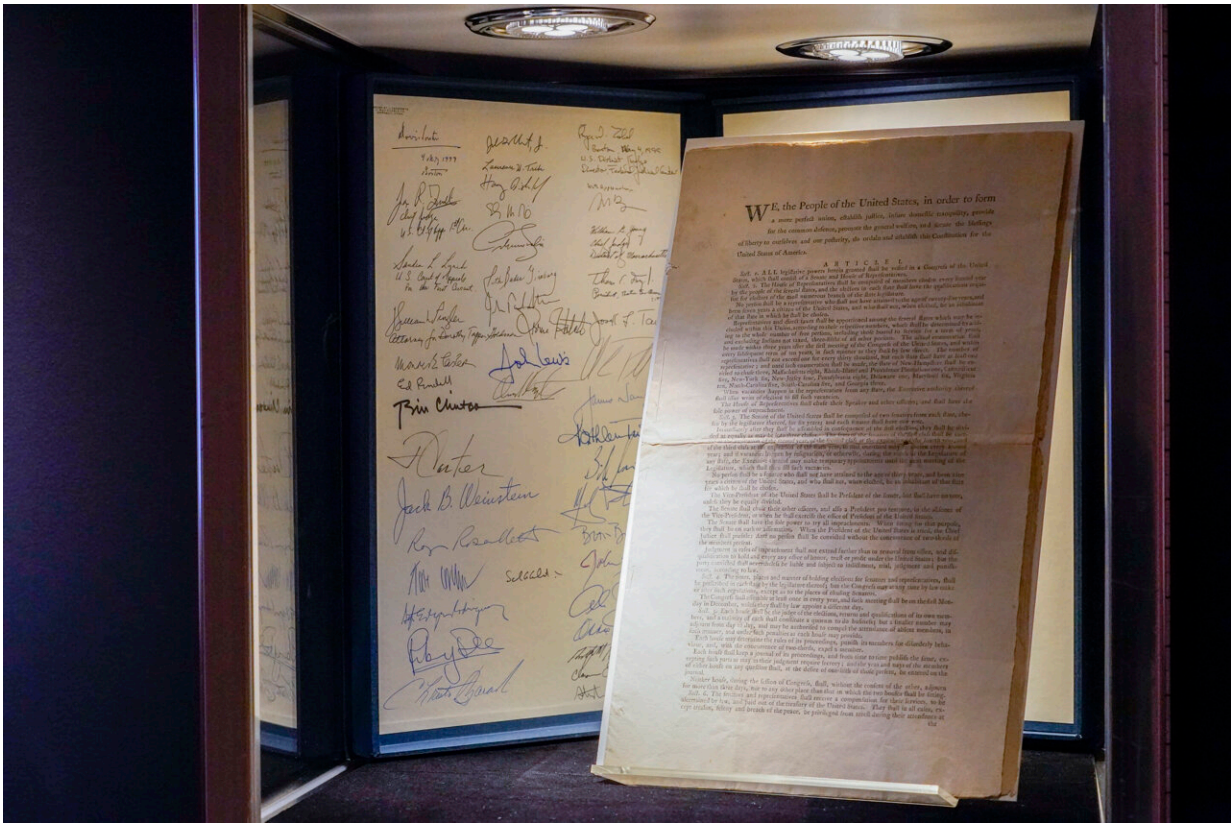


Rare first printing of US Constitution sells for record \$43M

November 19 2021, by Karen Matthews



A first printing of the United States Constitution is displayed at Sotheby's auction house during a press preview on Nov. 5, 2021, in New York. The rare copy has sold Thursday, Nov. 18, for a record \$43.2 million at Sotheby's to an anonymous buyer who outbid a group of cryptocurrency investors. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File

A rare first printing of the U.S. Constitution sold at Sotheby's in New York for \$43.2 million, a record price for a document or book sold at auction.

The anonymous winning bidder at Thursday night's sale outbid a group of 17,000 cryptocurrency enthusiasts from around the world who crowdfunded to buy it over the last week.

The document offered for sale was one of 13 known copies of the first printing of the Constitution and one of only two in private hands.

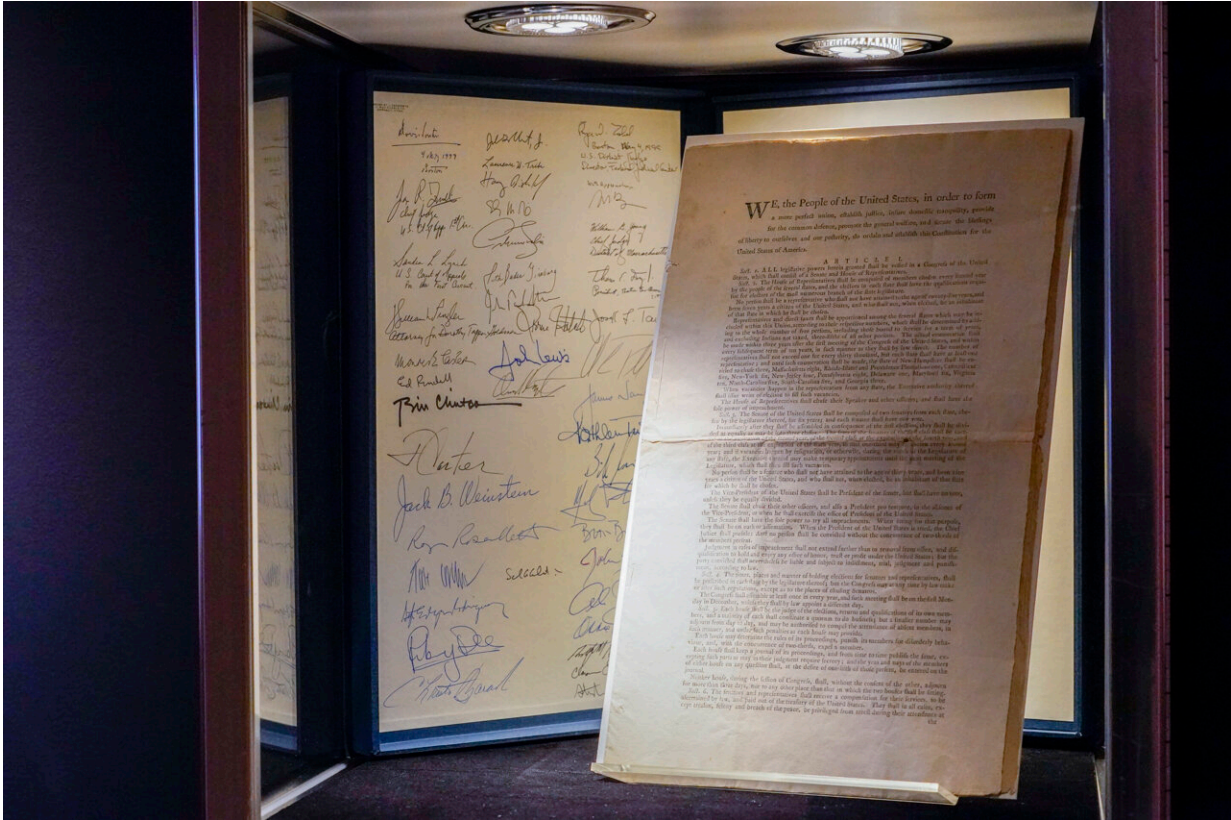
This printing of the Constitution was last sold in 1988, when real estate developer and collector S. Howard Goldman bought it at auction for \$165,000.

Proceeds from Thursday's sale will benefit a foundation established by Goldman's widow, Dorothy Tapper Goldman, to further the understanding of constitutional principles.

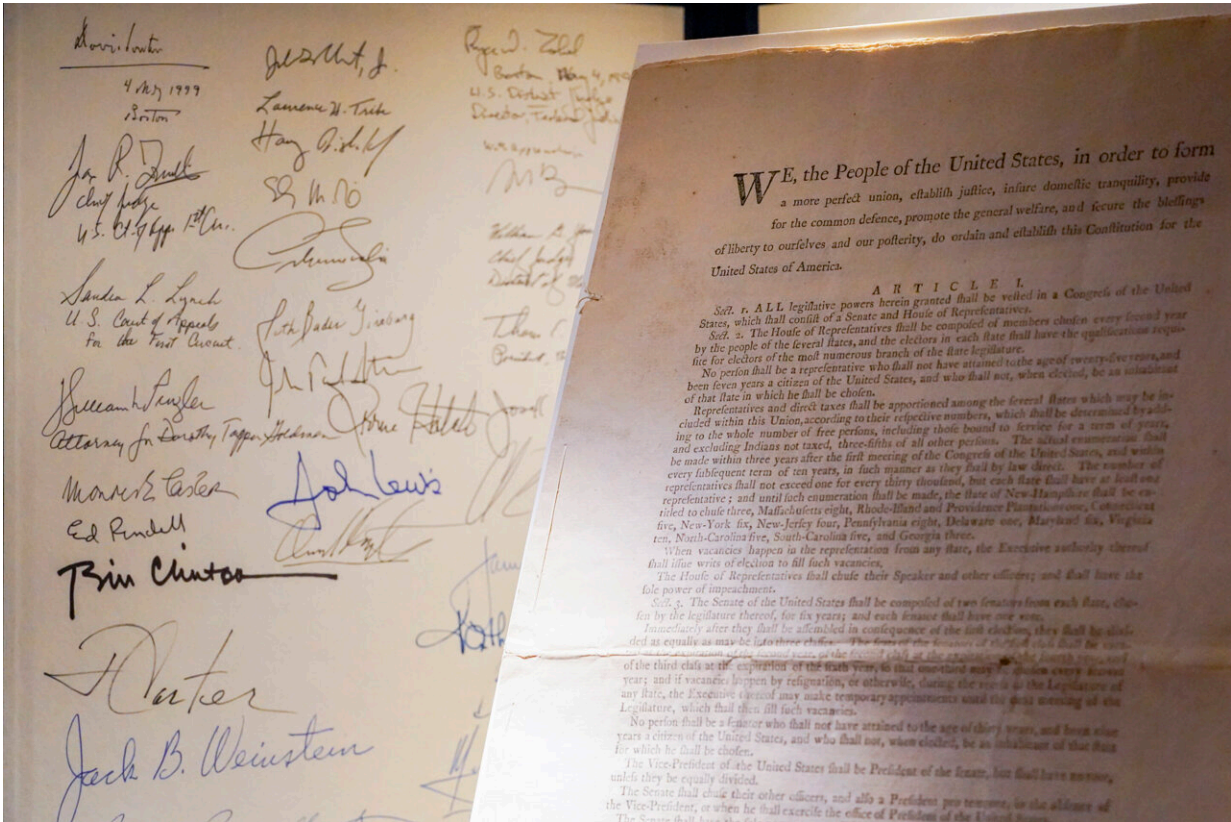
"Tonight's sale of this exceptionally rare and important [printing](#) of the Constitution was a monumental and historic occasion," Selby Kiffer, Sotheby's senior international specialist for books and manuscripts, said in a statement.

Kiffer said the auction result reflects how relevant the Constitution remains, "not only in America but for global democracy."

The underbidder was ConstitutionDAO, which announced its plan to raise millions of dollars to buy the Constitution on Twitter on Nov. 12. DAO stands for decentralized autonomous organization, a type of community-run business that operates on the blockchain.



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A detail of a first printing of the United States Constitution is displayed at Sotheby's auction house during a press preview on Nov. 5, 2021, in New York. The rare copy has sold for a record \$43.2 million at Sotheby's to an anonymous buyer who outbid a group of cryptocurrency investors. Credit: AP Photo/Mary Altaffer, File

[ConstitutionDAO tweeted Thursday night](#), "We showed the world what crypto and web3, onboarding thousands of people in the process, including museum curators and art directors who are now excited to keep learning."

The group added, "We were the first DAO Sothebys has ever worked with, but we're sure we won't be the last one."

The previous [auction](#) record for a book or manuscript was set in 1994 when Bill Gates purchased the Codex Leicester by Leonardo da Vinci at Christie's for \$30.8 million.

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