Collection Summary

Title: William Paterson Papers
Span Dates: 1760-1806
ID No.: MSS35576
Creator: Paterson, William, 1745-1806
Extent: 125 items ; 1 container ; 4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
Summary: Jurist, member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and U.S. senator from and governor of New Jersey. Correspondence, legal and business records, essays, and notes of debates and resolutions from the U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

People
Paterson, Cornelia Bell, 1755-1783--Correspondence.
Paterson, William, 1745-1806.

Organizations
United States. Constitutional Convention (1787)

Places
United States--History--Confederation, 1783-1789.
United States--Politics and government--1783-1789.

Occupations
Governors--New Jersey.
Jurists.
Senators, U.S. Congress--New Jersey.

Administrative Information

Provenance
The papers of William Paterson, jurist, member of the Constitutional Convention of 1787, and U.S. senator from and governor of New Jersey, were obtained by the Library of Congress by gift and purchase between 1903 and 1940.

Processing History
The Paterson Papers were processed between 1903 and 1940 and subsequently rehoused. The finding aid was created in 2016.

Additional Guides
The Paterson Papers as received in 1903 and 1908 are described in the Handbook of Manuscripts in the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C., 1918): 472-473.

Copyright Status
The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Paterson is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).
Access and Restrictions

The papers of William Paterson are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container number, William Paterson Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Biographical Note

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1745, Dec. 24</td>
<td>Born, County Antrim, Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1747</td>
<td>Immigrated to United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1763</td>
<td>Graduated, College of New Jersey (later Princeton University), Princeton, N. J.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1768</td>
<td>Admitted to the bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1769</td>
<td>Commenced law practice, New Bromley, N.J.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1775-1776</td>
<td>Delegate and secretary to Provincial Congress 1775-1776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776</td>
<td>Delegate to New Jersey state constitutional convention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1776-1783</td>
<td>Attorney general, New Jersey 1776-1783</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780</td>
<td>Elected delegate to U.S. Continental Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1787</td>
<td>Delegate to U.S. Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia, Pa., and one of the signers of the Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1789-1790</td>
<td>U.S. senator from New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790-1793</td>
<td>Governor of New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1793-1806</td>
<td>Associate justice of the Supreme Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1806, Sept. 9</td>
<td>Died, Albany, N.Y</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Scope and Content Note

The papers of William Paterson (1745-1806) span the years 1760-1806. The collection consists of correspondence, legal and business records, essays, and notes of debates and resolutions from the United States Constitutional Convention of 1787. Subjects include the New Jersey Plan, Paterson's proposal for the structure of the U.S. government, submitted to the convention on June 15, 1787. Correspondents include Robert Morris and Paterson's wife, Cornelia Bell Paterson. In addition to original material, the collection is composed in part of a typewritten transcript and of negative photostats that are unidentified according to place of reproduction or transcriber.
Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged according to type of material.
## Container List

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Container</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| BOX 1     | U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787  
            Miscellaneous material  
            Notebooks
            Typewritten transcript
            Negative photostats, New Jersey Plan and almanac
            Bills and business papers, 1765-1786
          Draft essay for a New Jersey newspaper; Fourth of July oration; notes for an untitled address;
            extracts from a New York statue to regulate highways
            Legal papers, 1772-1786
            Letters to Cornelia Bell Paterson (wife) and material related to her, 1777-1783
            Literary essays mostly in Paterson’s hand composed probably at the College of New Jersey,
            Princeton, N.J., circa 1760-circa 1770; some post 1776; an essay on rivalry between John
            Adams and Thomas Jefferson, circa 1796-1800
            Miscellaneous correspondence, 1782-1806 |