

William Paterson Papers
A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



Manuscript Division, Library of Congress
Washington, D.C.
2016

Contact information: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/mss.contact>

Catalog Record: <https://lcn.loc.gov/mm77035576>

Additional search options available at: <https://hdl.loc.gov/loc/mss/eadmss.ms016028>

Prepared by Manuscript Division Staff

Finding aid encoded by Library of Congress Manuscript Division, 2016

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The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of William Paterson is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).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

Container	Contents
BOX 1	<p>U.S. Constitutional Convention of 1787</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Miscellaneous materialNotebooks<ul style="list-style-type: none">Typewritten transcriptNegative photostats, New Jersey Plan and almanac <p>Bills and business papers, 1765-1786</p> <p>Draft essay for a New Jersey newspaper; Fourth of July oration; notes for an untitled address; extracts from a New York statute to regulate highways</p> <p>Legal papers, 1772-1786</p> <p>Letters to Cornelia Bell Paterson (wife) and material related to her, 1777-1783</p> <p>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</p> <p>Miscellaneous correspondence, 1782-1806</p>