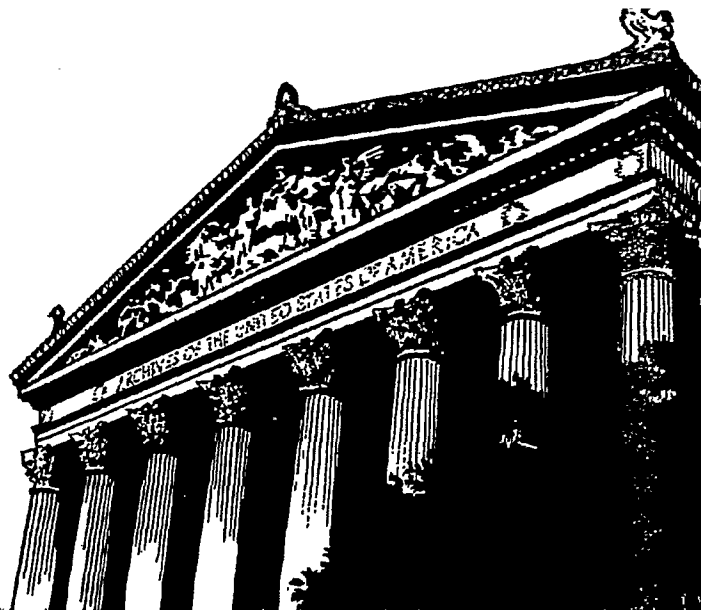


WELCOME TO THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES R · O · T · U · N · D · A

WASHINGTON, DC



Exhibition Hall

How is the exhibition area divided? The domed area is the Exhibition Hall, also known as the Rotunda. The exhibit area around the back of the hall is the Circular Gallery.

May I use my camera here? Only if no flash or artificial light is required. This type of light may damage the documents. In order to protect the documents, we also prohibit food, beverages, and gum inside the Rotunda.

How high is the dome? 75 feet above the floor.

Who painted the murals? Barry Faulkner (1881-1966) of New York.

When were the murals painted? They were executed in the early 1930s and installed in December 1936.

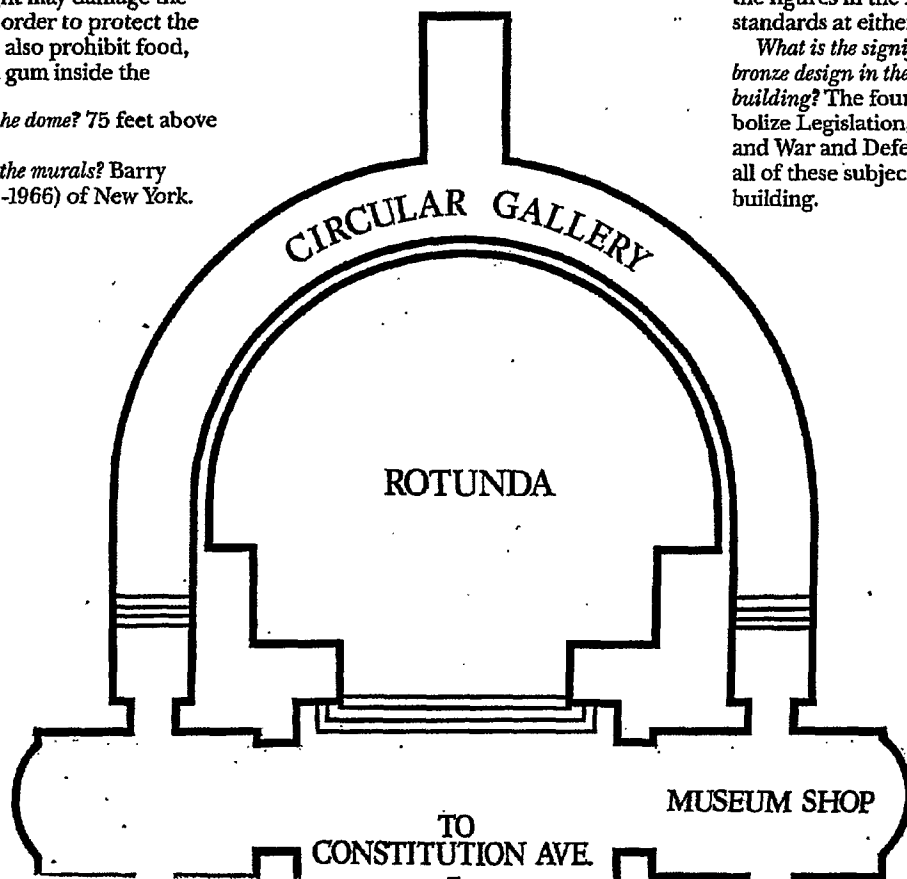
How large are they? 13 feet 10 inches high and 34 feet 10 inches long.

What are the subjects of the murals? The one on the left as you enter the Exhibition Hall is entitled "The Declaration of Independence." It represents

Thomas Jefferson presenting a draft of the Declaration to John Hancock, the president of the Continental Congress. The mural on the right is entitled "The Constitution." It shows James Madison submitting the Constitution to George Washington and the Constitutional Convention.

Who are the persons portrayed in the murals? Charts showing the identity of the figures in the murals are on the standards at either side of the hall.

What is the significance of the big bronze design in the floor as you enter the building? The four winged figures symbolize Legislation, Justice, History, and War and Defense. Documents on all of these subjects are in this building.



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Charters of Freedom

Are the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights the real, original documents? Yes. We call them the Charters of Freedom.

What are the emblems on either side of the center exhibition case? These are the two sides of the Great Seal of the United States — on the left is the obverse and on the right is the reverse side.

Why do the documents look so green? Because of the refractive properties of the laminated glass in the case, as well

as the special filters that protect the parchment documents from harmful light rays. The glass was obtained from the Monsanto Company and installed by American Plate Glass Company.

When were the Charters installed in the Exhibition Hall? On December 15, 1952. The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution had been transferred in an armored vehicle from the Library of Congress two days earlier. The Bill of Rights came to the

National Archives from the Department of State in September 1938.

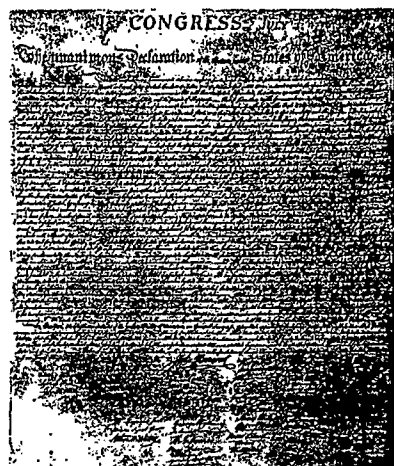
How are the documents protected against further deterioration? Each sheet of parchment is enclosed in a separate sealed case that is made of special glass and bronze and contains only helium, an inert gas, and a carefully measured amount of water vapor. Dust and excess moisture, as well as free oxygen, sulphur, and other pollutants in the air, are all excluded. The cases also protect the documents from damage by handling or accident. At night, and in case of emergency, the documents are lowered into the vault below.

Declaration of Independence

When was the Declaration of Independence drafted? Between June 11 and 28, 1776, by Thomas Jefferson and his fellow committee members — John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston, and Roger Sherman.

When was the Declaration adopted? On the afternoon of July 4, 1776.

When was it signed? The parchment original on exhibit here was signed on August 2, 1776, first by John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress, and then by the other members pres-



ent. Most of those who were absent that day signed later.

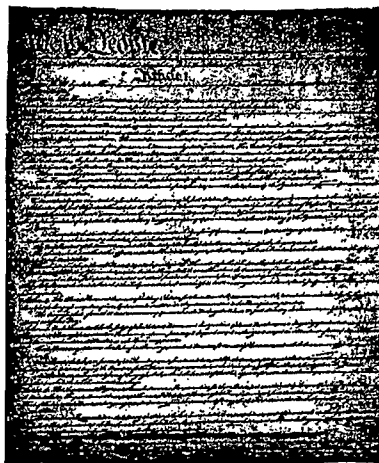
Why is the Declaration so faded? During the 19th century it was exposed to strong light for many years and was often carelessly handled.

How large is the document? It measures 29 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Constitution

When was the Constitution drafted? It was drafted by the Constitutional Convention meeting in Philadelphia between May 26 and September 17, 1787.

When was the Constitution signed? It was signed September 17, 1787, by representatives of 12 states. The Continental Congress then forwarded printed copies to the states for ratification.



Which state did not send delegates to this convention? Rhode Island, which was the last of the original 13 states to ratify the Constitution.

When did the Constitution go into effect? In March 1789. George Washington was inaugurated as President the following month.

Where are the other two pages of the Constitution? In helium-filled cases in the vault. They are exhibited once a year on September 17, which is now celebrated as Constitution Day.

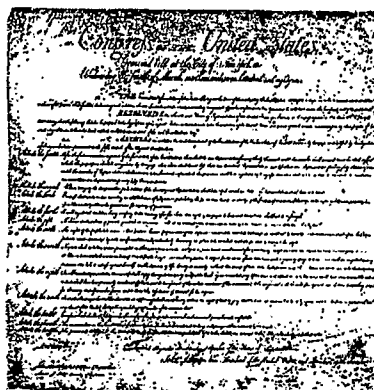
How large is the Constitution? The text is on 4 sheets of parchment, each measuring 28 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches by 23 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches.

Bill of Rights

Why does the Bill of Rights have 12 articles instead of 10? Twelve articles were proposed, but only the last 10 were ratified as amendments to the Constitution by the necessary three-fourths of the states.

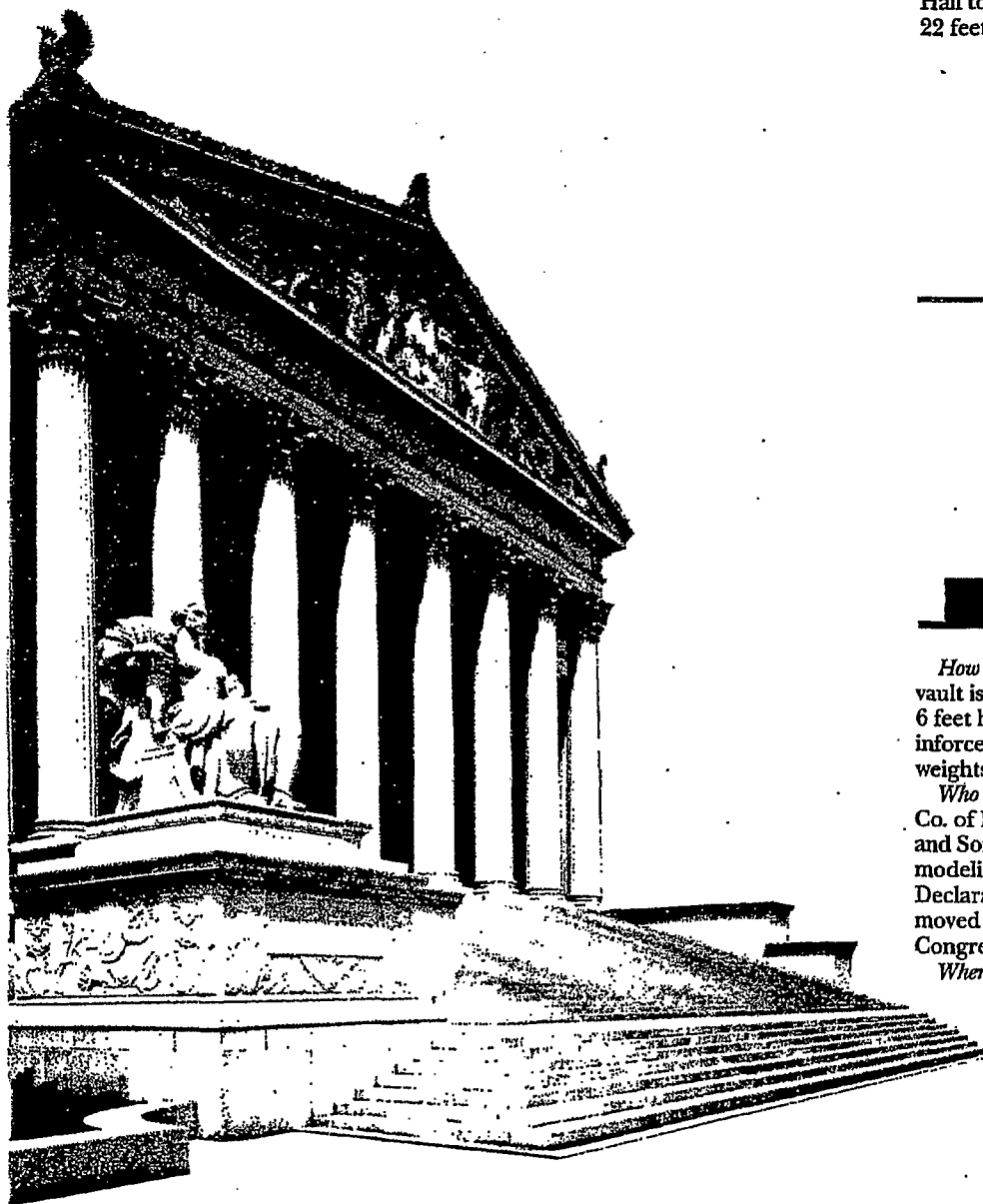
Is this the entire Bill of Rights? Yes. It is on a single sheet of parchment, measuring 28 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches by 28 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches.

Is this the original? This is the federal government's official record copy. Thirteen other copies were made and sent to the states for ratification.



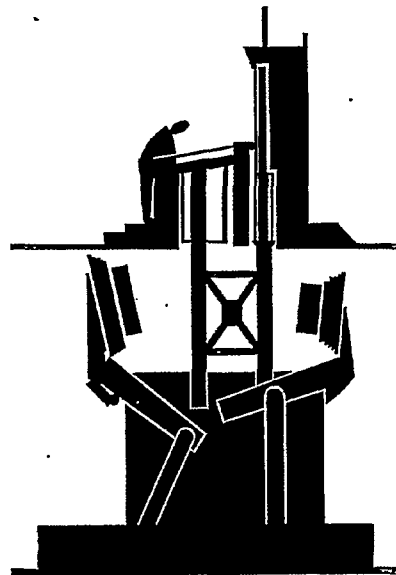
The Vault

How does the vault operate? Electrically. In case of power failure, it is operated by a back-up battery system. The documents in their helium-filled bronze cases are lowered into the vault below the Exhibition Hall floor. When they are inside the vault, the massive doors on the top of the vault swing



shut and the documents are safe.

How far down is the vault? The distance from the floor of the Exhibition Hall to the floor of the vault is about 22 feet.



How large is it? The inside of the vault is 7 1/2 feet long, 5 feet wide, and 6 feet high. The walls are made of reinforced concrete and steel. The vault weighs 55 tons.

Who built the vault? The Mosler Safe Co. of Hamilton, Ohio. James King and Son of New York directed the remodeling of the exhibit area when the Declaration and Constitution were moved here from the Library of Congress.

When was it constructed? In 1952.

Why is the Magna Carta — a British document — displayed in the National Archives Rotunda? Magna Carta was the foundation for fundamental English rights including trial by jury, equality before the law, and freedom from arbitrary arrest. These profoundly important individual privileges have a direct legacy in our own Bill of Rights.

When was the Magna Carta signed? The Great Charter, originally agreed to by King John in 1215, was revised and reissued several times in the 13th century. The 1297 Magna Carta is on display at the National Archives.

Is this the only existing copy? No. There are four copies remaining of the 1297 version, endorsed by Edward I.



Is it printed in English? No. The document is written in Latin script on parchment measuring $14\frac{1}{2}$ x $17\frac{3}{4}$ inches.

Where has this document been since 1297? This copy was discovered in 1974 during an inventory of the Brudenell

family records at Deene Park in central England. It is believed that the Great Charter entered the Brudenell family through Edmund Brudenell, Attorney General under Richard II (1377-1399) or through Sir Robert Brudenell, Chief Justice of the Common Pleas under Henry VIII (1509-1547).

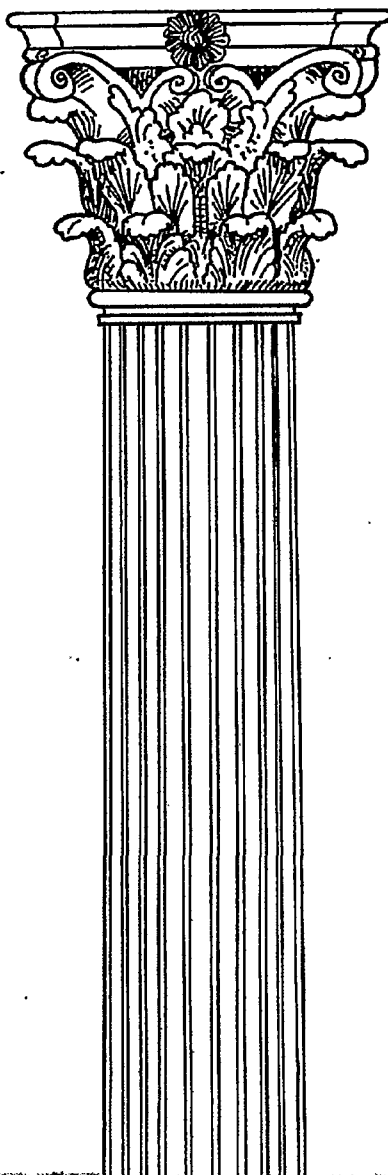
How did the 1297 Magna Carta come to the National Archives? The charter remained in the Brudenell family until Dallas businessman H. Ross Perot purchased it in 1984. It is the only privately owned Magna Carta and the only copy permanently residing in the United States. Mr. Perot has generously agreed to display it for an indefinite period at the National Archives.

What does the National Archives do?

It preserves and makes available for reference and research the permanently valuable records of the U.S. government. These records include well-known documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights, as well as 3.2 billion textual documents, 1.6 million cartographic items, 5.2 million still photographs, 9.7 million aerial photographs, 110,000 reels of motion picture film, and 173,000 video and sound recordings — all created by federal government agencies since the beginning of the nation. The National Archives also makes available for research a select number of collections donated to the federal government for that purpose.

Known formally as the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the agency operates 14 records centers, 11 regional archives, and 8 Presidential libraries in 15 states. Research facilities are available at the regional archives and the Presidential libraries. NARA publishes *The Federal Register*, a daily record of the executive and administrative orders of the federal government.

When was the National Archives built? Construction was begun in December 1932 and completed in June 1937. Parts of the building were first occu-



ried in November 1935.

Who designed it? John Russell Pope, a leading American architect of his day, who also designed the National Gallery of Art and the Jefferson Memorial.

How much did it cost? More than \$12 million.

How large are the bronze doors at the Constitution Avenue entrance? Each door weighs 6½ tons and is 38 feet 7 inches high, nearly 10 feet wide, and 11 inches thick. The doors slide and can be seen only when the building is closed.

When is the National Archives Building open to the public? The Exhibition Hall is open from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. except during winter months (the day after Labor Day through March 31) when the Exhibition Hall is closed at 5:30 p.m. The building is closed on Christmas Day. The Pennsylvania Avenue entrance provides access to the Central Research and Microfilm Research Rooms, which are open Mondays through Fridays from 8:45 a.m. to 10 p.m. and on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; the rooms are closed on federal holidays.

How can guided tours of the National Archives be scheduled? Guided tours for special groups or individuals may be arranged in advance with the Office of Public Programs, telephone 202-523-3183.

May copies of the documents on exhibit be purchased? Facsimiles of the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights, as well as copies of other documents, pictures, books, postcards, etc., can be purchased at the Museum Shop.



General Information Leaflet No. 18 1988

National Archives and Records Administration
Washington, DC 20408

Exhibition Hall, 7th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW. Open 10 a.m.-9 p.m. every day, April 1 through Labor Day; 10 a.m.-5:30 p.m. every day, September through March 31.

Research Rooms, 7th Street & Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. 8:45 a.m.-10 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday.

Admission Free.

202-523-3000 (recorded schedule of special program events)

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