The Story of the Faulkner Murals
By Lester S. Gorelic, Ph.D.

The story of the Faulkner murals in the Rotunda begins on October 23, 1933. On this date, the chief architect of the National Archives, John Russell Pope, recommended the approval of a two-year competing United States Government contract to hire a noted American muralist, Barry Faulkner, to paint a mural for the Exhibit Hall in the planned National Archives Building.[1] The recommendation initiated a three-year project that produced two murals, now viewed and admired by more than a million people annually who make the pilgrimage to the National Archives in Washington, DC, to view two of the Charters of Freedom documents they commemorate: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America.

The two-year contract provided $36,000 in costs plus $6,000 for incidental expenses.[*] The contract ended one year before the projected date for completion of the Archives Building's construction, providing Faulkner with an additional year to complete the project. The contract's only guidance of an artistic nature specified that "The work shall be in character with and appropriate to the particular design of this building."

Pope served as the contract supervisor. Louis Simon, the supervising architect for the Treasury Department, was brought in as the government representative. All work on the murals needed approval by both architects. Also, The United States Commission of Fine Arts served in an advisory capacity to the project and provided input critical to the final composition. The contract team had expertise in art, architecture, painting, and sculpture.

Faulkner's early formal training had been at the American Academy of Rome where he had worked with renowned painters and sculptors including his uncle Abbott Thayer, as well as Herman Saint-Gardens, and George deForest Bush. Furthermore, he was one of the muralists considered to have revolutionized decorative painting in America.[2] By 1933, Faulkner had completed commissioned murals for the Eastman Theater (Rochester, New York), Rockefeller Center (formerly called the RCA Building) in New York City, and Mortensen Hall of Bushnell Center (Hartford, Connecticut).[3]

Pope had been the architect for the National Gallery of Art, Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and the Masonic Temple of the Scottish Rite.[4]

The Commission of Fine Arts was chaired by Charles Moore, an architect, art historian, founding member of the Commission of Fine Arts and former acting chief of manuscripts at the Library of Congress.[5] Through most of the mural project, the Commission members were H. P. Caemmerer (secretary) and the following six presidentially appointed and internationally recognized experts in architecture, art and sculpture: Gilmore D. Clarke, Charles A. Coolidge, John M. Howells, Lee Lawrie, Eugene F. Savage, and Egerton Swartwout.

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[*] $804, 000 in 2018 U.S. dollars. https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl.

Missing from the original team was a credentialed expert in U.S. history. Faulkner extensively researched the subjects in his paintings and was able to identify the important men in early U.S. history. However, two decades later, in a presentation to the Keene (N.H.) Daughters of the American Revolution, he admitted he had lacked the expertise needed to assess the relative importance of the men he portrayed to the subjects of his paintings; and that for the first several months felt he had "bitten off more than he could chew."[6] This deficiency cast a shadow over the project for several months until J. Franklin Jameson from the Library of Congress, regarded by Moore as being the "dean of American history," was added to the team.[7]

CONCEPTUALIZATION

The Early Stages

Faulkner had supplied two sketches for the contract.[*] One was titled *Archive Makers: The Declaration* and the other *Archive Makers: The Constitution* (fig. 1). Both sketches show a lineup of people of importance to the early Republic set against a purely landscape background. Washington is portrayed in the *Constitution* in a back view to the right; James Monroe, John Jay, and John Marshall are included. In the center of each sketch and behind the men is a single oak tree, and on the opposite side, a lone nondescript tree.[†]

The Commission evaluated these sketches at their January 1934 meeting. The only comments they made were that "the *Constitution* needed as much life and congruity as the *Declaration,* mostly front views were shown" and "Washington ought to be doing a little something."[8] Not noted in the meeting minutes was the absence of John Hancock, the President of the Continental Congress, in the *Declaration*.

In the months that followed, Faulkner completed a new set of sketches. The Commission evaluated the sketches at their July 27, 1934, meeting.[9] One sketch, a rework of the original *Constitution* now titled "Fathers of the Republic"(fig. 2), shows new thinking on organization and content.[‡] The men are distributed throughout the sketch and grouped, as opposed to being in a single line in front, and the background includes architecture. Washington was repositioned as the central figure and Monroe is absent. Finally, Albert Gallatin (Secretary of the Treasury under Presidents Jefferson and Madison), the Marquis de Lafayette, General Charles Cotesworth (C. C.) Pinckney, and Celeb Strong are included.

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[*] The black and white photographic reproductions of Faulkner's sketches/studies described in this section are part of the Peter A. Juley photographic collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C. These reproductions were accessed at siris-juleyphoto.si.edu using Barry Faulkner as the Keyword and the SIRI locator numbers, viz., J0003642, included in the legends to the figures in this section. Most of the reproductions lacked person identifiers. This deficiency was addressed by making use of name lists provided to Moore by Jameson and Faulkner [See Faulkner to Moore, September 20, 1934; Entry 17, Box 118, Folder 5: RG 66; NAB and Jameson to Moore, November 16, 1934; Entry 17, Box 118, Folder 6; RG 66; NAB.] and the name listings for the completed murals.

[†] Based on tree leaf shape. See Elbert L. Little, *National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Trees* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1980), 382.

[‡] The sketch is referred to in the archival records as "Founders of the Republic."

Faulkner also submitted the first stage studies required by the contract. To allow for an evaluation of the artistry *and* how the studies would integrate with the architecture and decorations of the Exhibit Hall, the studies were first mounted in frames on the wall of a partial scale model of the Exhibit Hall and then photographed. Those black-and-white photographs (fig. 3) were provided to the Commission.

The first stage studies show the men lined up in front of classic porticos with amorphous pieces of architecture jutting out from one side, and a bas-relief griffin medallion (symbolic for vigilant strength) in the *Declaration*.[10] Two fluted columns rest on bases on the top of the portico steps in the *Declaration*; only one wide diameter column of similar design is seen in the *Constitution*. Because Pope commented later that columns themselves can be symbolic, it is useful to note that because of the structured base the columns cannot be of the Doric order.[11] The crown of a massive oak is depicted behind the building facades and columns in each study. The trees' branches, filled with lobular leaves, span more than halfway across the backgrounds. Opposite is a single unidentifiable tree. The positioning of the porticos at the heights of the crowns of the trees suggests that the porticos are elevated.

Justification for the new background was not provided in the Commission meeting minutes. However, Pope subsequently explained in an August 3, 1934 letter to Louis Simon, the government representative to the contract, "dramatic quality is generally present in effective architecture."[12] Additionally, some 20 years later in his presentation to the Keene DAR [Daughters of the American Republic], Faulkner explained that "the [new] background would integrate well with the stark architecture of the Exhibit Hall, and would impart a feeling of distance and space, and the alternative, an architectural background, would require the use of Independence Hall, which would be monotonous across two panels."[13]

The positions of the men in the first-stage *Declaration* differ from the corresponding *Archives Maker* sketch. Two men had been added, Patrick Henry and another whose identity is unknown. For the *Constitution,* it is almost as if the lineup of men in the corresponding *Archives Maker* sketch had been cut out and pasted into a new background.

Simon made the presentation on the studies. He argued against painting the "Fathers of the Republic" because it was too limited in scope, depicting leaders only of the early Republic, and the figures would be disproportionately large in the final mural. He expressed additional concerns that the subjects of the first stage studies, the *Constitution* and the *Declaration*, had been treated too narrowly and that a "more comprehensive treatment of the matter was desirable in connection with the wide range of materials to be housed in the Archives Building."[14]

Based on Simon's critique, the Commission did not consider further the "Fathers" sketch. However, the theme of the sketch came up later in a discussion of enhancing the studies' historic comprehensiveness. Additionally, features of the sketch can be seen in the murals that now decorate the Rotunda walls.

The Commission's final evaluation of the first-stage studies incorporating Simon's comments was provided the day after the meeting in a letter Moore wrote to Simon.[15] Simon forwarded a

copy of this letter to Pope the next day. Pope replied that he understood the comment on comprehensiveness to mean that the murals "should be a subject related to this particular building, in other words, frontispieces for its contents."[16] He also expressed concern that addressing this issue "would turn this hall into a picture gallery at the expense of the Constitution and Declaration." Pope therefore requested advice from the Commission on "a form of artistry" that would avoid this situation. This advice arrived twenty days later in a letter from Swartwout, a member of the Commission. Swartwout responded, "The picture, as a work of art and as a composition counted more than the story told. However, since it is likely that large crowds of people will come to view the murals and criticize them, at least in the present case they [the murals] needed not only a very compelling story, but also a great deal of monumental composition."[17]

During the next two weeks, Faulkner and Pope tried but failed to obtain additional information on the Commission's evaluation of the first stage studies.[18] In spite of this situation, Faulkner forged ahead, completing a revised set of first-stage studies (fig. 4) that he presented at the September 17 Commission meeting.[19] Faulkner introduced his new studies as the signers of the Declaration and the signers of the Constitution. Reflecting the team's lack of expertise in American history, John Jay, John Marshall, and James Monroe had been added to the *Constitution* study, even though none of them had signed the charter. Through a process of addition and deletion, Faulkner had increased the number of individuals in his prior first-stage studies (fig. 3) by four to fifteen men in the *Declaration* and included John Hancock. He increased the number of men in the *Constitution* by three to fourteen. He additionally made changes to the porticos, including adding a statue and railing with balustrades to each, and in the *Declaration* replaced the original large fluted columns with four smooth columns.

The Commission considered the new studies to be improvements, but their prior concern about a lack of comprehensiveness remained. As a possible solution, Moore suggested that "one of the panels [should] be dedicated to the founders of the Republic and the other to Abraham Lincoln and his time." He added that "The men [should] be arranged chronologically." Howells commented, "There was nothing inspiring in the sketches."[*] Savage questioned whether the "paintings will be historical representations of the time or allegorical."[†]

In a letter to Moore on September 20, Faulkner acknowledges receipt of a letter from Moore explaining his concern about a lack of comprehensive in Faulkner's latest studies and offer of assistance in seeking the advice of the Assistant Secretary of State on a list of appropriate statesmen. Faulkner understood Moore's suggestions on comprehensiveness to mean that additional persons should be added to the studies without changing the original emphasis on the documents. In response, he developed two lists accommodating the portrayal of up to nineteen men in each study, with both lists based on one of two selection models for each subject. The first model was "to confine the subject matter to men of primary and secondary importance who

[*] Howells would later explain in a telegram to Moore that the absence of inspiration was primarily "due to the general heaviness of the whole interior and the acceptance of a constructed picture cut in two by a central motif or altar. I felt a certain bareness and poverty in the whole conception." From Howells to the Commission of Fine Arts, September 28,1934; Entry 17, Box 118, Folder 5; RG 66; NAB.

[†] See Swartwout to Moore, August 23, 1934; Entry 17, Box 118, Folder 5; RG 66; NAB and Faulkner to Moore, September 20, 1934; Entry 17, Box 118, Folder 5; RG 66; NAB.

wrote or signed the Declaration and the Constitution or who were intimately concerned with the two documents, but not members of the Conventions: like Patrick Henry, James Otis, John Jay, and John Marshall." The second was "to enlarge the scope of the subject, introducing great statesmen up to the time of Jackson or even Lincoln, but with the stress still on the men of the Constitution and Declaration."[20]

According to a letter from Moore to Lawrie and a letter to the record, sometime after the September 17 Commission meeting (and prior to October 4), Moore had suggested privately to Faulkner two alternative subjects for his studies.[21] The first was the reading of the Declaration of Independence from the portico of the State House in Philadelphia; the second was George Washington's first inauguration at Pierre L'Enfant's remodeled city hall in New York City. "This would give him [Faulkner] two focal points, historical and artistic, and enable him to exercise his artistic abilities along the lines at which he is best." Moore also wrote that he would be seeking assistance on the second focal point from a noted historian at the Library of Congress, J. Franklin Jameson.[*]

Faulkner used his lists and the recommendations made at the September 17 meeting as the basis for a new set of studies (fig. 5) that he sent to Moore's office on September 22, 1934.[22] Moore received the studies four days later.[23] What is immediately apparent in the new studies are features from the earlier *Fathers* sketch (fig. 3). Specifically, men are distributed throughout the composition and mostly organized into groups. Additionally, in the *Constitution,* Washington is now the central figure.

Twenty-two men are portrayed in the new *Declaration,* eight more than in the prior study (fig. 4) and now include Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin, and Abraham Lincoln. Twenty men are portrayed in the new *Constitution*, nine more than in the prior study. With the exception of the statue and a few missing persons to the left of Charles Pinckney, the depicted men and their arrangement in the *Constitution* resemble that seen in the mural currently on display in the Rotunda.[24]

Unbeknownst to Faulkner, Moore had drafted a letter to Pope on September 25, a day before receiving the new studies. This letter was not mailed until almost mid-October. The contents of this letter are notable for two reasons. First, the letter discloses that the Commission had recommended disapproval of Faulkner's first-stage studies. Two specific reasons are provided: lack of unity and lack of focal character. Second, Moore expresses his vision for the murals that "opportunity is offered, as never since the Rotunda of the Capitol was decorated, to express in mural work the significance of the place of the building itself in the history of the country."[25]

A New Direction

At Moore's suggestion, he and Pope met at Pope's residence in Newport, RI, on October 10 to discuss the status of the murals. They brought Faulkner into the discussion by phone. At the meeting, Pope and Moore agreed informally that Faulkner needed to discard his prior studies and

[*] Faulkner would publicly take credit for this critical suggestion in a 1957 presentation to the Keene, N.H. Daughters of the American Revolution. See Barry Faulkner Papers, circa,1858-1973; Box 1, Folder 63; Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

prepare an entirely new set of panels, "with the first presenting the Declaration of Independence and the second the Constitution, in general terms to connote the spirit in which these historic documents were produced."

They then worked out a number of artistic specifications for the new panels. According to Moore, "The pictorial aspects of the panels would need to fit into the surrounding decorations and architecture of the Exhibit Hall. Each panel should have a single historical theme; and not only must each element of each panel be consistent with this theme, the panels themselves would need to integrate with each other. [Finally,] it might be a consideration to the artist that whereas the Declaration was adopted during war and was intended as a justification of that war and an encouragement to those striving to win success; on the other hand, the aim of the Constitution was to bring enduring peace at home and abroad founded on an efficient central government maintained with due regard to the rights of the states."[26]

The report on the Newport meeting was read into the minutes of the October 19 Commission meeting.[27] At the meeting, Moore commented that "Faulkner's newest studies (fig. 5) represented a substantial improvement over the prior studies." For the first time in the deliberations on the murals, the fact that the two Charters resided at the Library of Congress was brought up for discussion. The Commission decided to defer discussion on this subject until they could obtain official information on the status of the Charters.

Approximately three weeks later, on November 7, Faulkner requested Moore's help in assembling an authoritative list (25 men for each picture) for a new set of studies.[28] Moore responded with a four-page letter on November 10.[29] He first suggested that Faulkner contact Jameson for assistance in constructing his lists and noted that he had asked Jameson to "put his mind to the subject."

Moore then made several suggestions relevant to the artistry. For the *Declaration*, since only half the signers can be represented, he suggested selections be based on "some broad generalization." He also suggested differences in costuming could be used in a central grouping to distinguish the "contrasting Cavalier and Puritan strains," i.e., the Lees of Virginia and John Adams of Massachusetts. As for the architecture, he suggested the Georgian style, which was more representative of the buildings of that period.[*] Since, as Moore noted, "The Declaration stood for war, the Constitution for peace, there is an opportunity to work this feeling into the skies." Finally, he reminded Faulkner that "Washington's character produced the harmony in the convention which brought the Constitution into being; and that Hamilton and John Adams had most to do with its ratification."

On November 21, Moore forwarded Faulkner a letter and listings Jameson had provided to him of possible men to portray and a rationale for the selections.[30] In Jameson's letter, he advised Faulkner to include in each study at least one person from each state, "lest there be outcries if there was any one [state] that did not have a figure in the painting; [and that] Rhode Island could make no claim to representation." Jameson also suggested that for the *Declaration*, "John Hancock as well as Thomas Jefferson and his committee needed to be included."

[*] This suggestion was not implemented.

Jameson's *Declaration* list included Hancock, Jefferson, and eleven men from the remaining states; and an additional ten men in order of preference "should the need arise for additional." He also provided a list of nineteen men for the *Constitution*. Jameson also advised Faulkner to contact Max Farrand, a noted historian.[31]

The Final Phase

Using Jameson's lists plus some additional men, Faulkner composed a new set of studies (fig. 6) and submitted them with an explanatory note for presentation at the December 3 Commission meeting.[32]

Comparison of the *Declaration* in fig. 6 with the corresponding Rotunda mural (see https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-mural) shows in fig. 6 an additional man in the back between Witherspoon and Hancock, another additional man in back between Samuel Huntington and Thomas Jefferson; and three additional men in addition to Richard Henry Lee and Thomas Nelson Jr. in the grouping at the extreme right. None of the additional men could be identified. A similar comparison for the *Constitution* (see https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-mural) shows two additional (unidentifiable) men in the back row of the left-hand side behind the grouping in front of John Rutledge, James Wilson and Oliver Ellsworth

Faulkner made the presentation on the new studies, explaining first that "the *Declaration* symbolized war, the *Constitution* peace." According to Faulkner, the Committee groupings "show thirteen in one group to represent the thirteen original colonies; and only Benjamin Franklin and one or two other statesmen had been duplicated in each of the sketches."

Faulkner further explained that the basis for his groupings was that of the committees appointed in the two conventions. For the *Constitution*, these were the Committee of the Great Compromise, the Committee for the first draft of the Constitution; and the Committee for the final draft of the Constitution. The groups in this study are centered on Washington. When men served on more than one committee, he "placed them in positions most advantageous to the general scheme." Finally, a few important men had been included, such as General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and his cousin Charles Pinckney, although they did not serve on these committees.

Two committees are represented in the *Declaration*. One is comprised of Jefferson and the Committee on the Declaration ["The Committee of Five"] with Hancock and with Harrison acting as secretary of the Committee of the Whole.[33] [Harrison was actually the chairman of this committee.[34]] The second, the Committee for drafting the Articles of Confederation, is represented because it was closely linked with the Committee on the Declaration and was appointed at the same time. The Articles were useful as a basis for some parts of the Constitution and help link the two subject matters. The Committee included a man from each state. R. H. Lee is positioned prominently in the *Declaration* because of his motion for independence. Finally, the men not on these committees are grouped by themselves.

Twenty-seven men are portrayed in the new *Constitution*, grouped the same as in the *Rotunda* mural. Thirty-three men are portrayed in the new *Declaration*. Although five men in the *Declaration* could not be identified, it was possible to establish that Clay, Gallatin, and Lincoln had *not* been carried over from the prior study (compare with fig. 5). The left side of the *Declaration* and the right side of the *Constitution* show "a part of a portico building with [four smooth] classical columns."[35] The sculpted figures in the original first stage studies (fig. 3) are replaced with statues likely symbolizing war (*Declaration*) and peace (*Constitution*).

The Commission evaluated the new studies favorably. Savage commented, "The sculpted figures should be replaced by something more in keeping with the time in which the delegates lived." He suggested the use of "the standards of the colonies" to represent the dangerous situation of the men who took part in the Declaration of Independence, and "trophies of victory and the Stars and Stripes" for the *Constitution*.

Returning to the subject of the location of the Charters, Moore advised that "the documents were placed in the Library of Congress by Executive order and that a new Executive order will be necessary in due time to transfer the documents." Moore added "When laying the cornerstone for the new Archives building, President Hoover referred to them saying that they would be deposited in the new Archives building." It would not be until December 13, 1952, sixteen years after the Archives building was opened to the public, that the two documents would be transferred to the National Archives Building and two days later enshrined in their display cases.[36]

Following the December 3 Commission meeting, Faulkner set to work incorporating the Commission's recommendations into a new set of studies. He submitted these studies (fig. 7) to Simon, who received them on December 19 and forwarded them to Moore.[37] In a December 22 letter to Moore, Faulkner explained that the basis for the groupings in the new studies remained the same as for the prior set of studies. The sculpted figures in the prior set had been replaced with "known Revolutionary battle flags in the *Declaration*; and for the *Constitution*, the State flags of the thirteen original colonies in the symbol of the Union."[38] Not mentioned were the amorphous grayish storm clouds newly appearing in the sky of the *Declaration*, likely added in response to Moore's earlier suggestion to represent war in the skies.[39]

Simon was notified on December 27 that the Commission evaluated "the progress made by Faulkner [is] such as to insure the satisfactory completion of his task."[40] From Pope's office, Eggers informed the Commission at their January 16, 1935, meeting that the frames for the murals would be made of *companio* rose marble, which had been given a honed finish.[41] The Commission officially approved Faulkner's latest studies on January 21, 1935.[42]

PAINTING AND INSTALLATION[*]

[*] The essential aspects of the painting of the murals and their installation have been described in Faulkner's presentation to the Daughters of the American Revolution in Keene, N.H. See Barry Faulkner Papers, circa 1858-1973; Box 1, Folder 63; Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; and *Barry Faulkner: Sketches from an Artist's Life,* Chap. XV (Dublin, NH: William L. Bauhan, 1973), 158-172. The narrative presented in this section summarizes and expands on these descriptions, incorporating information from the holdings of the National Archives.

With the Commission's approval of Faulkner's latest studies, he was now able to begin completing the final studies at larger scale. For this purpose, he used prints of busts and portraits of the statesmen to ensure that he would paint reasonable likenesses of all the faces. Faulkner explained that he had used a text by Farrand providing physical characteristics of many of the statesmen and had researched the lives of each of the statesmen.[*] In addition, he "studied the characters and motives of these men."[43]

Faulkner's first studies for the painting were in black and white, and in detail at a scale of one inch to the foot. These studies were photographed and used as bases for his many color studies. By May 1935, the final color studies had been produced and enlarged to one-third size (four inches to the foot) using photography.[44] Each enlargement was then traced onto a large piece of stiff drawing paper, producing a black-and-white cartoon.[45] The cartoons were completed in early September, and the Commission approved them on October 4, 1935.[46] [The original cartoons (object ids 1943.005.07, 1943.005.008) and one of the studies in oil are preserved at the New Hampshire Historical Society, 7 Eagle Square, Concord, New Hampshire 03301.]

Then, using a model, drawings were made for the different figures at the exact same size as the tracing on the cartoon. After completing the individual drawings and incorporating them into the cartoons, Faulkner moved out of a "pleasant [New York] 72nd Street studio" to rented space in the attic over New York's Grand Central Station.[†] There, he built two walls 40 feet long by 18 feet high facing each other to support the canvases.

With the help of three assistants—Olaf Olsen, John Sitton, and Cliff Young—by December 20, the completed cartoons had been enlarged to full size by photography and traced the cartoons onto fine Belgian canvas.[47] Then, he laid out the design in ochre and raw sienna and painted. Faulkner provided 24 inches of empty canvas in each of his 14' x 36' paintings to allow for any additional artistry needed to account for possible differences between the space allotted for the murals in the plans and the actual available space on the curved walls of the Exhibit Hall.[48]

The Commission visited Faulkner's Grand Central Station studio on March 12, 1936, to see his compositions now in full color (fig. 8).[‡] During the painting process, Faulkner is seen to have added a lower set of surrealistic clouds to the sky of the prior *Declaration*, the darkest of which are centered over Jefferson; and, with a bit of imagination, form a silhouette of the head of Abraham Lincoln lying on its side (compare with figure 7). Faulkner informed the Commission that he had approximately six more months of work on details.[49]

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[*] A number of black and white photographs of the prints/busts are preserved at the Cheshire County Historical Society of New Hampshire, 246 Main Street, Keene, NH 03431-4143 (See MG#93, Series No. III, Box #5 and #8). Although not identified by Faulkner, the "text" is likely Max Farrand. "The Convention and its Members," chap. II in The Framing of the Constitution of the United States (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1913,14-41); and Universal Library: The Framing of the Constitution (1913). https://archive.org/details/framingofthecons011019mbp.

[†] The studio was owned by the American muralist Ezra Winter. See Eggers to Caemmerer, September 11, 1935; Entry 17, Box 118; Folder 5; RG 66; NAB.

[‡] These compositions cannot be the final versions shipped to the Archives since features seen in the *Rotunda* murals such as the clusters of orange fruit in the foliage on the left side of the "Declaration" are missing.

As Faulkner had predicted, the painting of the murals was completed six months later in September. The completed paintings were then rolled up on wooden drums, boxed, and "expressed" to the National Archives in Washington, D.C. before the end of September. Faulkner followed with Sitton and the paperhanger Fred Crittendon, who would install the pictures. As they were getting the paintings ready for installation, they discovered that each was short of its allotted space on the Rotunda walls. Faulkner and Sitton used 18 inches of the spare 24 inches of canvas to fill in what Faulkner called the "yawning voids at the ends containing the architecture." The resulting paintings were now 37.5 feet wide.

Installation began on October 1 and was completed on October 15, 1936.[50] Commission members viewed the installed murals on October 23 (fig. 9), officially approving the installed murals at their October 24 meeting. The murals became available for public viewing two weeks later during the week of November 8.[51] During installation, an air bubble developed under the tree foliage in one of the murals, so it was slashed crosswise with a knife and the gashes pressed back in place.

One year after their installation, the painted surface of each mural was completely varnished with beeswax and varnish in turpentine, followed by buttermilk in water. Faulkner instructed that the murals' treated surfaces were not to be touched, and said that he expected the pictures to stay in good condition for forty or fifty years.[52]

CONSERVATION*

The murals had been scheduled for the Artworks Maintenance Program under the General Services Administration in 1982. However, due to their excellent conditions, on April 13, 1982, Karel Yasko, Counselor for Fine Arts and Historic Preservation of the General Services Administration, recommended that the murals be removed from that program. Two days later, the Fine Arts Officer of the National Capitol Region, Quentin Smith, noted the slashes Faulkner had introduced into one of the murals and incorrectly called them mistakes. He advised that the murals be removed for conservation, but that this should be delayed until the now-hardened lead base had deteriorated further to prevent damage from occurring during removal.[53]

By 1986, the murals were exhibiting buckles and bulges due to the crumbling of the plaster behind them, and deformation of the canvas. These changes were so noticeable that the National Archives provided instructions to its docents on how best to answer queries from patrons on the condition of the murals.[54]

In 1999 a project for conserving the murals was officially designated as a "Save America's Treasures" project. The project was timed to coincide with the National Archives Building's first-ever top-to-bottom renovation, during which the Rotunda would be closed to visitors. The contract cost was $2.2 million dollars.[55] A number of donations helped support the project. These included $500,000 from the America's Treasures Historic Preservation Fund, funded through a partnership between the National Park Service and the National Endowment for the Arts; and

* Unless indicated otherwise, the information provided in this section was derived from records in the holdings of the National Archives that have not yet been accessioned.

gifts from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Bay Foundation.[56] The Preservation Fund's donation provided support for the three stages of the conservation project: removal of the canvases from the circular walls; examination, restoration and cleaning of the murals; and re-hanging of the murals in the newly renovated National Archives Building.

On June 30, 2000, Request for Proposals (RFP) Announcement NAMA-00-SEM-0010, titled "Removal, Conservation and Reinstallation of the Murals in the National Archives Building, Washington, D.C." was published soliciting bids for the work. Following the peer review and scoring of the eligible proposals, on October 6, 2000, the Atlantic Company of America, Inc. was awarded the overall contract. Atlantic chose Olin Conservation, Inc., as conservation subcontractor to plan and perform all the tasks of the conservation project.[57]

Each task of the conservation project presented its own special problems. The murals required a facing material that was flexible enough to allow flattening deformations in the canvasses without damaging the paint surface. Lead abatement procedures had to be followed. Plaster needed to be removed from the canvas backings without damaging the paintings. The large size and weight of the murals required the use of specially designed spools for removal from the wall and for transport. A packaging system was needed that would not trap moisture within the rolled canvasses. Finally, the in-studio procedures required removal of excess hardened white lead adhesive, compensating for distorted areas, mending of canvas anomalies such as tears, and stabilizing the canvas.[58]

Conservation of the murals was completed in November 2002.[59] A month later, the murals were reinstalled on the Rotunda walls in special panels of an aluminum/titanium alloy sandwiched with a closed cell-neoprene rubber designed for large curved surfaces. This construction stabilized environmental conditions at the front and back of the murals, thereby eliminating condensation and seepage; and enhanced the ease of removal of the murals if needed. After varnishing and in-painting, temporary dust covers were erected in January 2003 to protect the murals throughout renovation of the Rotunda.

The conservation processes caused only a small loss in definition of the "lip" of the "Lincoln" silhouette (compare figures 8 and 10).

THE STORIES IN THE MURALS

The following narratives refer to high resolution photographic reproductions of the murals after conservation (fig. 10). The narratives are based on the explanations accompanying the December 3, 1934, studies (fig. 6), supplemented with the information on the intervening studies provided in the minutes of earlier Commission meetings. Authenticated historic and related information on the depicted events are used to fill in gaps in information. The validity of this last step is dependent on the verity of the history represented in the murals, which Faulkner had ensured by bringing Jameson into the team. A caveat of this approach is the possibility of alternative interpretations. Finally, the loss to history of the basis for the color schemes limited analysis of that element.

Faulkner is seen to have woven three sets of stories into his compositions, all of which thread their way through the following narrative. The first set, focused on the production of the two charters, dominates the narrative and is at times expanded in the footnotes. The second set provide facets of the personal and political lives of a number of the depicted men and appears throughout the narrative occasionally parenthetically. The third set move the compositions through space and time and are found in the narratives on the roles the depicted men played in American history beyond the title documents, and the costuming and foliage. These stories are integrated in the *Epilogue*.

The Individual Murals: The Declaration of Independence

The setting of this mural is a time of war, represented by the tumultuous sky.[60] The dangerous situation of the men who took part in the Declaration of Independence is represented by the group of commonly seen battle flags of the Revolution on the right end of the mural.[61]

Faulkner's depiction of the committee writing the Declaration is represented by the nine men in the front row, starting with Thomas Nelson, Jr. and Richard Henry Lee of Virginia at the right end, and ending with the pair of John Hancock of Massachusetts in front and Benjamin Harrison of Virginia on Hancock's left.[62] Lee presented to the Congress the Lee Resolution, which would serve as the basis for the Declaration of Independence. Faulkner's portrayal captures the call-to-arms tenor of Lee's presentation.[63] The Lee Resolution had its origin in the Virginia Resolution for Independence, which fellow delegate Thomas Nelson, Jr. had brought to Lee. Nelson stands paired with and to the left of Lee. [64]

The grouping of five men to the left of Lee is the Committee of Five. Congress charged this committee to write a justification for the Lee resolution [which would constitute the Declaration of Independence]. Included in this grouping in front and from the left are Thomas Jefferson of Virginia, John Adams of Massachusetts, and Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania. The remaining members are in the rear Roger Sherman of Connecticut closest to Jefferson followed by Robert R. Livingston of New York. Jefferson's position in the grouping represents his role as committee chairman. He is portrayed proudly holding forward the draft Declaration of Independence produced by his committee. An earlier draft of this document, originally listing King George III's continuation of the slave trade among the grievances, had been edited first by John Adams and then Franklin, in the same order as they are positioned relative to Jefferson.[65] Adams is depicted standing erect, holding a walking stick between his thumb and forefinger, possibly representing his habit of regularly "making a quick tap on the floor as if punctuating a point." [66]

Facing Jefferson on his left is John Hancock, the President of the Congress. Hancock is depicted with his right hand extended to receive the document Jefferson is holding forward, symbolizing the transfer of the draft Declaration to the Congress for final discussion and voting. Partnered with Hancock on his left is Benjamin Harrison, the chairman of the Committee of the Whole, where most of the discussion on Jefferson's draft took place starting on July 1, 1776.[67] Harrison is depicted with arms wide open welcoming all (the "Whole") into his committee; and is partnered with Hancock, representing their close cooperation in overseeing the proceedings of

the Congress.[*] Hancock, is costumed in the aristocratic style of clothing he wore to each session of the Congress; his manner of dress reflecting his position among the elite of Boston society.[68] The small rolled document in his right hand could be symbolic for the speech he gave after the Boston Massacre, the content of which dispelled prior doubts of Bostonians about his patriotism.[†]

Hancock is paired on his left with John Witherspoon followed by Abraham Clark, both from the New Jersey delegation.[‡]The New Jersey delegation, undecided on the issue of independence at the outset of the debate on independence would finally cast the critical ninth vote on July 1, 1776 in favor of the Lee resolution for independence.[69] [The rules of the Congress required approval by nine of the thirteen colonies[70]] The delegation from Rhode Island had also entered into the debate on July 1 undecided on the issue, which is likely why Faulkner chose to position Richard Ellery of Rhode Island with this grouping in the rear and somewhat obscurely.

In front and to the left of the Jefferson "grouping" is John Dickinson, the author of "Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer" and "The Olive Branch Letter."[71] He represents the conservative revolutionaries in the colonies advocating for continued negotiations to resolve differences between King George and the colonies.[72] Dickinson's portrayal clearly communicates his concerns about declaring independence from England. These concerns would lead Dickinson to absent himself from the Congress on the vote for independence.[73]

The grouping of three men to the left of Dickinson is seen to be used as a foil to the stance of the "conservatives" on the issue of independence.[74] Through their pamphleteering and other political activities, these three men were in the forefront of the independence movement. In front is Samuel Adams of Massachusetts, portrayed with a facial expression conjuring up his reputed "firebrand" demeanor.[75] The lead position of Samuel Adams in the grouping acknowledges his being regarded as "the father of the revolution."[76] One of the more slovenly dressed Bostonians, S. Adams is depicted transformed in clothing to "fit in" with the other delegates attending the Congress who were among the wealthiest the colonies had to offer. He is depicted wearing the new red suit, silver buckle shoes, fine hosiery, and stylish wig that the Boston Sons of Liberty gave him; and is wrapped in a gold cloak (not the red cloak actually provided), likely symbolic for this transformation.[77]

Following Samuel Adams in front is Stephen Hopkins of Rhode Island, and somewhat behind and on the left is Thomas McKean from Delaware. These two men had participated in the Stamp Act Congress of 1765.[78] Hopkins was one of the early patriots.[79] He is shown patriotically holding to his heart the Quaker-style wide-brimmed hat he always wore in the chambers of the Congress.[80] McKean was also an early patriot. Likely symbolizing McKean's concurrent judicial

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[*] Procedurally, the full Congress devolved into the Committee of the Whole by Hancock passing the gavel to Harrison. "Off-the-record" discussions and straw voting then took place. The full Congress reconvened by passing the gavel back to Hancock. "Official" action on the results of these activities, as well as additional discussion, took place by Harrison returning the gavel to Hancock.

[†] Faulkner uses a similar prop in the Constitution to symbolize the Small State Plan of government.

[‡] Witherspoon is depicted in a gown reflecting his position as president of the College of New Jersey. See Goodrich, Lives of the Signers of the Declaration, 213.

appointment in Pennsylvania, a characteristic robe of a judge of the Pennsylvania courts at that time is draped over his arm.[81]

Returning to the center of the mural, on Hancock's right, the alternating patterns of clothing styles of Jefferson and Lee, as compared with John Adams and Franklin, likely represent Moore's suggestion that clothing be used in a central grouping "to distinguish the Puritan and Cavalier strains [New Englanders and Southerners] at the Congress; and the coming together of the two "strains" with the signing of the Declaration."[82]

There is one more grouping in the front row at the extreme left. The men depicted in this last grouping represent some of the functions of the Congress directly related to the war effort. Charles Carroll in the lead and paired on his left with Samuel Chase, both of Maryland, had been commissioned by the Committee of Correspondence to negotiate a foreign alliance with Canada to join in the fight against the British as the fourteenth state.[83] Robert Morris, a member of the Committee of Secret Correspondence and the Secret Committee of Trade, as was Carroll, coordinated the acquisition of munitions and shipment of arms. Morris, through his worldwide shipping fleet, was also involved in gathering intelligence on British troop movements. Referred to as the "Financier of the Revolution," Morris would later become the Superintendent of Finance for the first central bank of the new republic, the Bank of North America.[84] The purple robe in which he has been "wrapped" is likely symbolic for these roles.

Faulkner explained that he included the committee writing the Articles of Confederation in the mural. However, he did not identify the committee members. The committee chairman, John Dickinson, wrote most of the document.[85] In the front rows are Samuel Adams, Hopkins, McKean, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and Robert R. Livingston of New York (from the Committee of Five), and Nelson. Additionally, in the pronaos in the front row starting from the left are Josiah Bartlett of New Hampshire, Joseph Hewes of North Carolina, Francis Hopkinson of New Jersey, Edward Rutledge of South Carolina; and in the back from the left, Lyman Hall (the only delegate from Georgia), and Thomas Stone of Maryland.[86] Relatedly, on Harrison's left is Samuel Huntington of Connecticut, President of the Congress when the Articles were finally ratified on March 1, 1781.[87]

Hewes is portrayed in Quaker-style clothing and holding his wide brimmed hat "humbly," symbolizing his Quaker upbringing.[88] His colony had sent the Halifax Resolves to the Congress, the first action among the colonies calling for independence.[89] Somewhat ironically given his Quaker upbringing, on February 6, 1776 Hewes was appointed to and served on the Committee of Naval Stores.[90]

Rutledge, strongly against independence, is depicted holding a piece of paper, possibly symbolic of the letter he sent John Jay, who was also anti-independence, imploring him to return to the Congress for the vote on the issue.[91] Bartlett, a commander in the New Hampshire militia, is depicted brandishing a short sword.[92] Hopkinson, a writer and poet and known for his "Battle of the Kegs" song, is depicted holding a folded-over piece of paper in his hand as if it were lines of verse to be read.[93] [He would later contribute to the design of the United States Great Seal.[94]] At the top of the steps outside the pronaos and up against the columns, Wythe is shown wearing a black judicial robe, likely reflecting his position as a judge in the Virginia High Court of

Chancery.[95] In front of Wythe, William Floyd of New York is depicted carrying a walking stick in the same manner as in another portrayal, likely symbolic of his wealth.[96] Finally, Huntington, who was "quite close to his gathered family and commented often on wishing he could go home," is depicted wearing riding boats with an outer coat draped over his arm as if prepared to leave the Congress.[97]

Finally, there is the "Lincoln" cloud above and behind Jefferson. As noted earlier, Faulkner had incorporated Lincoln into one of his later studies (fig. 5) but deleted him in the subsequent study, likely because inclusion quite overtly violated the requirement for a single historic hypothesis in each mural. Lincoln becomes covertly integrated into the historic hypothesis of the composition through the slavery issue, an issue expounded in an early Jefferson draft of the Declaration.[98]

The backdrop for the stories is a combination of architecture, foliage, and countryside. The architecture is a classic portico including a pronaos formed by the piece of architecture jutting out from the side and four aligned columns.[99] The nondescript aspect of the columns suggests they are being used as symbols, and in fact represent pillars of democracy.[*] The architecture fits with the decorations of the Rotunda, a principal requirement of the contract; and into the rest of the composition through the association of early Greek architecture with government and democracy.[†] Running from the base of the portico steps to the right end of the mural behind the men is a railing supported by balustrades. The scene below the railing, and the position of the entire architectural structure at the same height as the tree crowns, implies that the portico is elevated and suggests a balcony structure.

In the far background is a heavily wooded countryside typical of the mid-Atlantic and Atlantic colonies. Significant magnification of the far background between Franklin and Lee reveals a body of water with several ships. The ships may symbolize British invasion forces amassing off of New York City while the Congress was in session.[100]

The foliage in the near background filling in the space behind the pronaos of the portico is primarily sycamore. This foliage continues around the back of the columns and crosses in front of a massive white oak with lobular leaves spanning almost half-way across the background. The branches of a smooth sumac with feather-like saw-toothed leaves and clusters of orange-hued fruit extend behind Wythe and Floyd at the top of the portico steps. On the opposite side of the mural and behind the grouping of flags is a red or sugar maple.[‡]

The sugar maple, a primary "crop" tree in Vermont, is the only possible exception to the types of trees found in the Atlantic and mid-Atlantic colonies.[101] Symbolically, oak trees are classic representations of strength and endurance.[§] White Oak was Jefferson's favorite native species.[¶] Faulkner's care in depicting smooth sumac in the mural (see discussion above under "Painting")

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[*] Personal communication from Jocelyn Faulkner Bolle, a niece of Barry Faulkner.
[†] The only form of democracy known at the time was the direct democracy of early Greece.
[‡] The foliage in the murals was identified with the assistance of staff at the U.S. National Botanical Gardens in Washington, D.C., the National Arboretum in Beltsville, MD, and the Jefferson Foundation, Inc. The lack of clarity of the maple in the high resolution image of the *Declaration*, as well as in the original mural, prevents making an unambiguous distinction between the two possible maple species.
[§] This is a possible explanation for the single oak tree placed centrally in each of Faulkner's murals.
[¶] Personal communication from Peggy Cornett, the Curator of Plants, Monticello, The Jefferson Foundation, Inc.

and its positioning as a decorative shrub at the top of the steps of the portico is likely an acknowledgement of Jefferson's high regard for, and extensive use of, smooth sumac as an ornamental at Monticello.[*] If the depicted maple tree is a sugar maple, then it could symbolize the single remaining sugar maple from Jefferson's abortive attempt in 1790 to create a sugar maple plantation in Virginia in the so-called "Maple Tree Scheme."[102] The objectives of this scheme were to end the dependence of the states on cane sugar supplied by the British from the West Indies, and to eliminate slavery in this area of the world.

The Individual Murals: The Constitution of the United States

The setting of this mural, a time of peace and victory, is symbolized by the trophy of flags at the left end in the symbol of the union.[103] The flags are state flags of the thirteen original colonies, including Rhode Island which did not participate in the convention. The clear, bright sky may be symbolic for Franklin's "rising sun" comment made during the signing of the Constitution.[104]

Historically, the story of the development of the Constitution starts with a "Federal Convention" organized largely through the behind-the-scenes efforts of Edmund Randolph of Virginia.[105] Prior to the opening day of the Convention, James Madison of Virginia had presented to his delegation a draft of a plan for a government. A revised version of this plan would be reported out to the Convention as the Virginia Plan on the opening day and would serve as the working document for the Convention.[106] The full Convention immediately devolved into the Committee of the Whole for discussion. Two additional plans for a government were presented to the Convention, the Pinckney Plan by Charles Pinckney of South Carolina on the same day as the Virginia Plan; and nineteen days later, the "British Plan," was offered by Hamilton. [107] Hamilton's plan was not considered, which is likely why Faulkner would choose not to group him with Madison and Pinckney. The Pinckney Plan, portions of which would appear in the final Constitution, was not discussed in the Committee of the Whole.[108]

Artistically, the story begins with Edmund Randolph, depicted obscurely at the extreme left of the mural and behind Nathaniel Gorham of Massachusetts, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole.[109] This seemingly captures Randolph's *background* but critical role in organizing the Convention. Gorham is wearing outer clothing typical of the "northern" states. Madison is depicted centrally next to Washington, symbolically presenting his "original draft to Washington and a group of the Convention members."[110]

The Committee of the Whole deliberated on the Virginia plan for almost two months. The record of these deliberations is likely represented by the disorganized roll of what could be parchment under Gorham's right arm. These notes were compiled into a report referred to as the Gorham Report.[111] This report was presented to a newly appointed committee, the Committee of Detail (Faulkner's second committee), charged with incorporating all details of the report into a first draft Constitution. This committee was chaired by John Rutledge of South Carolina. The remaining committee members were Randolph, Gorham, and James Wilson of Pennsylvania.[112] Rutledge is depicted to the right of Gorham, holding a book likely symbolic for the Gorham Report; and seemingly pointing out a detail likely intended to reflect the title of his committee. He is depicted in finery associated with his being a southern gentleman of considerable

[*] Personal communication from Peggy Cornett, the Curator of Plants, Monticello, the Jefferson Foundation, Inc.

wealth.[113] The noticeable difference between Rutledge's and Gorham's clothing, and their pairing, may have been used symbolically in the same manner as the contrasting clothing of Lee and Adams in the *Declaration* described in the preceding section.

The contentious issue of suffrage in the legislature arose during the deliberations of Rutledge's committee that blocked progress on the first draft of the Constitution. This issue centered on the Virginia Plan, referred to as the Large State Plan, and an alternative plan called the New Jersey or Small State Plan, introduced by William Paterson of New Jersey.[114] The Virginia Plan described a bicameral legislation with representation based on population, thereby favoring the more populous states in the legislature; the New Jersey Plan described a unicameral legislation with equal representation. Roger Sherman of Connecticut had proposed what would become the core element of the final solution (the "Grand Compromise") to this issue in the first days of the Convention on June 11, 1787. Gorham referred to this proposal as "Sharman's proposal." However, a discussion of the issue was deferred until later in the Convention.[115]

An ad hoc committee called the Committee of the Grand Compromise by Faulkner (also known as the Committee on the Connecticut Compromise) was assembled to resolve the issue.[*] Elbridge Gerry of Massachusetts, committee chairman, is depicted between Madison and William Samuel Johnson of Connecticut.[116] The committee was comprised of one delegate from each of the twelve participating states (Rhode Island did not send a delegation to the Convention).

Wilson is depicted to the left of Rutledge as the student of jurisprudence and legal Scholar that he was.[117] He developed an elegant comparison of the two plans that would guide the deliberations of the committee.[118] This comparison is likely symbolized by the single-page documents shown in each of his hands. Among his many other contributions to the Constitution were the three-fifths Compromise on slavery and the Electoral College.[119]

The final compromise, called the Connecticut Compromise, was incorporated into a largely disjointed preliminary first draft of a Constitution.[120] Oliver Ellsworth, a judge of the Supreme Court of Connecticut, shown to the left of Wilson and wearing a judicial robe, had been a strong advocate of this compromise during the discussions and co-authored it with Sherman.[121] It is likely for these reasons that he is depicted (barely) holding a partially unrolled and disorganized document symbolizing the preliminary first draft, and a quill in his other hand.[122] Ellsworth's placement is symbolic of the key role this compromise played in the production of the first draft.

Wilson then rewrote the preliminary first draft into a second more cohesive final draft of the Constitution.[123] The final draft was then presented to the Committee of Style and Revision, Faulkner's third committee. The charge to this committee was to "revise the style of and arrange the articles which had been approved by the House."[124] This committee is represented by its chairman, William Samuel Johnson from Connecticut, in front and to the left of Washington. The remaining members of this committee were Alexander Hamilton, Gouverneur Morris, James Madison, and Rufus King of Massachusetts.[125] Johnson is depicted cradling what is likely the final Constitution presented to the Convention on September 13, 1787. Morris (as well as Wilson) penned this document and wrote the Preamble.[126]

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[*] Faulkner's first committee.

Madison, grouped with Johnson, C. Pinckney, and Gerry, is shown symbolically presenting his "original draft to Washington and a group of the Convention members."[127] This grouping of the three men associates symbolically the two plans for a government, i.e., the Virginia and the Pinckney Plans, originally presented at the opening of the Convention, and the Connecticut Compromise with the final Constitution, thereby establishing a precursor-product relationship. Additionally, the placement of Pinckney in this group is consistent with his plan not having been discussed in Gorham's committee; Madison's position emphasizes his important contributions to the Constitution. C. Pinckney, known for his love of scholarship, is depicted holding a book over his heart and holding a walking stick likely symbolic of his family's distinguished position in South Carolina society.[128] Madison is portrayed wearing the type of ruffled shirt he wore to every session of the Convention.[129]

On the right of Johnson is George Washington, the President of the Federal Convention. Through most of the convention sessions, Washington sat quietly, but still exerted a powerful influence on the proceedings. Moore ascribed Washington's influence to "his [Washington's] character producing the *harmony* that brought the constitution into being."[130] Farrand somewhat more severely ascribed Washington's influence to his being "*almost* the commander-in-chief again, inspiring awe and fear."[131]

Faulkner is seen to have captured the above impressions of Washington by positioning him as the focal point of the composition, depicted dead center along the mural frame and with the delegates on both sides turned in his direction. Coupled with the manner in which the individual delegates and groupings are distributed around Washington, a sense of balance/harmony and awe in the mural is achieved. The stoic pose and costuming of Washington is reminiscent of what is seen in extant portraits of the monarchs of the times.[132] The effusiveness of his costuming, not too dissimilar from the regalia worn at coronations, may also be symbolic for Washington's inauguration as President. [In reality, Washington wore only a Hartwood woolen brown coat and britches at this affair.[133]] Together, the pose and the costuming capture Washington's monarch-like persona (and how Congress and in particular the Federalists expected Washington to present himself to the European powers as the first President of the United States).[134] Farrand's "almost commander-in-chief" comment on Washington's status is symbolized by epaulettes lacking the (three) stars of a general, and an empty scabbard.[135]

The differing viewpoints at the Convention on the form of the new government are represented on the right side of the mural.

The grouping of Washington, George Mason (behind and to the left of Washington), and Benjamin Franklin on the opposite side of Washington brings together the different viewpoints on the forms of the Executive. Mason and Franklin favored a plural executive.[136] Washington is the embodiment of a singular executive.

Mason is seen holding a piece of paper in his right hand, likely symbolizing the list of his objections to the ratification of the Constitution he would subsequently present to Washington.[137] Included among these objections was the failure to address the issue of individual rights, subsequently addressed through the Bill of Rights.[138] These objections formed the basis for many

of the first seventeen amendments to the Constitution submitted by James Madison for consideration to the House of Representatives on June 8, 1789 of which ten would become the Bill of Rights.[139]

The second group of three men to the right of Washington represents the different viewpoints on the distribution of power in the government between the large (more populous) states and the small states. Rufus King from Massachusetts, on the right of Washington, supported the Virginia Plan favoring the large states.[140] William Paterson of New Jersey, paired on his right with King, authored the New Jersey or Small State Plan, likely symbolized by the small piece of paper in his right hand.[141] General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney of South Carolina is paired on his right with Paterson and costumed in a manner befitting his military rank.[142] Like Paterson, Pinckney supported a role for the states in the government, but was more moderate in his position .[143]

Paterson is depicted in a robe representative of his later appointment as Associate Supreme Court Justice.[144] However, the style of the robe is seen in portraits of John Jay, who would become the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in October of 1789, not what is seen in portraits of Paterson that would have been available to Faulkner.[145] Jay, in contrast to Paterson, favored a bicameral legislature, with a popularly elected lower house and an upper house with members elected for life.[146] This use of Jay's robe introduces him (covertly) into the composition; and integrates him into the historic hypothesis as was done for Lincoln.

The final grouping of three men is comprised of Gouverneur Morris followed by Alexander Hamilton, and then George Read. This grouping represents the different viewpoints on the role of the state governments in the central government and the system of government that should be adopted.

Gouverneur Morris of Pennsylvania at the left end of this grouping envisioned the state governments disappearing of their own accord. In addition, he favored an aristocracy as opposed to a democracy.[147] He is depicted in the clothing of an aristocrat and with a walking stick obviously not being used for support, symbolizing his upbringing in the aristocracy.[148] Alexander Hamilton is paired with G. Morris on his right and is shown wearing a style of military uniform consistent with his appointment as commander of the light infantry in the Battle at Yorktown. [149] [However, his uniform is bluish-gray, with the gray element seen only in uniforms worn in the year 1812 of the War of 1812.[150] Compare with the navy blue color of General C. C. Pinckney's jacket.] Hamilton likewise to G. Morris advocated a diminished role for the state governments. However, his "British Plan" for a government described a monarchy, likely symbolized by his gold cape and the brandished sword, with the Executive and the Senate elected for life.[151] Pope had reminded Faulkner that Hamilton had paid an important role in the ratification of the Constitution.[152] Therefore, the sword may also symbolize Hamilton's staunch defense of the Constitution through his Federalist papers.[153]

Read at the far right of the mural is depicted in a robe reflecting his position as a judge.[154] He is depicted in shadow and at the far right as if he were an outlier perhaps because he took an outlier position that all state boundaries should be erased.[155]

Supporters of states' rights are on both sides of the mural and include on the left side the grouping of Randolph, Gorham, John Dickinson (now representing Delaware), Ellsworth, and Mason (behind Washington). Additionally, grouped together in the pronaos on the right side, from left to right, are Luther Martin of Maryland; Roger Sherman; Gunning Bedford, Jr., of Delaware; and Abraham Baldwin of Georgia. Martin, who voted against ratification of the Constitution, had contributed the key Supremacy Clause to the Constitution.[156] Sherman, characterized by his Connecticut colleague, Jeremiah Wadsworth, as being "cunning as the devil, slippery as an eel," is depicted holding his walking stick in a sinister manner.[157] The "corpulent" Bedford is depicted as such with his left hand outstretched surreptitiously, likely symbolic for his statement "Sooner than be ruined, there are foreign powers who will take us [small states] by the hand."[158] Finally, Abraham Baldwin of Georgia is depicted in "frontier" style clothing, likely reflecting his being from what was considered then a frontier state.[159]

Faulkner had explained to the Commission that the *Constitution* had been linked with the *Declaration* by including members of the committee drafting the Articles of Confederation. From historical information, these members are John Dickinson and Roger Sherman.[160]

The architecture is the same style and composition as seen in the *Declaration*. It seems likely that the porticos are being used again as a symbol of government. The view from the railing and the position of the portico at the heights of the tree crowns again imply that the portico is elevated and suggest a balcony structure.

The trophy of flags at left end of the portico is comprised of the state flags of the colonies, including Rhode Island, which did not participate in the Convention.

The foliage in the near background of the *Constitution* differs from that of the *Declaration*. Although sycamore is once again seen behind the pronaos, it is now infused with dogwood, which continues around the back of the columns and in front of a red oak instead of the white oak seen in the *Declaration.* Symbolically, this oak may have once again been used to represent endurance and strength. To the left and behind the red oak is the characteristic flat top of a flowering dogwood. Cedars (most likely Cedar of Lebanon) are behind the trophy of flags, whereas a maple appeared behind the flags in the *Declaration*.

From a realistic viewpoint, the trees and depicted geography are characteristic for the mid-Atlantic and southern states at the time of the Constitution. To the west of the entrance to the Bowling Green on Mount Vernon there were three red oaks with one being a double tree 90 feet tall; and a circle of flowering dogwoods had been planted near the South Garden House in 1795.[161] A Cedar of Lebanon was planted at Washington's tomb on December 15, 1899, by members of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union to commemorate the centennial of Washington's death.[*]

[*] Personal communication from J.D. Norton, Director of Horticulture, Mount Vernon Estate, Mount Vernon, Virginia.

EPILOGUE

After three years of work, and with counsel from the Commission of Fine Arts and the historians J. Franklin Jameson and Max Farrand, in October of 1936, two allegorical murals painted by Barry Faulkner and three associates had been approved and installed on the walls of the Rotunda in the new National Archives Building.

The Charters of the United States of America (the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States of America) are the murals' overarching themes. The murals integrated well with the architectural style of the Rotunda and with the display cases for the Charters.

The depicted skies, stormy in the *Declaration* and peaceful in the *Constitution*, and the ships in the *Declaration*, captured the respective political climates during the time each charter was written. The men depicted and their portrayals provided insights into their personal and professional lives. This was complemented by foliage representative of Washington's Mount Vernon and Jefferson's Monticello. The individual groupings and positions of the men told the stories of the development of the Charters. Porticos in both murals symbolized a government based on the principles of democracy. Finally, the depicted history had been extended allegorically beyond the "founding" period through the Civil War to the end of the nineteenth century by using the depicted men and their costuming as symbols of important events in American history ; the "Lincoln" cloud; and foliage symbolizing the centennial celebration of Washington's death.

The murals had been linked *thematically* through representation of the Articles of Confederation in both murals. Both murals were also linked *geopolitically*, through inclusion of sycamore in both as well as two different species of Oak, bringing together artistically the depicted region-specific distinct countrysides into a unified nation, i.e., the United States of America. Finally, the murals were linked *visually*, with the first steps in the writing of the individual charters being positioned around the Shrine and subsequent steps radiating outwards in chronological order

Through magnificent composition Faulkner's murals indeed "told compelling stories" of the formation of the two Charters of the United States of America and the founding of the nation. By extending that span of history through the use of allegory, Faulkner had made the murals more representative of the contents of the National Archives Building. Together, this achieved the outcome that Chief Architect of the National Archives, John Russell Pope, had hoped for "establishing [through artistry] the place of the National Archives Building in the history of the United States."

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NOTES

1. John Russell Pope, Chief Architect of the National Archives to Louis Simon, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, October 27, 1934; PI-110 31, Box 395; General Correspondence; Records of the Public Building Service, Record Group 121; National Archives at College Park, College Park, Md (**NACP**).

2. *Barry Faulkner: Sketches from an Artist's Life* (Dublin, New Hampshire: William L. Bauhan,1973); page 387 from Eugene Neuhaus, *History and Ideals of American Art* (Stanford University, CA: Stanford University Press, 1931) in Barry Faulkner Papers, circa 1858-1973, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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149. "Alexander Hamilton" in *Soldier-Statesmen of the Constitution*, Robert K. Wright Jr. and Morris MacGregor, Ed. John W. Eisberg. Jr., first printing: CMH Pub. 71-25 (Washington, D.C.: Center of Military History US Army, 1987), 94-96, http://www.history.army.mil/books/RevWar/ss/ss-fm.htm; James L. Kochan. Osprey MAA. 345, 352. Regular Army, 1812. NY Company of the Artillery of the Army U.S. Army, 34.

150. David Cole, "Survey of U.S. Army Uniforms, Weapons and Accouterments." https://history.army.mil/html/museums/uniforms/survey.html.

151. *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* ed. Ferrand, M. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 3: 617-619, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html.

152. Moore to Faulkner, November 10, 1934; Entry 17, Box 118, Folder 6; RG 66; NAB.

153. *Federalist Papers*. Primary Documents in American History. The Library of Congress. https://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/The+Federalist+Papers.

154. *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* ed. Ferrand, M. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 3: 93, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html.

155. *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* ed. Ferrand, M. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 1: 136, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html.

156. *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* ed. Ferrand, M. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 2: 664, 28, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html.

157. Letter from Jeremiah Wadsworth to Rufus King, June 3, 1787; *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* ed. Ferrand, M. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 3: 33-34, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html.

158. *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787,* ed. Ferrand, M. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), 3: 92,1:501, http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwfr.html.

159. "Abraham Baldwin" in *Soldier-Statesmen of the Constitution*. Robert K. Wright Jr. and Morris MacGregor, Jr., Ed. John W. Eisberg, first printing, CMH Pub. 71-25 (Washington, D.C.: Eisberg.Center of Military History US Army, 1987), 64-66, http://www.history.army.mil/books/RevWar/ss/baldwin.htm..

160. Continental Congress 1781, 5: 433, https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw/lwjclink.html.

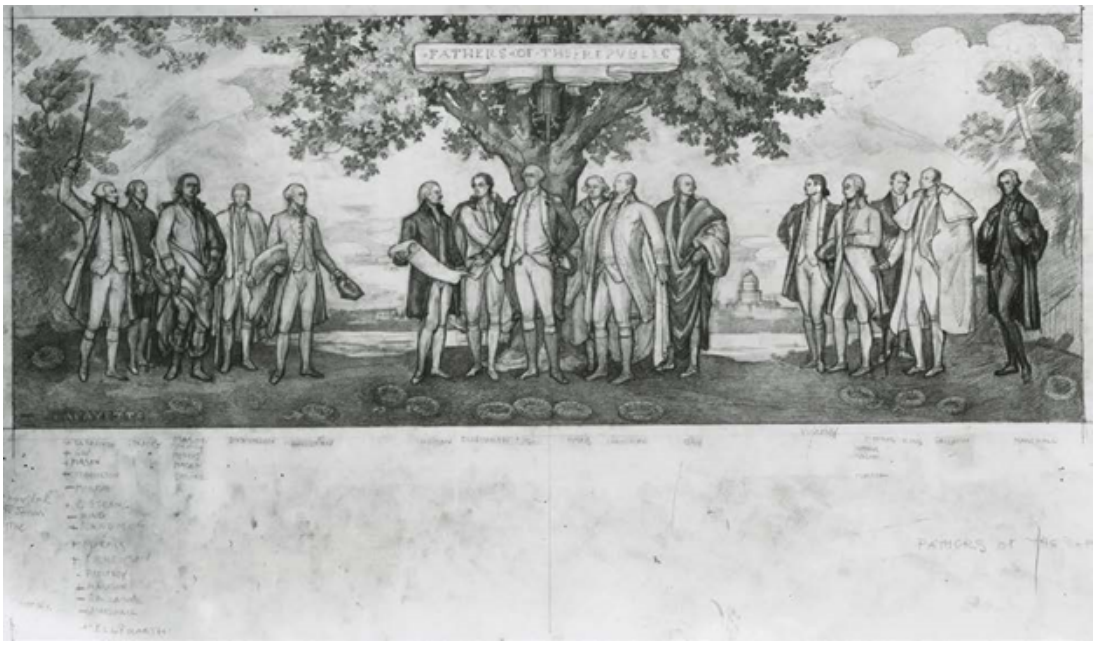
161. *The Trees at Mount Vernon:Report of Charles Sprague Sargent, Director of the Arboretum to the Council of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union*, reprinted from the Annual Report of 1917 of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union, http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/76615#page/15/mode/1up.

FIGURE 1

The Archives Makers: The Declaration of Independence. Sketches submitted with the contract. From *left to right*, unknown, R. Morris, unknown, unknown, B. Franklin, unknown, T. Jefferson, S. Adams, R.H. Lee. (J0003642).

The Archives Makers: The Constitution of the Unites States of America. Sketches submitted with the contract. From *left to right*, A. Hamilton, J. Monroe, O. Ellsworth, J. Madison, J. Dickinson, G. Mason, E. Randolph, J. Jay, Gouverneur Morris, G. Washington, J. Marshall. (J0003644). Return

FIGURE 2



Fathers of the Republic. Sketch presented at the July 26, 1934 Commission meeting. From left to right: M. de Lafayette, C. Strong, Mason, Dickinson, Hamilton, Madison, Ellsworth, Washington, G. Morris, Randolph, J. Jay, Gen. C. C. Pinckney, J. Monroe, R. King, A Gallatin, J. Marshall. (J0003641). Return

FIGURE 3

Photographs of the first stage studies mounted on the walls of a model of the National Archives exhibit hall. The *Declaration* is on the left side, the *Constitution* on the right side. The studies were presented at the July 26, 1934 Commission meeting. (J0108077). Next

FIGURE 3, continued

Photographs of the first stage studies mounted on the walls of a model of the National Archives exhibit hall. The studies were presented at the July 26, 1934 Commission meeting. *The Declaration*. From *left to right*, G. Wythe, G. Read, R. Morris, R. Sherman, J. Adams, G. Livingston, Franklin, Jefferson, S. Adams, P. Henry, R.H. Lee. C. (J0108078). Next

FIGURE 3, continued

The Constitution. The identities of the portrayed men are unchanged from Figure 1. (J0108079).
Return

FIGURE 4

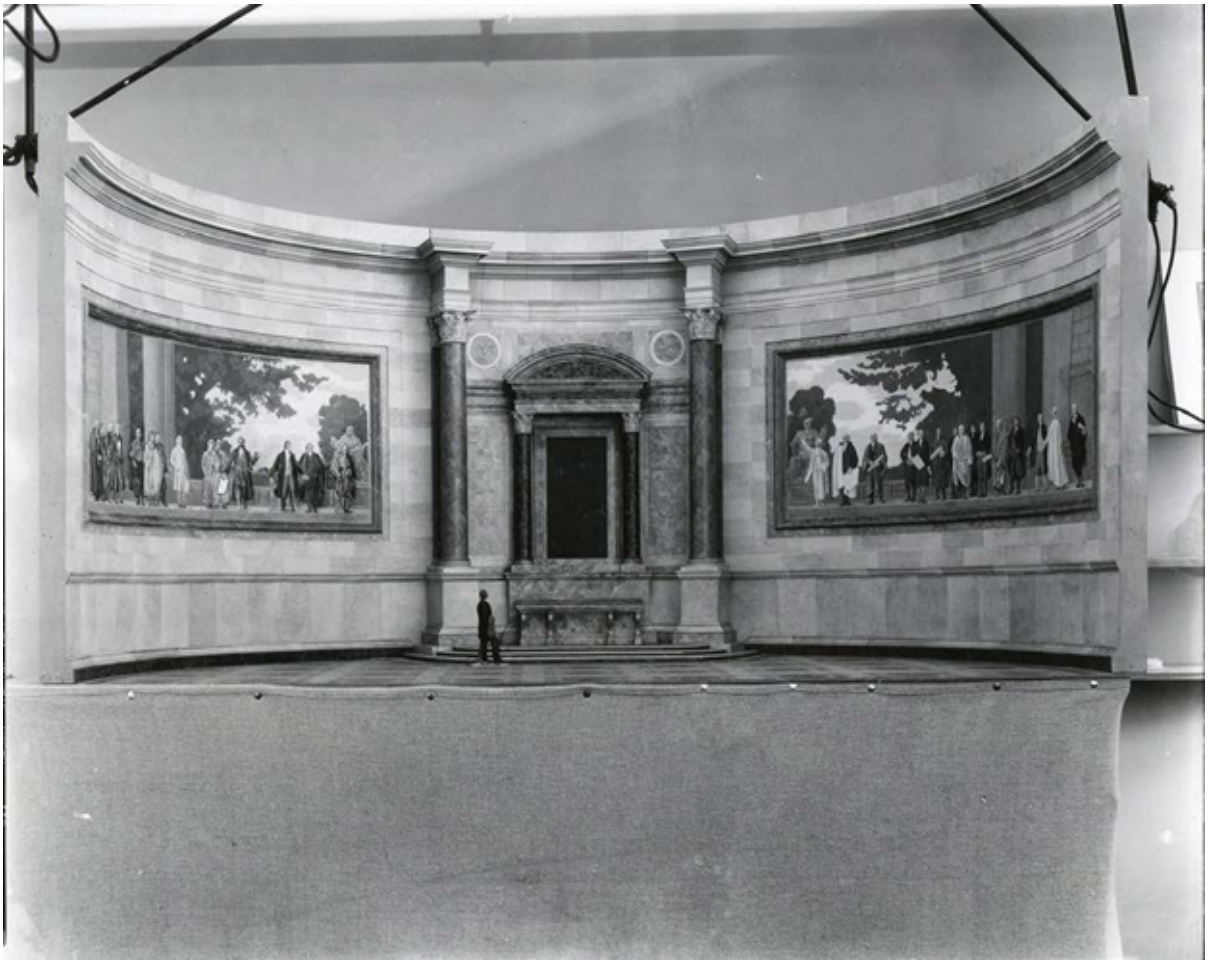


Figure 4. Photographs of the revised first stage studies mounted on the walls of a model of the National Archives Exhibit Hall. These photographs were presented at the September 17, 1934, Commission meeting. The *Declaration* is on the left side, the Constitution on the right side. (J0108080). Next

Figure 4, continued

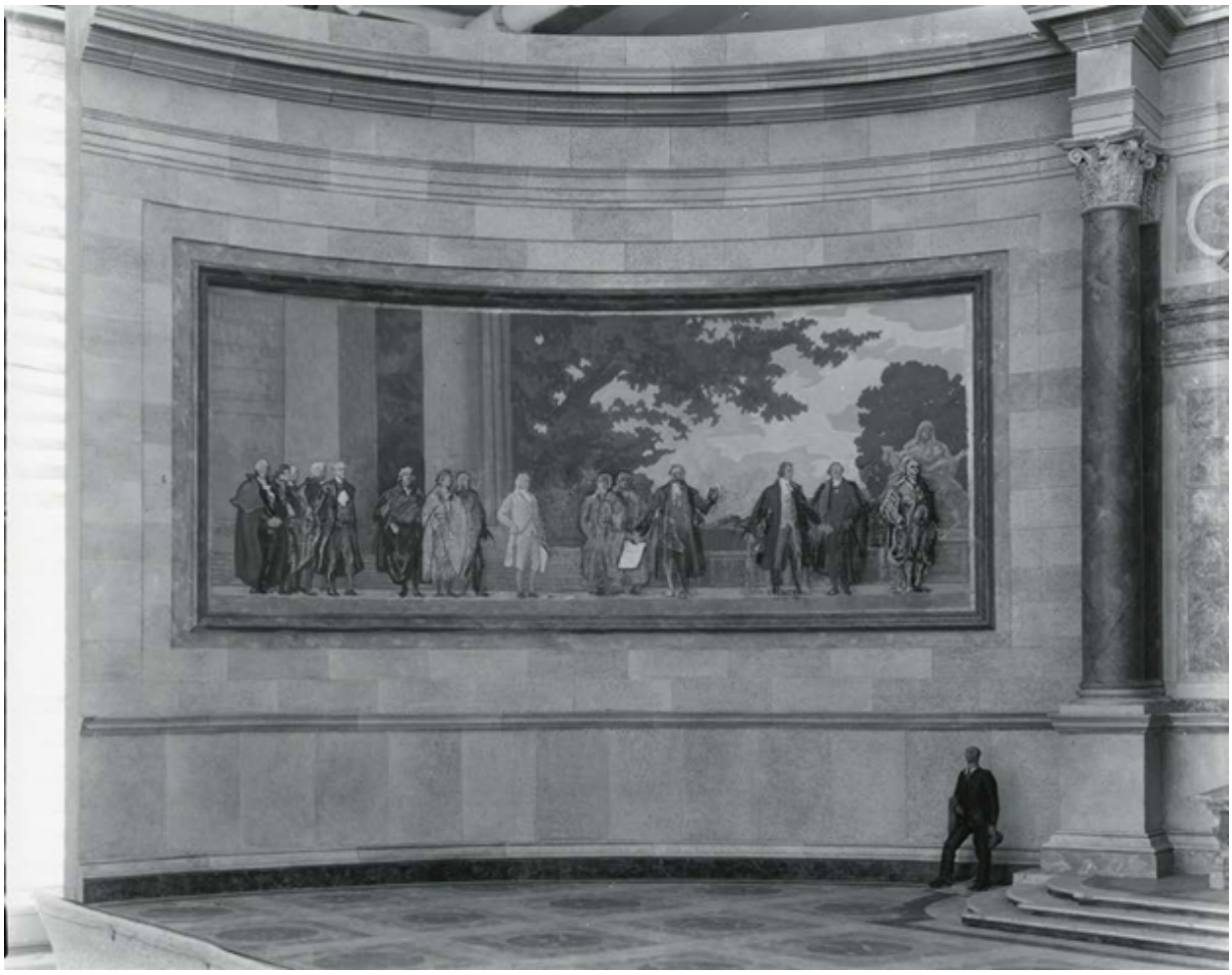


Figure 4. Photographs of the revised first stage studies mounted on the walls of a model of the National Archives Exhibit Hall. These photographs were presented at the September 17, 1934, *The Declaration*: From left to right along the base, the first group of five unknown, James Monroe, Roger Sherman, Robert Livingston, John Adams, John Hancock, Robert Morris, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, Benjamin Franklin. C. (J0108076). Next

FIGURE 4, continued

Figure 4. Photographs of the revised first stage studies mounted on the walls of a model of the National Archives Exhibit Hall.. These photographs were presented at the September 17, 1934, Commission meeting. *The Constitution***.** From left to right along the base are Alexander Hamilton, James Wilson, Oliver Ellsworth, James Madison, John Dickinson, George Mason, Rufus King, William Paterson, Gouverneur Morris, George Washington, George Read. Behind Madison to his left is John Dickinson. Behind Washington on his left is George Mason and on his right Benjamin Franklin. (J0108082). Return

FIGURE 5

Photographs of the Expanded Studies sent to Charles Moore on September 22, 1934. *The Declaration*: From left to right along the base are Henry Clay, Albert Gallatin, Abraham Lincoln, James Monroe, Roger Sherman, David Livingston, John Adams, John Hancock, John Dickinson (hidden), Gouverneur Morris, Thomas Jefferson, Samuel Adams, Patrick Henry, Benjamin Franklin. In the pronaos and in front, at the extreme left, Benjamin Morris followed by Josiah Bartlett. To the right of the columns at the top of the steps, George Wythe followed by William Floyd. (J0108093). Next

Figure 5, continued

Photographs of the Expanded Studies sent to Charles Moore on September 22, 1934. *The Constitution.* From left to right, John Rutledge, James Wilson, Oliver Ellsworth, Charles Pinckney (in back), James Madison, Elbridge Gerry (in back), Samuel Johnson, George Mason (behind Washington), George Washington, Benjamin Franklin (behind Washington), Rufus King, William Paterson, General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Gouverneur Morris, Alexander Hamilton and William Read. In the pronaos, starting from the left side and progressing right are Luther Martin, Roger Sherman, Bedford Gunning, Abraham Baldwin. (J0108091). Return

FIGURE 6

Photographs of the studies presented to the Commission on December 3, 1934. *The Declaration***.** From *left* to *right* in the from row are Robert Morris, Samuel Chase, Charles Carroll, Stephen Hopkins, Samuel Adams, Thomas McKean, John Dickenson, Abraham Clark, John Witherspoon, John Hancock, Benjamin Harrison, Thomas Jefferson, (Robert R. Livingston, back), John Adams (Roger Sherman, back) , Benjamin Franklin, R.H. Lee , remaining men unidentified. On stairs from *left to right*, Joseph Hewes, and Josiah Bartlett (in front); George Wyeth, and William Floyd (J0108086).

Photographs of the studies presented to the Commission on December 3, 1934. *The Constitution*. From *left to right* in the front row: Edmund Randolph, Nathaniel Gorham, John Dickinson, John Rutledge, unidentified, James Wilson, unidentified, Oliver Ellsworth, Charles Pinckney, James Madison, Oliver Ellsworth, William Samuel Johnson, James Mason, George Washington, all others the same as in the Rotunda mural. (J0108090). Return

FIGURE 7

Photographs of the studies presented to the Commission on December 19, 1934. *The Declaration*. (J0108087). Next

FIGURE 7, continued

Photographs of the studies presented to the Commission on December 19, 1934. *The Constitution*. (J0108089). Return

FIGURE 8

Figure 8. Photographs of Faulkner's oil-on-canvas paintings in easels in the attic of New York Grand Central Station viewed by the Commission of Fine Arts on March 23,1936. A. *The Declaration*. (J0003643). Next

FIGURE 8, continued

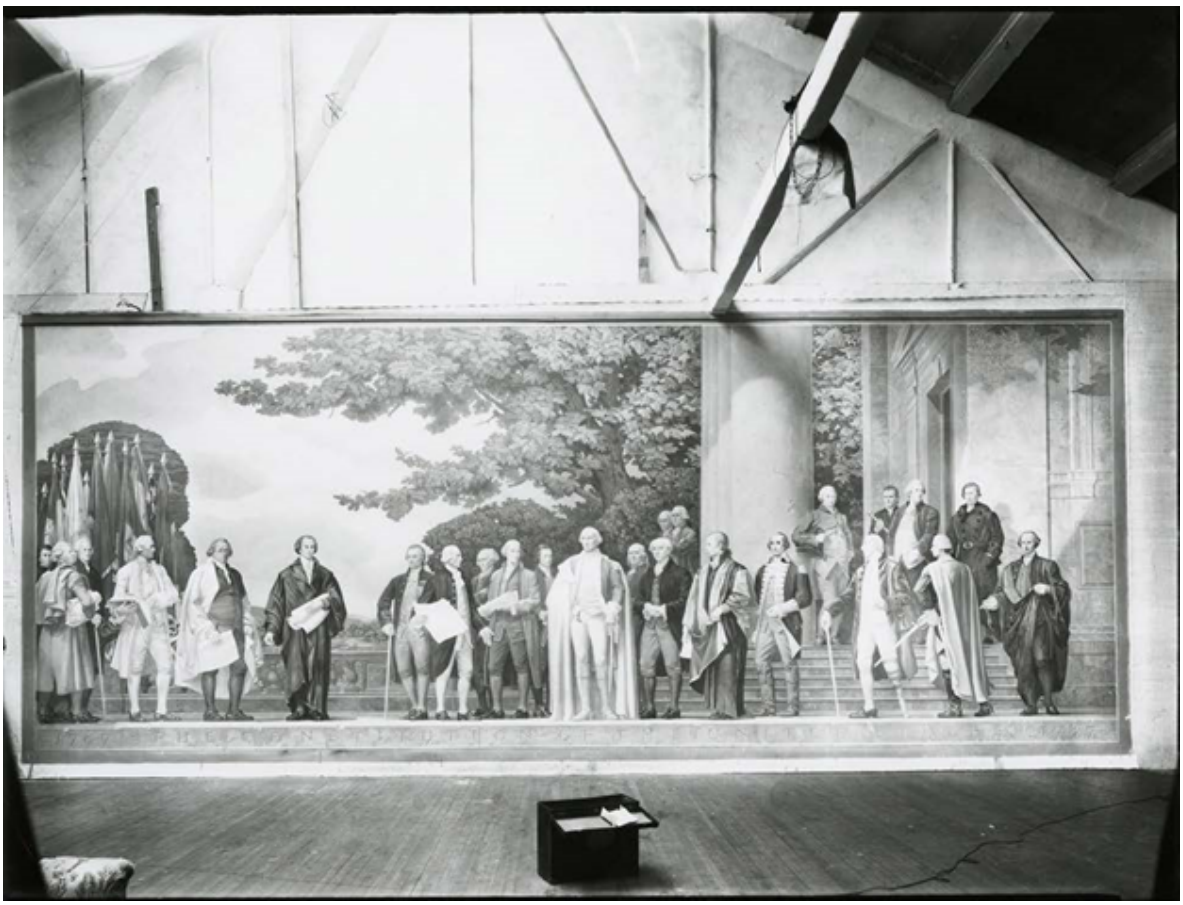


Figure 8. Photographs of Faulkner's oil-on-canvas paintings in easels in the attic of New York Grand Central Station viewed by the Commission of Fine Arts on March 23,1936. *The Constitution*. (J0003645). Return

FIGURE 9

The Commission of Fine Arts viewing the Faulkner murals for the first Time, October 23, 1936. Standing beneath the mounted *Constitution* are from left to right, Barry Faulkner, Eugene F. Savage, John M. Howells, Lee Lawrie, Charles Moore (CFA Chairman), Charles L. Borie, Jr., Henry R. Sheply, H.D. Caemmerer. From Photograph of the Commission of Fine Arts viewing the Faulkner murals for the first time with the Archivist of the United States R.D.W. Connor, October 23, 1936; Historic Photograph File of National Archives Events and Personnel,1935-1975; RG 64. Records of the National Archives and Records Administration, local identifier 64-NA-111, National Archives Identifier 7820667, NACP.) Return

FIGURE 10

The Faulkner murals in the rotunda of the National Archives Building. “The Declaration of Independence.” See https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-mural for person identifiers.

The Faulkner murals in the rotunda of the National Archives Building. “The Constitution of the United States of America.” See https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/constitution-mural for person identifiers. Return