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# Constitution Day

Humboldt State University

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# Constitution Day

Most Americans know that July 4th is our nation's birthday. Far fewer Americans know that September 17th is the birthday of our government, the date in 1787 on which delegates to the Philadelphia Convention completed and signed the U.S. Constitution.

The ideas on which America was founded--commitments to the rule of law, limited government and the ideals of liberty, equality and justice--are embodied in the Constitution, the oldest written constitution of any nation on Earth. Constitution Day is intended to celebrate not only the birthday of our government, but the ideas that make us Americans.

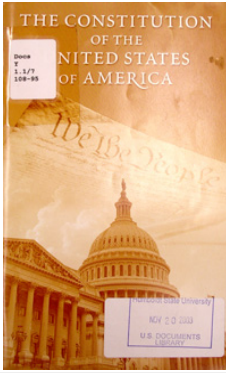
On September 17, 1787, the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention held their final meeting. Only one item of business occupied the agenda that day, to sign the Constitution of the United States of America.

Since May 14, 1787 the 55 delegates had gathered almost daily in the State House ([Independence Hall](#)) in Philadelphia to revise the Articles of Confederation. By the middle of June, it became apparent to the delegates that to merely amend the Articles of Confederation would not be sufficient. Instead, they would write an entirely new document designed to clearly define and separate the powers of the central government, the powers of the states, the rights of the people and how the representatives of the people should be elected.

After being signed in September of 1787, Congress sent printed copies of the Constitution to the state legislatures for ratification. In the months that followed, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay would write the Federalist Papers in support, while Patrick Henry, Elbridge Gerry, and George Mason would organize the opposition to the new Constitution. By June 21, 1788, nine states had approved the Constitution, finally forming "a more perfect Union."

## More Information can be found on the following websites:

- Law Library Resource website: <http://www.llrx.com/columns/govdomain8.htm>
- Library of Congress' repositories for Constitutional documents and information may be accessed at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/bdsds/bdsdhome.html>
- National Archives also has a Web site with a scan of the U.S. Constitution available online at: [http://www.archives.gov/national\\_archives\\_experience/charters/constituti...](http://www.archives.gov/national_archives_experience/charters/constituti...)
- The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) site at <http://www.naspa.org/policy/guide.pdf> includes a 12 page implementation guide which includes suggested activities, a list of web links, and some broadcast and video resources.



**Title:** The Constitution of the United States of America as amended : unrati ed amendments, analytical index / presented by Mr. Ney

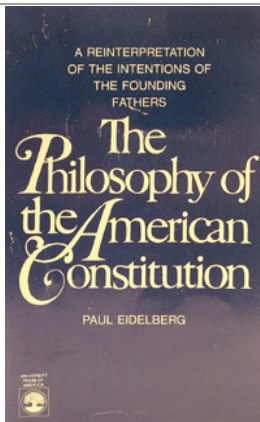
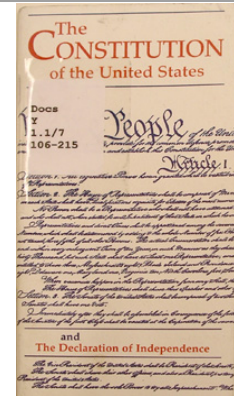
**Publication:** Washington : U.S. G.P.O. , 2003

**Call No:** Docs Y 1.1/7:108-95

**Title:** The Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence

**Publication:** Washington, DC : U.S. G.P.O., 2000

**Call No:** Docs Y 1.1/7:106-215



**Title:** The philosophy of the American Constitution: a reinterpretation of the intentions of the founding fathers / Paul Eid elberg

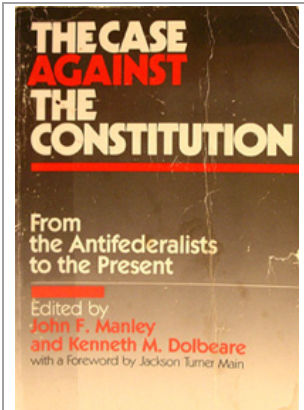
**Publication:** Lanham, MD : University Press of America, c1986. Reprint. Originally published: New York : Free Press, 1968

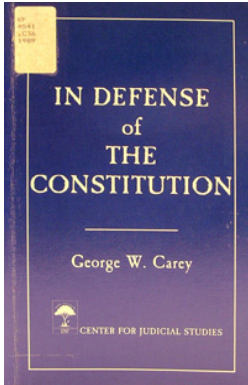
**Call No:** KF4541 E33 1986

**Title:** The Case against the Constitution : from the Antifederalists to the present / edited by John F. Manley and Kenneth M. Dolbeare ; with a foreword by Jackson Turner Main

**Publication:** Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, c1987

**Call No:** KF4541 C37 1987





**Title:** In defense of the constitution / George W. Carey

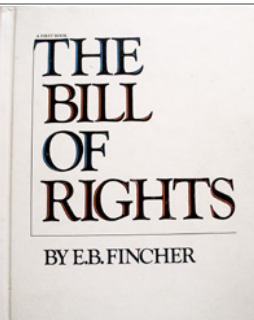
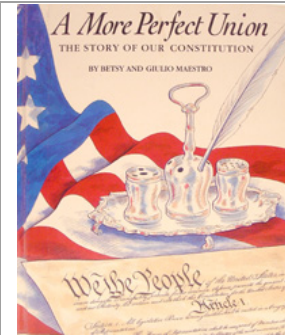
**Publication:** Cumberland, Va. : James River Press, 1989

**Call No:** KF4541 .C36 1989

**Title:** A more perfect union : the story of our Constitution / by Betsy and Giulio Maestro

**Publication:** New York : Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, c1987

**Call No:** 342.73MAESTRO (Children's Collection)



**Title:** The Bill of Rights / by E. B. Fincher

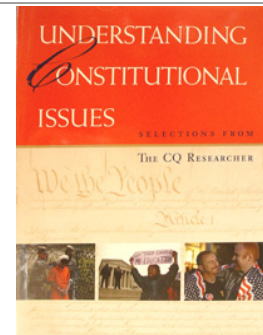
**Publication:** New York : F. Watts, c1978

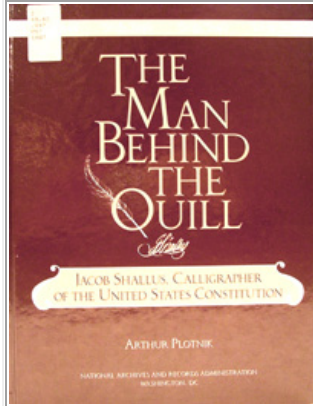
**Call No:** 342.73FINCHER (Children's Collection)

**Title:** Understanding constitutional issues : selections from The CQ researcher

**Publication:** Washington, D.C. : CQ Press, c2004

**Call No:** KF4550.Z9 U537 2004





**Title:** The man behind the quill : Jacob Shallus, calligrapher of the United States Constitution / Arthur Plotnik

**Publication:** Washington, DC : National Archives and Records Administration, 1987

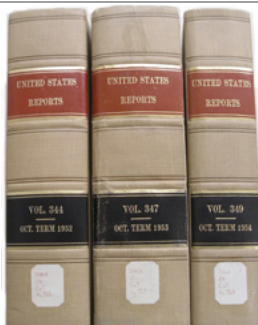
**Call No:** Z43.42.S47 P57 1987

### Cases Which Challenged the Courts

**Title:** Brown v. Board of Education / National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

**Publication:** Washington, D.C. : National Park Service, U.S. Dept. of the Interior 2003

**Call No:** Docs I  
29.6/6:B 81



**Title:** United States Reports: Vol. 344 U.S. 1, 141 (1952); Vol. 347 U.S. 483 (1954); Vol. 349 U.S. 294 (1955)

**Publication:** Washington, D.C. U.S. G.P.O.

**Call No:** Docs JU 6.8:

**Title:** Roe v. Wade : the abortion rights controversy in American history / N.E.H. Hull and Peter Charles Hoffer

**Publication:** Lawrence, Kan. : University Press of Kansas, c2001

**Call No:** KF228.R59 H85 2001

