

INTRODUCTION

September 17, 1787 marks the day, two hundred years ago, on which the Founding Fathers completed the drafting of the Constitution for the United States of America. This hallowed document is the guarantee for our personal liberties and security, and the basis of our national political life. It represents an incomparable legacy from the past, and has provided a stable and flexible government based solely upon elections for two hundred years.

The Lilly Library has an outstanding collection of materials relating to the framing of the Constitution, the struggle for ratification, and the beginning of the government under this new instrument. During this Bicentennial Year, the widest possible public exposure will be given to these resources. Many Lilly items, combined with those from other institutions, began a year-long journey on July 1 in a travelling exhibit called "Liberty's Legacy," commemorating the bicentennial of both the Constitution and the Ordinance of 1787. This splendid collection of historical materials will be available for public viewing for a two months' period at each of the following: Ohio Historical Society, Lilly Library at Indiana University, Clements Library at University of Michigan, Newberry Library in Chicago, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, and the Minnesota Historical Society. During August and September, a smaller exhibit relating to the Constitution will be on display at the Bracken Library at Ball State University, consisting of materials from the Lilly Library.

The items relating to the Constitution in the travelling exhibit "Liberty's Legacy" and those exhibited at Ball State, are listed and annotated on the following pages: books, pamphlets, broadsides, newspapers and manuscripts. All were printed or written contemporaneously with the drafting of the Constitution, its ratification, or the inauguration of the Federal government. Together, with the annotations, they tell the story of the evolution of events during the dramatic period when the foundation of our nation was put down.

A list of the most useful publications relating to this exciting period in American history is appended for the convenience of the reader.

That these documents, many of them national treasures, have found a home in Indiana is due in large part to the energy and imagination of Richard O. Morris of Indianapolis and to the generosity of the Ball Brothers Foundation of Muncie. Mr. Morris began collecting materials on the Constitution long before any thought was given to the then distant bicentennial we celebrate this year. On the advice of David A. Randall, then Lilly Librarian, he clearly defined the scope of his collection as contemporaneous publications concerning the drafting and ratification of the Constitution. Then, with the help and encouragement of the book trade, and especially Mike Walsh of Goodspeeds, he set about his job. The many items from the collection of Richard O. Morris in the Lilly Library testify to his success.

Our other great benefactor, the Ball Brothers Foundation, provided the funding that enabled us to secure several of the treasures that would otherwise have been beyond our reach. To them we owe the presence in this collection of the manuscript of the resolution of Congress calling The Constitutional Convention, the first printed draft of the Constitution, James Madison's letter to George Washington giving an account of ratification of the Constitution by Virginia and George Washington's letter to Senator John Langdon accepting the presidency of the United States as well as many other items both printed and manuscript.

With this issue of the Indiana University Bookman dedicated to their achievements we offer our profound thanks to these generous friends.

William R. Cagle
Lilly Librarian