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Award-Winning Constitutional Scholar Highlights Bill of Rights, How North Carolina Saved the Constitution

RALEIGH, N.C. — In honor of the Bill of Rights' 225th anniversary on Dec. 15, you will have a **rare opportunity** to see North Carolina's **original copy of the Bill of Rights** from Wednesday through Sunday, Dec. 14 to Dec. 18, at the **N.C. Museum of History** in Raleigh. Admission is free. To protect the fragile document from light, it is on view for a very limited time.

In addition, the museum will offer **free** programs about the Bill of Rights on Dec. 14. **Linda R. Monk**, a nationally award-winning author, journalist and constitutional scholar, will present **The Bill of Rights: How North Carolina Saved the Constitution**. (Did you know North Carolina was the only state to refuse to ratify the U.S. Constitution until a bill of rights was added?) Monk's work has been featured on PBS, Voice of America, MSNBC, C-SPAN and NPR, and she writes commentary for newspapers nationwide.

After Monk's program, State Archivist **Sarah Koonts** will briefly highlight the saga of North Carolina's original copy of the Bill of Rights, from its theft by a Union soldier during the Civil War to its recovery by the FBI in 2003.

History à la Carte: The Bill of Rights: How North Carolina Saved the Constitution

Wednesday, Dec. 14, noon-1 p.m.

Register at NCMOH-programs.com and purchase a boxed lunch — or just bring your own. Beverages provided. For information, call 919-807-7982.

Linda R. Monk, J.D., Constitutional Scholar and Author

North Carolina's role in ratifying the U.S. Constitution helped result in James Madison sponsoring the first 10 amendments in Congress. Ratified on Dec. 15, 1791, that Bill of Rights upholds the key freedoms Americans cherish to this day.

Monk, a graduate of Harvard Law School, has twice won the American Bar Association's Silver Gavel Award, its highest honor for public education about the law. She served as series advisor for the PBS documentary "Constitution USA with Peter Sagal."

Monk uses an accessible, narrative style to explore truths about our constitutional democracy. She conveys this depth of knowledge in a manner that is relevant and understandable to average citizens. Monk also presents seminars and lectures for audiences that include the Pentagon, National Archives, Fulbright Scholars and the Smithsonian Institution.

North Carolina's Original Copy of the Bill of Rights

Wednesday, Dec. 14, 1 p.m.

Sarah Koonts, Director, Division of Archives and Records

North Carolina's state archivist will briefly trace the intriguing history of North Carolina's official copy of the Bill of Rights. The journey started when a Union soldier stole it from the State Capitol in 1865 and ended in 2003, when it was recovered in an undercover FBI sting operation. After legal battles in state and federal courts, North Carolina won possession of the document in 2005 and ownership in 2008.

North Carolina's copy of the Bill of Rights is one of 14 original copies of the 12 proposed amendments to the U.S. Constitution prepared by three federal clerks in 1789. A copy was drafted for the legislatures of the existing 13 states to debate; the other copy was for the federal government. After the ratification of the first 10 amendments in 1791, North Carolina retained custody of its copy of the document.

For information about the N.C. Museum of History, a Smithsonian-affiliated museum, call [919-807-7900](tel:919-807-7900) or access ncmuseumofhistory.org or follow on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ or YouTube.

IMAGE Dropbox link: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/tbdsszvw3nlsdbm/Bill%20of%20Rights.jpg?dl=0>
File Bill of Rights: See North Carolina's original copy of the Bill of Rights from Wednesday through Sunday, Dec. 14 to Dec. 18, at the N.C. Museum of History in Raleigh. **Image credit:** State Archives of North Carolina.

About the N.C. Museum of History

The N.C. Museum of History is located at 5 E. Edenton Street in downtown Raleigh. Hours are Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sunday, noon to 5 p.m. The museum collects and preserves artifacts of North Carolina history and educates the public on the history of the state and the nation through exhibits and educational programs. Each year more than 300,000 people visit the museum to see some of the 150,000 artifacts in the museum collection. The Museum of History, within the Division of State History Museums, is part of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

About the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

The N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR) is the state agency with a vision to be the leader in using the state's natural and cultural resources to build the social, cultural, educational and economic future of North Carolina. Led by Secretary Susan Kluttz, NCDNCR's mission is to improve the quality of life in our state by creating opportunities to experience excellence in the arts, history, libraries and nature in North Carolina by stimulating learning, inspiring creativity, preserving the state's history, conserving the state's natural heritage, encouraging recreation and cultural tourism, and promoting economic development.

NCDNCR includes 27 historic sites, seven history museums, two art museums, two science museums, three aquariums and Jennette's Pier, 39 state parks and recreation areas, the N.C. Zoo, the nation's first state-supported Symphony Orchestra, the State Library, the State Archives, the N.C. Arts Council, State Preservation Office and the Office of State Archaeology, along with the Division of Land and Water Stewardship. For more information, please call 919-807-7300 or visit www.ncdcr.gov.

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