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Editorial

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the publication of Max Farrand's three-volume *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, which gathered together and made available transcripts of the documents of the Constitutional Convention, including both official papers of the convention and notes and letters from participants. Farrand's work remains the most important source for study of the drafting of the U.S. Constitution. Among the documents Farrand transcribed were several documents from the James Wilson Papers at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

The drafts of the U.S. Constitution within the Wilson Papers are perhaps the Historical Society's best-known historical treasures. Because of the damage that can be caused by overuse, however, they are rarely made available (other than in photocopy form) to the public or to researchers. Yet there is great curiosity about them, and about the surrounding documents of the convention and its Committee of Detail, both from a public eager to connect to and understand the foundations of our republic and from scholars still working to untangle the narrative of the development of our Constitution and to uncover the origins of the distinguishing features of our system of constitutional law.

Farrand was a careful editor, but his transcripts do contain slight errors. Images of the drafts have never been published in full. For these reasons, and for those mentioned above, in this issue of the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* we publish new transcripts, by legal scholars William Ewald and Lorianne Updike Toler, alongside the respective facsimile images of the drafts of the U.S. Constitution and documents of the Committee of Detail. In an introductory essay, Ewald and

Toler make the case for the enduring significance of these documents, and particularly for renewed attention to the crucial work of the Committee of Detail and better appreciation for the role of Pennsylvania's James Wilson in drafting a constitution that not only birthed a nation but that continues to guide us and to serve as a model to nations across the globe.

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