Collection Summary

Title: William Paterson Papers
Span Dates: 1760-1806
ID No.: MSS35576
Creator: Paterson, William, 1745-1806
Extent: 125 items
Extent: 1 container
Extent: 4 linear feet
Language: Collection material in English
Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
LC Catalog record: https://lccn.loc.gov/mm77035576

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 LC Catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically.

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.
Judges.
Justices, U.S. Supreme Court.
Lawyers.
Senators, U.S. Congress--New Jersey.

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Paterson is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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
Date | Event
---|---
1745, Dec. 24 | Born, County Antrim, Ireland
1747 | Immigrated to United States
1763 | Graduated, College of New Jersey (later Princeton University), Princeton, N. J.
1768 | Admitted to the bar
1769 | Commenced law practice, New Bromley, N.J.
1775-1776 | Delegate and secretary to Provincial Congress 1775-1776
1776 | Delegate to New Jersey state constitutional convention
1776-1783 | Attorney general, New Jersey 1776-1783
1780 | Elected delegate to U.S. Continental Congress
1787 | Delegate to U.S. Constitutional Convention, Philadelphia, Pa., and one of the signers of the Constitution
1789-1790 | U.S. senator from New Jersey
1790-1793 | Governor of New Jersey
1793-1806 | Associate justice of the Supreme Court
1806, Sept. 9 | Died, Albany, N.Y

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 |