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- Abstract:** The chapter offers information on the development of the U.S. Constitution. Once the preamble was completed, the U.S. Constitution was turned over to Jacob Shallus. This meant Shallus had to write out, by hand, the words of the Constitution. John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the two men most responsible for the Declaration of Independence, did not participate in the writing of the Constitution. The first to ratify was Delaware, followed by Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island. As the delegates toasted the completion of the Constitution in the City Tavern in Philadelphia, printers John Dunlap and David Claypoole worked into the night to publish the first copies of the six-page document. We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.
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Chapter 4: Facts About the Constitution

Once the preamble was completed, the U.S. Constitution was turned over to Jacob Shallus for "engrossing." This meant Shallus had to write out, by hand, the words the delegates had argued over and voted on during the summer.

Shallus was an expert penman who was employed as the assistant clerk of the Pennsylvania Assembly to engross the assembly's documents. It was Shallus who wrote out the words "We the People" in large, bold letters, leaving little doubt in a reader's mind exactly for whom the document was written.

Shallus was paid \$30 to engross the Constitution.

Fifty-five delegates debated the Constitution during the summer of 1757. Nineteen other delegates had been appointed by their colonies to attend the Constitutional Convention but never showed up. They either declined to attend or shirked their responsibilities.

Rhode Island refused to send delegates, fearing that its lucrative shipping trade would be harmed with a change in government. New Hampshire's delegates did not arrive until July 23. Two out of the three New York delegates left early, leaving only Alexander Hamilton in attendance from that state. Without the other two delegates in attendance, Hamilton didn't feel he had the authority to cast the ballot for his state, so New York exercised no vote throughout much of the summer.

Although the delegates concerned themselves with writing laws, not all of them were lawyers. Thirty-four of the 55 delegates practiced law; the others were soldiers, farmers, teachers, clergymen, physicians, bankers, and merchants. Benjamin Franklin, at age 81, was the oldest delegate. Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey, age 26, was the youngest.

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson, the two men most responsible for the Declaration of Independence, did not participate in the writing of the Constitution. At the time of the Constitutional Convention, Adams was serving as American ambassador to Great Britain while Jefferson held that position in France. Later, Jefferson called for the addition of the Bill of Rights.

The Constitutional Convention ended on September 17, 1787. On that day, George Washington wrote in his journal: "The business being closed, the members adjourned to the City Tavern, dined together and took cordial leave of each other after which I returned to my lodgings and retired to meditate on the momentous work which had been executed."

Disputes over the Constitution led to the establishment of political parties in America. People who supported the Constitution joined the Federalists while opponents became known as the Anti-Federalists. Anti-Federalists opposed the Constitution because they believed it would create a central government that would become too powerful and dominated by wealthy people, and that the federal government would take power away from the states.

Eventually, all 13 states did vote for ratification. The first to ratify was Delaware, followed by Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina and Rhode Island. The Constitution became effective when the ninth state, New Hampshire, ratified the document on June 21, 1788. On September 13, 1788, Congress instructed the states to send representatives to the Electoral College on the first Wednesday in February 1789, for the purpose of selecting a president. On that day, George Washington was elected president with 69 electoral votes. Twelve electors did not cast ballots. Two electors each from Virginia and Maryland declined to vote, and none of the eight electoral votes allocated to New York were cast because the state legislature could not agree on how to select the electors.

Government under the old Articles of Confederation ended on March 3, 1789. The next day, Congress met for the first time under the rules established by the Constitution. And on April 30, 1789, George Washington took office as the nation's first president.

The inauguration was in New York City, which served as the capital of the United States at the time. The oath was administered to Washington on a balcony over-looking Broad and Wall streets by Robert R. Livingston, a New York state official, who asked Washington to swear that he would "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States."

Washington answered, "I swear, so help me God!"

Livingston then turned to the crowd below and announced: "Long live George Washington, president of the United States!"

As the delegates toasted the completion of the Constitution in the City Tavern in Philadelphia, printers John Dunlap and David Claypoole worked into the night to publish the first copies of the six-page document; it was ready for delivery to the state legislatures the next morning.

The preamble to the Constitution reads:

We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

PHOTO (COLOR): A copy of the U.S. Constitution. Thirty-eight of the delegates to the 1787 convention in Philadelphia signed the Constitution, yet the document contains 39 signatures. George Read, a delegate from Delaware, signed for himself as well as John Dickinson, who had gone home because he became sick.

PHOTO (COLOR): George Washington presides as the delegates sign the Constitution during the 1787 convention in Philadelphia. Washington would be the first president elected under the new constitution.

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By Hal Marcovitz

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