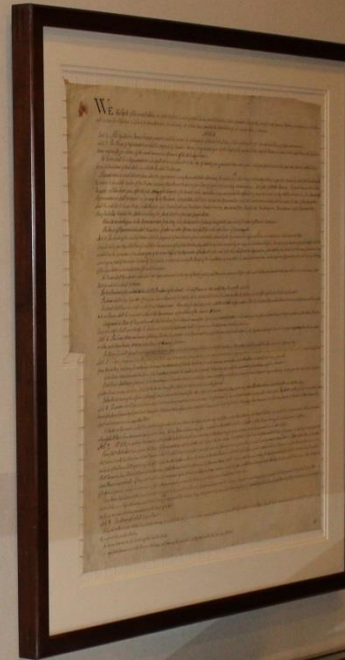


First Constitution of the State of New York, 1777 (Final Draft)

New York's first constitution was adopted April 20, 1777. The constitutional convention met in Kingston because New York City, the seat of government, was occupied by the British army. Although the constitution was drafted by committee, John Jay is considered to be the document's primary author. The constitution established three branches of government—executive, legislative, and judicial—and guaranteed basic civil rights for New Yorkers.

Shown here are parts of the final draft, endorsed at the end by Governor Gansevort, president of the constitutional convention.

Collection New York State Archives, series 6218



NEW YORK'S CONSTITUTIONS

New York has had four constitutions, adopted in 1777, 1846, 1894, and 1938. Each was prepared by a convention of delegates. Constitutional conventions in 1801, 1861, 1893, 1938, and 1987 proposed new documents or major amendments, most rejected by the voters. In November 2017 New Yorkers will again decide whether to hold another constitutional convention.



Approved Copy of the U.S. Constitution, 1788

This is a copy of the U.S. Constitution, as it appeared in 1788. It is a copy of the original, which is now in the possession of the National Archives and Records Administration. The copy is a facsimile of the original, and is used for educational purposes.



Final Copy of the New York Constitution, 1777

This is a copy of the final draft of the New York Constitution, as it appeared in 1777. It is a copy of the original, which is now in the possession of the New York State Archives. The copy is a facsimile of the original, and is used for educational purposes.

The manuscript texts of New York's constitutions are "treasure" documents carefully preserved by the New York State Archives.

The New York State Archives is a program of the State Education Department/University of the State of New York.

[Faint, mostly illegible handwriting at the top of the left page]

Our Arguments will manifest, that some of them are manifestly
 wrong as they are such as of course to be equally right every where in the
 Union — Our Attachments to our sister States, and the Constitution
 upon which we cannot be more firmly demonstrated, than by our
 to a Government, which many of us think very important, that we
 the power of determining whether that Government shall be retained, the
 federal or its present form, or attached agreeable to our wishes, or a
 Novity of the States, with whom we unite.

We request the favor of your Excellency to lay this letter
 before the Legislature of your State or Commonwealth, and we are per-
 suaded that your Report for our national Harmony and good Government
 will induce you to promote a Measure, which we are confident is
 thinking, very conducive to those interesting Objects.

By the unanimous Order of the Convention

Samuel Jones
 John Schenck
 Nath. Lawrence
 Stephen Croman
 Peter Lefferts
 Peter Vandervoort
 Wm. Brant
 Gerson Ryer
 John Haring

Ed. Clinton Secy
 John Jay
 Jefferson Hobart
 James Hamilton
 Nath. Livingston
 Isaac Newell
 Jas. Duane
 Rich. Harrison
 Nicholas Low

Robert Yates
 John Lansing Junr
 John Jay
 Israel Thompson
 Jonathan H. W. Evans
 John Smith
 Thomas Freese
 John Canine
 Jos. C. Schoonmaker
 Paul Cook
 James Clinton
 Wm. Morris
 Wm. Livingston
 Richard Hartshorn
 Wm. C. C. Smith
 Wm. Woodhull
 Henry Johnson
 John Wood

2 Wm. Platt
 Melancton Smith
 Jacobus Van Rensselaer
 Jonathan Thine
 Gilbert Livingston
 J. W. Wm.
 W. Harper
 William R. R.
 John King

New York (State) Constitution

THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

STATE

OF

NEW-YORK.

FISH-KILL:

PRINTED by SAMUEL LUDON.

M.DCC.LXXVII.

Subjects of this State, shall take an Oath of
Allegiance to this State, and Abjure and renounce
all Allegiance and Subjection to all & every foreign
King, Prince, Potentate and State in all matters
ecclesiastical as well as civil.

By Order

Leonard Gansevoort Secy. of State.

State of New York
Secretary's office }

I hereby Certify that the preceding Original
Constitution of this State was this day
Received from John Mc Kesson Esquire
accompanied by the Annexed Letter—

Albany August 30. 1821.

J. V. M. A. S.
Secretary of State

*the Duty of every Man who enjoys the Protection
of Society to be prepared and willing to defend it;
This Convention therefore in the Name and by
the Authority of the Good People of this State doth*

Ordain a

Militia

well in

Discipline

all such

Scruples

bearing

Legislate

of money

the same

ture be

this State

And that

proportion

forever he

and by

Maintain

in this

*And this Convention doth further Ordain de-
termine and declare in the Name and by the
authority*



New York State Archives



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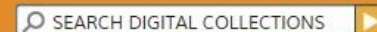
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NYS Constitution

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p. 1

WHEREAS the present Government of this Colony by Congress and Committee, was instituted while the former Government under the Crown of Great-Britain existed in Force; and was established for the sole Purpose of opposing the Usurpation of the British Parliament, and was intended to expire on a Reconciliation with Great-Britain, which it was apprehended would soon take place, but is now considered as remote and uncertain.

AND whereas many and great Inconveniences attend the said Mode of Government by Congress and Committee, as of Necessity in many Instances Legislative, Judicial, and Executive Powers have been vested therein, especially since the Dissolution of the former Government by the Abdication of the late Governor, and the Exclusion of this Colony from the Protection of the King of Great-Britain.

AND whereas the Continental Congress did resolve as followeth, *to wit*.

WHEREAS his Britannic Majesty, in Conjunction with the Lords and Commons of Great-Britain, has, by a late Act of Parliament, excluded the Inhabitants of these United Colonies from the Protection of his Crown.—And whereas no Answers whatever, to the humble Petition of the Colonies for Redress of Grievances and Reconciliation with Great-Britain, has been, or is likely to be given, but the whole Force of that Kingdom, aided by Foreign Mercenaries, is to be exerted for the Destruction of the good People of these Colonies.—And whereas it appears absolutely irreconcilable to Reason and good Conscience, for the People of these Colonies *are* to take the Oaths and Affirmations necessary for the Support of any Government under the Crown of Great-Britain; and it is necessary that the Exercise of every Kind of Authority under the said Crown should be totally suppressed, and all the Powers of Government exerted under the Authority of the People of the Colonies, for the Preservation of internal Peace, Virtue, and good Order, as well as for the Defence of our Lives, Liberties, and Properties, against the hostile Invasions, and cruel Depredations of our Enemies.

Therefore, Resolved, That it be recommended to the respective Assemblies and Conventions of the United Colonies, where no Government sufficient to the Exigencies of their Affairs has been hitherto established, to adopt such Government as shall, in the Opinion of the Representatives of the People, best conduce to the Happiness and Safety of their Con-

Typwritten cover page of the handwritten New York State Constitution of 1777.

The handwritten New York State Constitution of 1777. (30 pages)

Identifier: NYSA_A1802-78

Date: April 20 1777

Repository: New York State Archives

Source: New York State Archives. New York (State). Secretary of State. First constitution of the State of New York, 1777. Series A1802-78.

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