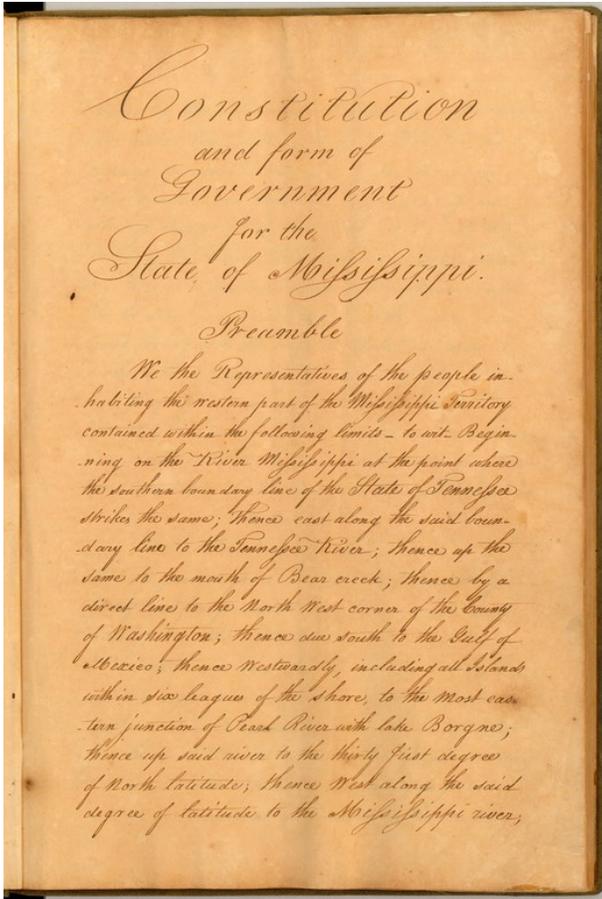


1817 Mississippi Constitution to be on display at State Law Library in Jackson April 12

April 8, 2016

The original 1817 Mississippi Constitution will be on display on Tuesday, April 12, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the State Law Library in Jackson. The historic display is free and open to the public at the Mississippi Supreme Court building at 450 High Street.



The display of the more than 40-page hand written document that established Mississippi's government at the inception of statehood is part of the prelude to the state's Bicentennial in 2017. The Mississippi Department of Archives and History will make the Constitution of 1817 document available for public viewing at the Law Library during National Library Week.

The 1817 Constitution and the 20-star flag that marked Mississippi's addition to the Union will be exhibited in 10 communities around the state starting in October.

"We are excited to be able to give the public a glimpse, if only briefly, of this historic treasure," said Supreme Court Chief Justice Bill Waller Jr. "The constitutional rights that we as a court are called upon to interpret today trace their beginnings to this document."

Opportunities to see the actual document are rare. Because of its age, it is seldom removed from secure, climate controlled storage, said Chris Goodwin, director of public information for the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.

State Law Librarian Stephen Parks arranged to have the 1817 Constitution displayed. "When I read about the upcoming tour of the Constitution, I felt it would be nice that the State Law Library display it due to our role as the state's library. The Department of Archives and History has been gracious in allowing us to display it, especially during National Library Week."

Parks said, "This year's National Library Week theme is 'Libraries Transform.' We are thrilled at hosting this document that assisted Mississippi in transforming to the state it is today, 200 years later."

Mississippi became the twentieth state of the United States on Dec. 10, 1817. The Mississippi Territory took its first step toward statehood when President James Madison authorized people living in the western portion of the Mississippi Territory to form a state government. A constitutional convention of 48 delegates met in the town of Washington, near Natchez, on July 7, 1817, and began drafting the constitution. On Aug. 15, 1817, the 8,957-word document was signed by 45 of the delegates. One of the delegates objected, one was absent due to illness and one had died.

A digital copy of the document is at this link: http://mdah.state.ms.us/arrec/digital_archives/series/constitutions/detail/34611.

A transcript of the entire text of the Mississippi Constitution of 1817 is at this link: <http://mshistorynow.mdah.state.ms.us/articles/100/index.php?s=extra&id=267>.