

FASCINATING FACTS ABOUT THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

1. Of the spelling errors in the Constitution, PENSYLVANIA above the signers' names is probably the most glaring because today, Pennsylvania is spelled with two Ns; in 1781, the spelling with one N is also correct.



2. The Constitution does not set forth requirements for the right to vote. At the outset of the Union, only men could vote. Blacks and women were excluded from the electoral process until 1870 and 1920, respectively. Native Americans were not given the vote until 1924.

3. A proclamation by President George Washington and a congressional resolution established the first national Thanksgiving Day on November 26, 1789. The reason for the holiday was to give thanks for the new Constitution.



4. There was initially a question as to how to address the President. The Senate proposed that he be addressed as "His Highness the President of the United States of America and Protector of Liberties." Both the House and Senate later compromised on the use of President of the United States.

5. Although Benjamin Franklin's mind remained active, his body was deteriorating. He was in constant pain and could barely walk. He entered the convention hall in a sedan chair carried by four prisoners from the Walnut Street jail in Philadelphia.



6. There was a proposal at the Constitutional Convention to limit the standing army for the country to 5,000 men. George Washington sarcastically agreed, as long as, he said, there was a stipulation that no invading army could number more than 3,000 men.

7. From 1804 to 1865 there were no amendments added to the Constitution until the end of the Civil War, when the 13th Amendment abolished slavery. This is the longest period in American history in which there were no changes to our Constitution.



8. As evidence of its continued flexibility (or its limited flexibility, depending on your viewpoint) the Constitution has been changed seventeen times since 1791, when the first 10 amendments, known as the Bill of Rights were made.

9. At the time of the Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia was the most modern city in America and the largest city in North America. It had a population of 40,000, 33 churches, 10 newspapers and a university.



10. Although the United States Treasury Department stopped distributing currency denominations of \$500, \$1000, \$5000, and \$10,000 in 1969, the production of each stopped after World War II in 1945. These notes may be found in circulation today, although they are very rare. James Madison, "The Father of the Constitution" is on the \$5,000 bill.