



New York State Archives

**New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the
United States Constitution Photograph File 15912**

New York State Archives
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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	This series consists of photographic prints, film negatives, color slides, and at least one videotape of materials produced by the New York State Bicentennial Commission to publicize/illustrate the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. Images include portraits of notable persons; historic structures, scenes, artifacts, and documents; illustrative and promotional materials; and program materials from special events.
Creator:	New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution
Title:	Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution photograph file
Quantity:	2 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1987-1989
Series:	15912

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Arrangement

Arranged roughly by event or subject.

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Administrative History

The New York State Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution was established on July 1, 1986 (Chapter 261, Laws of 1986) to promote and coordinate activities to commemorate the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution and of New York State's role in its ratification. Membership consisted of educators, state legislators, historians, and judges. Sol Wachtler, Chief Judge of the New York State Court of Appeals, was chairman of the commission. Stephen L. Schechter was the executive director, Shirley Rice was associate director, and state historian Paul Scudiere was the administrative officer. Commission members

represented the state at federal commemorative activities, and reported to the governor annually.

The commission's central function was to coordinate commemorative activity and act as the state's clearinghouse for event information and federal and state funds. It operated a local assistance grant program, but had no research function other than to encourage and subsidize publication of scholarly works on the constitution. Educational and promotional activities included production of classroom aids, and public outreach through exhibits, lectures, and newsletters. The major outreach program, "Critical Choices: New York and the Constitution," included scholarly lectures; issues forums; a reunion of living delegates to the 1938 State Constitutional Convention; and a statewide convention of community constitutional representatives held at Poughkeepsie, New York, on July 25-26, 1988, to reenact the ratification.

Initial legislation required the commission to cease operations on December 31, 1989, but subsequent appropriations enabled it to continue until March 31, 1990.

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Scope and Content Note

The series consists of photographic prints, film negatives, color slides, and at least one videotape of materials produced by the New York State Bicentennial Commission to publicize/illustrate the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution. The series does not include administrative or operating files of the commission.

Images include portraits of notable persons; historic structures, scenes, artifacts, and documents; illustrative and promotional materials (for exhibit catalogs, posters, calendar); and program materials from special events (e.g., the "Critical Choices" convention, Federalist Day, and Capitol Days) held during 1987-1988. There are folders for most of the major activities of the commission, including an exhibit of Federal period furniture at the State Museum, the publication of an 18th century cantata of musical selections performed at George Washington's first inauguration, and a Law Day tree planting ceremony in Albany.

Some of the images were used in commission-sponsored publications. Chief among these were "New York, the Eleventh Pillar of the Federal Republic" and "Well Begun; Chronicles of the Early National Period" (edited by Stephen Schechter). The commission also produced a wall calendar featuring photographs documenting people and events during the constitutional period. Of special interest among publicity photographs are those of chairman Sol Wachtler (narrator of a commission video), shown with former New York governor Charles Poletti, congressman Michael McNulty, and Albany mayor Thomas Whalen at the event honoring delegates of New York's 1938 Constitutional Convention (November 3, 1988).

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

Administrative Information

Processing Information

This accession results from a project by Archives staff in 1999 to describe or integrate estrayed or unidentified records.

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Access Terms

- Black-and-white prints (photographs)
- New York (State)--Centennial celebrations, etc.
- Coordinating
- Educating
- Videotapes
- New York (State)
- United States--History--Constitutional period, 1789-1809
- United States Constitution Bicentennial, 1987-1991
- Celebrating
- Color slides
- New York (State)--Politics and government
- Negatives (photographs)
- Rice, Shirley.
- Schechter, Stephen L.
- Poletti, Charles, 1903-2002.
- New York (State). Constitutional Convention, 1938
- Wachtler, Sol.