

ONE NATION UNDER GOD?

The Residence Act of 1790 officially empowered the United States government to construct a national capital near the Potomac River. The new capital was later named Washington after George Washington, and the federal district that contained the capital was called the District of Columbia. Today, millions of tourists travel to Washington, D.C. every year.

Visitors can observe how American currency is printed and learn about the history of American currency itself at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing (BEP). The sole printer of U.S. paper money since 1877, the BEP currently has two facilities — one in Washington, D.C. and another in Fort Worth, TX. Printing paper money is a complex, detailed task.

Several elements, such as serial numbers and various security features, must be added to each bill before it can be placed in circulation. However, one of the most important elements is a short, four-word phrase. By law, all U.S. currency must be printed with the words “In God We Trust.” **However, despite those words, most people rely on their money more than they rely on God.**

Headquarters of the United States Congress, the Capitol Building is where bills are proposed and laws are created. Eight paintings illustrating key events in America’s history are housed in the Rotunda, the room below the Capitol’s iconic dome.

One painting *The Embarkation of the Pilgrims* commemorates the brave people who journeyed to the New World in search of religious freedom. The trip aboard the *Mayflower* was uncomfortable and perilous, but the Pilgrims valued worshipping God so highly they undertook the journey anyway.

Another painting named *Declaration of Independence* depicts Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert Livingston submitting a draft of the Declaration to the Second

Continental Congress. The Declaration's final draft mentions "nature's God," "their Creator," and "the protection of Divine Providence." Both the Pilgrims and the Founding Fathers trusted in God to protect and guide them.

The original copies of the Declaration of Independence, Constitution, and Bill of Rights are currently on display at the National Archives Building.

When the Constitution was first introduced, many Americans actually opposed it. They believed the Constitution in its present form did not provide adequate protection for their newly-won liberty. Thus, in 1791, the Constitution was amended. Composed of the first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights enumerates the rights and freedoms the government may not encroach on.

The First Amendment protects the right to worship and prevents the federal government from imposing a national religion, a frequent occurrence in Europe during the Founders' time. "Separation of church and state," a phrase that originated from a letter written by Thomas Jefferson, refers to institutional separation **and in no way prohibits praying before government meetings or displaying the Ten Commandments on government property.**

Sometimes called "America's Temple of Justice," the Supreme Court Building houses the Court Chamber, where the nine Supreme Court Justices meet.

These nine Justices exercise judicial review, which prevents the President or Congress from violating the Constitution. However, the Supreme Court Building alludes to a law that precedes the Supreme Court, the Constitution, and even the United States. Carved into the wooden door of the Court Chamber are two tablets inscribed with the numbers one through ten in Roman numerals, **listing the Ten Commandments.**

Centuries ago, Moses gave the ancient Israelites two stone tablets containing God's law — the Ten Commandments. The majority of

Americans do not keep the Ten Commandments fully. Many do not even know what they are, and those who do often dismiss them as archaic Jewish laws no longer applicable to modern Christians.

The Library of Congress is the official library of the United States Congress. Inside the Main Reading Room are sixteen bronze statues, each pair representing men whose lives embody a particular theme or concept.

One of these concepts is religion, symbolized by Moses and the Apostle Paul. God chose Moses to lead His people Israel out of Egypt and inspired him to write the first five Old Testament books. The Apostle Paul was God's "chosen vessel" to take the Gospel to the Gentiles. Paul's letters to the various congregations make up over half of the New Testament books.

Additionally, the Library of Congress owns one of the few remaining Gutenberg Bibles. Around 1440, Johannes Gutenberg developed the movable-type printing press. By 1455-1456, he began using it to print Bibles. Thanks to Gutenberg, the Bible became easier for the average person to obtain.

The White House has been the President's official home since 1800. John Adams, the second President of the United States, was the first President to live in the White House. Although he is sometimes overshadowed by his predecessor George Washington and his successor Thomas Jefferson, President Adams still managed to leave a lasting impression within the White House itself.

The following passage, taken from a letter written by President Adams, has been engraved into the mantel of the State Dining Room fireplace: "I Pray Heaven To Bestow The Best of Blessings On This House And All that shall hereafter Inhabit it. May none but Honest and Wise Men Ever rule under This Roof." John Adams hoped God would bless the Presidency and provide the United States with capable leaders.

Located near the Potomac River, the Jefferson Memorial pays tribute to Thomas Jefferson, the primary author of the Declaration of Independence and America's third President.

Several statements from President Jefferson are engraved on the inner walls of the memorial. Near the ceiling is the following quotation: "I Have Sworn Upon The Altar of God Eternal Hostility Against Every Form of Tyranny Over The Mind of Man." The inscription on the northwest interior wall contains another quotation, "Almighty God hath created the mind free."

Some of President Jefferson's most insightful words are inscribed on the northeast interior wall: "God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever."

Thomas Jefferson's remarks indicate his belief in and respect for God.

The Lincoln Memorial honors Abraham Lincoln, the man who led the country through the Civil War. A few years before he became the sixteenth President, Abraham Lincoln spoke at the Illinois State Capitol. The opening sentence of his speech — "A house divided against itself, cannot stand" — is taken from the Bible (Matthew 12:25; Mark 3:25).

Furthermore, President Lincoln's faith sustained him as he sought to win the war and preserve the Union.

In 1863, he signed a resolution proclaiming a National Fast Day. After the Battle of Gettysburg, a state-funded cemetery was created for the fallen Union soldiers. While attending the dedication ceremony, President Lincoln gave the Gettysburg Address, which is now inscribed into the walls of the Lincoln Memorial. In this famous speech, he describes the United States as "This Nation Under God."

Evidence of America's Christian heritage is present throughout Washington, D.C. But that heritage has largely been discarded and

replaced with a desire for wealth, fame, and pleasure. Just as their ancestors, the Children of Israel, were punished for their disobedience and idolatry, so shall America be severely punished unless she repents and returns to God.