

BASIC DOCUMENTS OF SOUTH CAROLINA THE CONSTITUTION OF 1778

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INTRODUCTION: Although the constitution of 1778 was a mere act of the legislature, it was evolved over a two-year period with an intervening election and under the fire of vigorous public discussion. On October 14, 1776, Basileus Lowndes prepared a report from a committee of the General Assembly appointed to revise the temporary constitution of that year and this report, as amended, was ordered printed. Three months later the new Assembly yielded to the demands of the dissenters and agreed to end government support of the Anglican Church. On April 14, 1777, The Gazette of the State of South Carolina advertised the printed bill embodying the proposed constitution. Because of the loss of the legislative Journal of 1778 and 1779, it is not known how often changes were made; but the constitution adopted on March 19, 1778, was very different from its predecessor. Its bill of rights was selective rather than comprehensive. It replaced the Legislative Council with a Senate elected directly by the people, and, along with the constitutions of three other states, pioneered in devising the modern system of elected executive officials. It forbade government support of any church, but its framers undertook to give meaning to the declaration that "the Christian Protestant Religion shall be deemed . . . the established Religion of this State" by prescribing certain requirements in creed and government. This remarkable project, like the pronates of many early state constitutions, was a product of the country. The most significant provision, however, was that which recognized the two bases of political power in the state--landowner wealth and back-country white population--and promised equal representation for each. This principle, proposed by the Assembly committee in October, 1776, had been clearly summarized in the Commons House of Representatives of 1776 (MS Commons Journal of May 6, where it is asserted that the parishes "send Members in proportion to the

original, but the more systematic punctuation of the official report adopted.

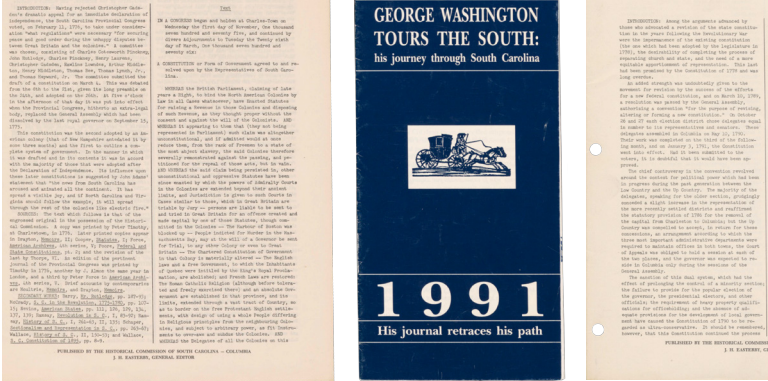
SOURCEWORK: GREEN, G. CONSTITUTIONS, 1405-16; HOWE, FRANKLIN, 1, 370-72; MCADAMS, D. C., JR., 1780, pp. 203-45; NEVINS, LEECH, BANCROFT, HISTORY OF U. S., II, 117-118; SCHULTZ, THE CONSTITUTION OF S. C., 1, 128-79; SCHULTZ, REPRESENTATION IN S. C., pp. 3, 34, 35, 11, 168-69; 168-99; HISTORY OF S. C., 1776-1777, pp. 277, 278-82; JOURNAL OF 1852, pp. 10-12; WOLFE, JAMES, S. C., pp. 43-44.

Text

At a GENERAL ASSEMBLY begun and
held at Columbia, on Monday the fifth
of January, 1778, the following
Year of our Lord one thousand
seven-hundred and eighty, and from
the beginning of the present
legislature to the nineteenth
of the Year of our Lord one
thousand seven-hundred and
eighty-eight.

AN ACT for establishing the
form and manner of electing
of SOUTH-CAROLINA.

WHEREAS The Constitution of
this State has been by the
Assembly agreed to and resolved upon by
this Country, met in Congress the
last, and the said Constitution
was temporary only, and suited
to the public Affairs of that
time, and to the exigencies
of the present, and to an
Accommodation with Great
Britain; And whereas the United
States have since continued
in the possession of the
political Constitution heretofore
and Great-Britain entered



Introduction

This resource was created for South Carolina educators to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the United States of America's founding. These activities were designed by South Carolina State Library staff, and all feature resources from the State Library's [Digital Collections](#).

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south carolina
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George Washington's Travels Through South Carolina

Resource

[George Washington Tours the South: His Journey Through South Carolina](#)

(South Carolina Department of Archives and History)

Grades 3-5

- **Activity #1:** Write journal entries from George Washington's point of view using the page below.
- **Activity #2:** Create a promotional poster for one or more of the locations George Washington visited.
- **Activity #3:** Pretend you're in charge of planning a tour of South Carolina for a modern-day president. Use the South Carolina map included in the packet and create a schedule of 5-10 *must-see* places throughout our state for the president.

Grades 6-12

- **Activity #1:** Research and present on one of the locations George Washington visited in South Carolina (listed on page 1 of the document). Is the site still open to the public today? What was the significance of that location during that time, and how is it significant today?
- **Activity #2:** Use a digital platform to create a story map of George Washington's travels through South Carolina.
- **Activity #3:** Research and discuss the effectiveness of George Washington's overall trip. Was it considered a success? What did he learn and accomplish? What would you have done differently?

Additional Educator Resources

- [George Washington Trail: Coastal Section](#)
(South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism)
- [George Washington Trail: Central Section](#)
(South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism)
- [Map: Washington's 1791 Presidential Journey](#)
(Mount Vernon)
- [George Washington and Travel](#)
(Mount Vernon)
- [Washington's Southern Tour: An Interview with Warren Bingham](#)
(Mount Vernon)
- [GIS Tools - Story Map Generator](#)



Celebrating America from the Bicentennial to Today

Resource

[What Will You Do for America's 200th Birthday?](#)

(South Carolina American Revolution Bicentennial Commission)

Grades 8-12

Read the page titled Bicentennial Project Ideas Are Endless (page 7 of the document), focusing on the distinctions among the “Heritage,” “Festival,” and “Horizon” project types. Then review the two pages of project ideas listed for each type.

- **Activity #1:** Select and plan one of the Bicentennial projects that is still relevant today.
- **Activity #2:** Create new and updated versions of each of the three sections for SC250.
- **Activity #3:** Discuss what may be different in South Carolina for SC250. Brainstorm what new types of “Horizon” projects may be suggested.

Additional Educator Resources

- [SC250 Website](#)
- [South Carolina 250 Digital Collection](#)
(South Carolina State Library)
- [American Bicentennial Celebration](#)
(Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library & Museum)
- [South Carolina American Revolution Bicentennial Commission Digital Collection](#)
(South Carolina State Library)

Studying the South Carolina Constitutions

Resources

- [The Constitution of 1776, J.H. Easterby](#)
(South Carolina Department of Archives and History)
- [The Constitution of 1778, J.H. Easterby](#)
(South Carolina Department of Archives and History)
- [The Constitution of 1790, J.H. Easterby](#)
(South Carolina Department of Archives and History)

Grades 8-12

Read the introductions to each of the three linked versions of the South Carolina Constitution.

- **Activity #1:** Discuss how each Constitution became increasingly representative of South Carolina's population (politically, geographically, and religiously). In what ways was the population not represented?
- **Activity #2:** Research one of the authors of the South Carolina Constitution of 1776.
- **Activity #3:** South Carolina adopted three state constitutions in 14 years (1776, 1778, 1790). Research and discuss why this was the case, and how this fits in with the changes in the federal government.

Additional Educator Resource

- [Constitutions](#)
(South Carolina Encyclopedia)

Drayton's Speech to the Georgia General Assembly

Resource

[Documents Relating to the History of South Carolina During the Revolutionary War](#)

(Compiled by Alexander Samuel Salley)

Grades 8-12

Read William Henry Drayton's speech to the Georgia Convention, located on page 12 of the book (page 17 of the PDF)

- **Activity #1:** Analyze and discuss the intent of Drayton's speech. Did Drayton speak for himself or the South Carolina General Assembly? Why did Drayton believe South Carolina should annex Georgia? How do you think the Georgia General Assembly reacted to this speech?
- **Activity #2:** The speech ends with the line "The rest of the speech is missing." Complete Drayton's speech.
- **Activity #3:** Research William Henry Drayton and his legacy, including Drayton Hall.

Additional Educator Resources

- [Drayton Family Papers, 1837-1869](#)
(Lowcountry Digital Library)
- [General Map of the Southern British Colonies in America](#)
(University of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library Map Collection)
- [This Month in SC History: William Henry Drayton](#)
(South Carolina Historical Society)
- [William Henry Drayton: South Carolina Revolutionary Patriot](#) by Keith Krawczynski
(Internet Archive)
- [Drayton Hall](#)