



# NATIONAL CONSTITUTION CENTER

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[www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org)

## **NEH Landmarks of American History Workshop**

**A Revolution in Government: Philadelphia, American Independence and the Constitution, 1765-1791**

**July 7-11 and July 21-25, 2008**

**National Constitution Center**

**Philadelphia, PA**

Dear Colleague:

The National Constitution Center in Philadelphia invites you to join distinguished historians and other scholars for a weeklong seminar: “A Revolution in Government: Philadelphia, American Independence and the Constitution, 1765-1791.” Philadelphia, the birthplace of American democracy, was the nation’s leading metropolis in the era of the American Revolution. Because so many formative events in the Revolutionary era – including the First and Second Continental Congresses and the Constitutional Convention – occurred in Philadelphia, the city is the perfect vantage point from which to study the American founding. More than any other American city, Philadelphia celebrates its past through the preservation of many nationally significant historic sites while simultaneously embracing its present and future as a commercially and culturally vibrant, modern city.

### **Theme**

No city in eighteenth-century British North America put more of its stamp on the founding of the American republic than Philadelphia. Here is where Independence was declared, where a provisional government was organized, and where a revolution in government – the framing of the U.S. Constitution – all took place. For a decade, between 1790 and 1800, Philadelphia was the capital of the new nation. Accordingly, the city and its inhabitants left an indelible mark on the dramatic political events of the founding era. Of the six men who signed both the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, four of them were Pennsylvanians. Philadelphia itself produced a remarkable generation of lawyers, legislators and statesmen, including Gouverneur Morris, Robert Morris, James Wilson, and of course, Benjamin Franklin. The influence that these men and the city they inhabited had on the nation’s founding will be a special focus of the institute, which will include walking-tours of historic Philadelphia and visits to its many landmarks. The institute will be conducted by leading American historians, who will present a tightly focused series of seminars on the origins of American conceptions of liberty and the titanic political conflicts of the founding era.

### **Content, Scholars and Classroom Material Development**

History in Philadelphia is something you can walk through. During our five days in Philadelphia we will participate in walking-tours and field trips throughout Independence National Historical Park. Carpenters’ Hall, site of the First Continental Congress, and Independence Hall, birthplace of both the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, are among the famous landmarks waiting to be explored. So are less well-known sites, such as the Graff House, where Jefferson drafted the Declaration of Independence and the Market Street address where Benjamin Franklin’s home and courtyard once stood. Seminars will be conducted by leading American historians, including: John Murrin, professor emeritus at Princeton University; Daniel

K. Richter, director of the McNeil Center for Early American Studies at the University of Pennsylvania; and Richard Beeman and Michael Zuckerman, senior historians at the University of Pennsylvania. Morning seminars will be accompanied by field trips and walking-tours in the afternoon, led by scholars and interpreters from the National Park Service. Professor Zuckerman, an expert on Benjamin Franklin, will lead a walking tour of “Franklin’s Philadelphia.” Daily sessions with a master teacher will be devoted to Methods of Teaching the Constitution and the development of classroom-ready materials.

Topics for the five-day seminar will include

### **Day One: The Anglo-American Heritage of Liberty (1215-1763)**

American traditions and practices of individual liberty have English roots that were expanded and transformed by 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century American life. For example, English “common law” and the 17th century struggle between Parliament and the King profoundly shaped English and American understandings of British liberty and the British Constitution. To help gauge the extent of the American transformation of British traditions, we will read Benjamin Franklin’s *Observations Concerning the Increase of Mankind* (1751). Franklin’s text will offer an American counter-example to the assigned English texts, which include the Magna Carta (1215), the Declaration of Rights (1689) and excerpts from Locke’s *Second Treatise on Government*. It will also serve as a gateway into the institute’s Pennsylvania-based curriculum. This seminar will be led by John Murrin, professor emeritus, Princeton University. Participants will take a walking tour that will familiarize them with the historic district and highlight major sites in the area.

### **Day Two: Declaring Independence (1763-1776)**

With the change in British imperial policy in 1763, Americans struggled to forge a coherent response to what many considered to be a threat to their liberties. From 1763 to 1774, American resistance proceeded sporadically; but by 1774 the colonies were beginning to coalesce into a more united rejection of British royal authority. Utilizing the landmarks of Carpenters Hall and the Pennsylvania State House, later to be called Independence Hall, this session will explore both the early American resistance to British authority and the climactic events of 1774-1776. We will begin the session by reading letters from British royal governors describing American resistance to the Stamp Act (July-November 1765). These will serve as more lively companions to our brief review of the “Resolutions of the Stamp Act Congress” (1765). To trace and discover how these principals fared over the next decade, we will read the “Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress” of 1774. James Wilson’s pamphlet, “Considerations on the Nature and Extent of the Legislative Authority of the British Parliament,” alongside Tom Paine’s *Common Sense*, will then serve as an intellectual bridge into our look at the Declaration of Independence of 1776. The seminar will be led by Richard R. Beeman, University of Pennsylvania

### **Day Three: To Begin the World Anew: Establishing Government in the Name of the People (1776-1781)**

With the separation from Britain, the states had to establish independent governments. “We have it in our power to begin the world over again,” wrote Tom Paine. “The birthday of a new world is at hand.” Seizing the opportunity to create new forms of government that would extend the principles of liberty across all America, most states adopted new, and republican

constitutions. But that did not solve the problem of how to divide authority between local and national governments. In 1781, the states agreed to the Articles of Confederation. While the central government established by the Articles led a successful revolution, it proved ineffectual at home and abroad after the war, and many Americans blamed the general deterioration of American political life on its weakness. By reading the fundamentally libertarian Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776) and comparing it to the more conservative Virginia state constitution (1776), participants will see that colonial legislative efforts varied considerably. These, in turn, will be compared to the Pennsylvania state constitution (1776), the most explicitly democratic state constitution of its era. Establishing new state governments in the name of the people did not solve the problem of how to divide power between local and central governments. We will examine the consequences of this in detail. The seminar will be led by Daniel Richter, McNeil Center for Early American Studies and the University of Pennsylvania. Participants will take a guided tour of Independence Hall, where the Second Continental Congress and Constitutional Convention were held.

#### **Day Four: Creating a New Federal Constitution (1781-1787)**

In the mid-1780s, frustration with weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation (1781) came together with mounting concern over examples of legislative tyranny and other political and social conditions in the states. This produced a powerful momentum for constitutional change. The result was a constitutional convention which met in Philadelphia in 1787 to frame the new Constitution. The delegates – including Pennsylvanians James Wilson and Gouverneur Morris, whose central roles will be explored in detail – gathered amidst uncertain chances of success. Yet the document they created was remarkable, both for the way it reconfigured ideas about republican government and federalism, and how it absorbed the precedents of state constitution-making, including Pennsylvania's. Its acceptance by the American people, however, would still require an epochal political struggle. Discussion in this session will be based primarily on the participants' reading of James Madison's *Notes on the Federal Convention*. Particular attention will be paid to the roles of James Wilson, Gouverneur Morris, John Dickinson, Charles C. Pinckney, and William Paterson. The seminar will be led by Richard R. Beeman, University of Pennsylvania

#### **Day Five: Adding a Bill of Rights: The Federalist/Anti-Federalist Debate (1788-1791)**

The debates over ratification in the fall and winter of 1787-88 involved a fundamental contest over what kind of society and culture America was to have. Anti-Federalists focused on what they saw as violations of earlier Revolutionary assumptions about the nature of power and the need of a small homogenous society in a republican state. Federalists saw themselves as saving the Revolution from its excesses. Ratification of a Bill of Rights in 1791 completed the framework of American government that has endured to the present day. This session will be based substantially on the participants' reading of the most important Federalist/anti-Federalist papers, and will therefore be primary-source rich. The session will be led by Michael Zuckerman, University of Pennsylvania.

#### **Development of Classroom Ready Materials**

Daily sessions will be devoted to methods of content presented in faculty workshop, the Constitution in the Classroom, and participants, working in small groups or independently, will be expected to develop a classroom ready document based on content covered in the institute,

with a plan in place before leaving Philadelphia. Participants will be given the opportunity to work side by side with faculty, during breakout sessions each morning.

## **Logistics**

### When

Each five-day seminar begins on Monday morning and ends on Friday afternoon. On your application, please indicate your order of preference regarding the week that you would like to attend.

Week one: July 7-11

Week two: July 21-25

### Where

Seminars will be conducted at the National Constitution Center on Independence Mall in the heart of the historic district of Philadelphia. We have reserved housing accommodations at the Holiday Inn Historic District, just two blocks from the National Constitution Center. Participants will be offered the choice of a private or shared room. The hotel provides free in room internet access and workout facilities. The National Constitution Center provides daily access to its Education Resource Library, where participants will have access to public computers and a wealth of materials for resource development.

### Who

The program is open to public, private and home-school teachers as well as other school personnel. Teachers and administrators from all levels and disciplines may apply, but preference will be given to teachers who incorporate American history themes and civics in their classrooms.

### Cost

Each participant will receive a stipend of \$500 to help cover food, lodging, and other personal expenses. Estimated housing costs are \$65 per night, for a shared room and approximately \$129 per night for a single room. Participants will be expected to arrive on the Sunday proceeding the first seminar session on Monday. Participants will also be provided an additional travel stipend, to help defer the cost of travel to Philadelphia.

## **Application**

You will need to complete the application, following the instructions outlined on our website at [www.constitutioncenter.org/summer](http://www.constitutioncenter.org/summer). Please note, there are four sections:

1. The application cover sheet: <http://www.neh.gov/online/education/participants/>
  - One copy automatically submitted electronically to NEH
  - Three hard copies submitted by mail to the National Constitution Center
2. Your resume (three hard copies submitted by mail to the National Constitution Center.)
3. Perhaps the most important part of the completed application is an essay of not more than one double-spaced page. This essay should include information about your professional

background and interest in the subject of the workshop; your special perspectives, skills, or experiences that would contribute to the workshop;

and how the experience would enhance your teaching or school service (three hard copies submitted to the National Constitution Center).

4. Additionally, you will need to submit a letter of recommendation from the principal or other school administrator of your teaching institution or the head of a home school association in support of your application.

No applicant will be discriminated against based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, disability, or any other protected category.

Your completed application must be postmarked **no later than March 17, 2008**, addressed as follows:

NEH Summer Teacher Institutes  
National Constitution Center  
525 Arch Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Questions should be addressed to [teacher@constitutioncenter.org](mailto:teacher@constitutioncenter.org)

Successful candidates will be notified on or about April 16, 2008. If accepted, applicants must confirm their participation by April 23.

We look forward to welcoming you to Philadelphia!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Stephen Frank".

Dr. Stephen Frank, Program Co-Director

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eli J. Lesser".

Mr. Eli J. Lesser, Program Co-Director