



Alabama DEPARTMENT OF
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PRESS RELEASE

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**ALABAMA'S SIX CONSTITUTIONS AND ORDINANCE OF SECESSION TO UNDERGO CONSERVATION
EXHIBITION SET FOR 2019 IN HONOR OF THE STATE'S BICENTENNIAL**

Montgomery, AL (2/1/2018) – The Alabama Department of Archives and History (ADAH) announced today the beginning of a year-long project to conserve the state's six constitutions and the 1861 ordinance of secession, which declared Alabama's separation from the Union on the eve of the Civil War. These documents, some of the most important in state history, will be conserved by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC), located in Andover, Massachusetts. Upon completion of the conservation work, the documents will be exhibited at the ADAH and elsewhere in the state during the 200th anniversary of Alabama's statehood in 2019.

Since Alabama entered the Union in 1819 as the 22nd state, six constitutions have provided the framework for its government. Stored and cared for by the ADAH, they document the rights of Alabama's citizens and reflect prevailing attitudes about the role of government at the time of their respective adoptions. Although the documents are in generally good condition, a July 2017 condition assessment concluded that conservation treatment is needed to clean and stabilize the documents, to repair damage from previous conservation efforts, and to ready them for display.

The first group of documents will depart Montgomery for the NEDCC's New England laboratory this week. Founded in 1973, the NEDCC is a leading conservation center specializing exclusively in the conservation and preservation of paper- and film-based collections. Other historic documents treated by the NEDCC include the oldest copy of the Mayflower Compact, personal letters written by Paul Revere, and colonial-era records from South Carolina.

Funding for the \$136,530 conservation contract will come from state appropriations to the ADAH. The cost of the 2017 condition assessment was borne by a private donor.

"As Alabamians reflect on our past during the bicentennial," said ADAH Director Steve Murray, "it is fitting that we also practice good stewardship by insuring that our foundational documents are well situated to survive the next two centuries."

Alabama's six constitutions and the Ordinance of Secession can be viewed online in the ADAH's digital collections at <http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/landingpage/collection/legislature>.

Additional details about the upcoming exhibitions will be released later this year.

The Alabama Department of Archives and History is the state's government records repository, special collections library and research facility, and is home to the Museum of Alabama, the state history museum. It is located in downtown Montgomery, directly across the street from the State Capitol. The Archives and Museum are open Monday through Saturday, 8:30 to 4:30. The EBSCO Research Room is open Tuesday through Friday and the second Saturday of the month from 8:30 to 4:30. To learn more, visit www.archives.alabama.gov or call (334) 242-4364.

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