

Who printed the first drafts of the constitution?

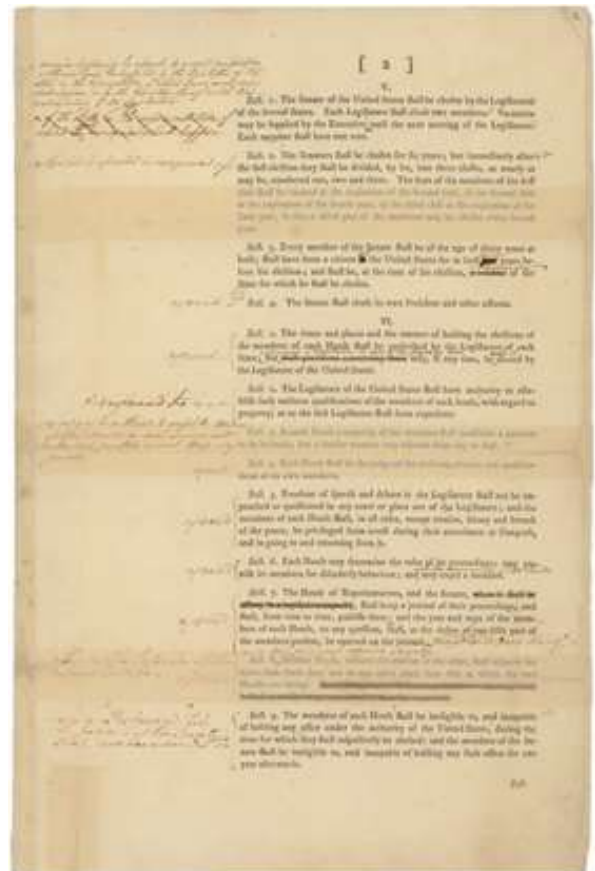
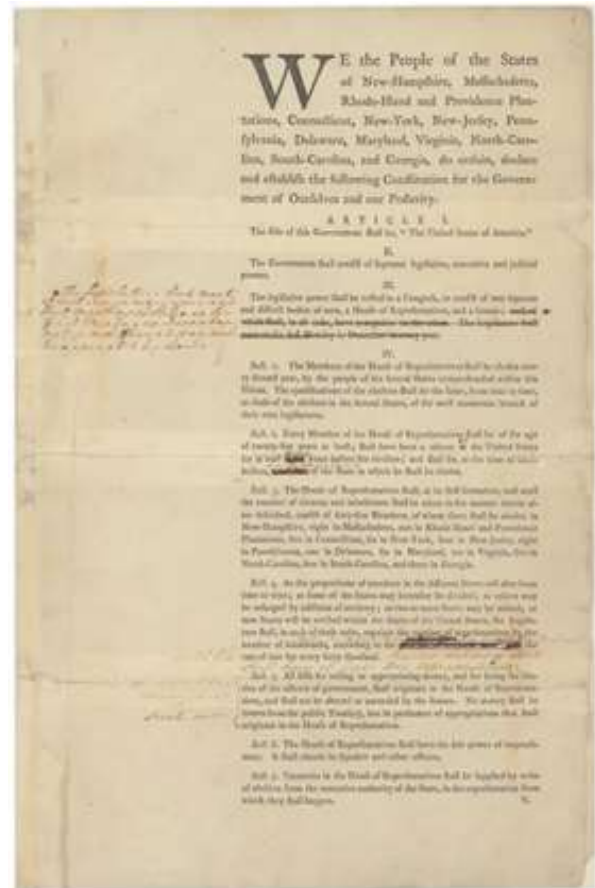
During the summer of 1787, while delegates met in Philadelphia, the company Dunlap & Claypoole, which consisted of printers John Dunlap and his partner David Claypoole, made two printings of committee proposals containing draft text of the Constitution. The two men had been printing for Congress for years. In fact, Dunlap had spent most of that summer in New York City, where Congress was meeting, so it's likely Claypoole did most of the work for the Convention.

Two of them are the first printed draft as reported by the Committee of Detail on August 6, 1787. After the delegates had agreed to 23 general resolutions, based primarily on the Virginia Plan, they elected members to the Committee of Detail to draft a document. Committee members included Oliver Ellsworth (CT), Nathaniel Gorham (MA), Edmund Randolph (VA), John Rutledge (SC), and James Wilson (PA).

On August 6, 1787, Rutledge delivered a working draft of the proposed Constitution and provided printed copies to the delegates. Most obvious on the draft is the Preamble, which did not begin with the familiar, "We the People of the United States," but rather started with, "We the People of the States of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode-Island..." etc.

One copy in the National Archives belonged to George Washington, who presided over the Convention. It is annotated by both Washington and William Jackson, the convention's secretary. Washington and Jackson's annotations included the additions and deletions that delegates adopted between August 6 and September 3.

George Washington's, who presided over the Convention. It was annotated by both Washington and William Jackson, the convention's secretary. Washington and Jackson's annotations included the additions and deletions that delegates adopted between August 6 and September 3.



On September 12, 1787, the committee completed its draft.



Washington held on to the papers until March 19, 1796, when he, now President of the United States, deposited the official records of the Constitutional Convention with Secretary of State Timothy Pickering. Most of those records remained in the custody of the State Department until they were transferred to the Library of Congress in the early 20th century. The State Department, however, held on to some papers, including Washington's draft Constitution, and sent it to the National Archives in the late 1930s when they transferred their historic records.

Dunlap & Claypoole also printed copies of the second working draft, which were distributed to the delegates on September 13. Finally, on September 17, "by the unanimous consent of the States present," delegates signed the Constitution, scribed by Shallus, and then submitted it to Congress for transmittal to the states for ratification. Dunlap & Claypoole were once again tasked with printing and produced 500 copies of the now-final text, but this time there was no need for secrecy.

on September 17, the delegates voted that George Washington, as President of the Convention, was to "retain the Journal and other papers, subject to the order of Congress, if ever formed under the Constitution." Later that evening, Jackson turned over the official records of the Constitutional Convention to Washington.