



National Archives and Records Administration

700 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20408-0001

Early Presidential Nominations in the U.S. Senate, 1797–1811

The Constitution of the United States (Article II, section 2) requires the Senate to provide advice and consent for Presidential nominations to major and minor Federal offices, the Federal judicial courts, and diplomatic personnel. From 1797 to 1811, in addition to cabinet-level posts, civilian nominations ranged from customs and revenue collectors, postmasters, territorial administrators, land office registrars, and foreign service personnel such as envoys, consuls, and ambassadors, to U.S. attorneys, marshals, and judges. The confirmation of Presidential nominations constituted an executive duty the Senate shared with the President, performed in closed sessions separate from other legislative proceedings, although Congress regularly published the results of the proceedings.

Nominating messages from the President and papers relating to appointees who generated debate or controversy constitute the bulk of the nomination records. The nomination papers may contain correspondence, including letters from private persons or Members of Congress, letters from executive departments, financial disclosures, newspaper clippings, petitions and affidavits, committee reports, and transcripts of confirmation hearings.

Records of the United States Senate (RG 46)

Microfilmed Records

The early executive nomination records have been microfilmed as part of an ongoing project to film all of the unbound records of Congress from 1789 to 1817. The U.S. Senate records are arranged according to several categories that reflect the business of the Senate, including Records of Legislative Proceedings, Records of Executive Proceedings, Records of Impeachment Proceedings, and Records of the Office of the Secretary. Presidential nomination messages and papers relating to nominations appear under the Records of Executive Proceedings.

Note: No nomination papers are known to exist for the 2nd through 5th Congresses (1791–1799) or the 8th Congress (1803–1805). The nomination papers of the 1st Congress (1789–1791) have not been microfilmed.

___M1704, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Fifth Congress, 1797–1799*. 5 rolls. DP. Nomination messages of the President appear on **roll 4** of this publication, arranged chronologically by each session of Congress.

___M1706, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Sixth Congress, 1799–1801*. 8 rolls. DP. **Roll 7** contains both executive nomination messages, arranged chronologically by session of Congress, and papers relating to nominations, arranged alphabetically by nominee.

___P2000, *Records of the Seventh Congress, 1801–1803*. 11 rolls.

This publication contains records of both the House and Senate. Senate records appear on **rolls 1–5**. **Roll 5** contains nomination messages, arranged chronologically by session, and nomination papers, arranged alphabetically by nominee.

___M1403, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Eighth Congress, 1803–1805*. 5 rolls. DP. Executive nomination messages appear on **Roll 4**, arranged chronologically by session of Congress.

___M1708, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Ninth Congress, 1805–1807*. 7 rolls. DP. **Roll 6** of this publication contains executive nomination messages, arranged chronologically by session, and papers relating to nominations, arranged alphabetically by nominee.

___M1712, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Eleventh Congress, 1809–1811*. 7 rolls. DP. Executive nomination messages appear on **roll 7**, arranged chronologically by session, followed by papers relating to nominations, arranged alphabetically by nominee.

Executive Proceedings

___M1252, *Journal of the Executive Proceedings of the U.S. Senate, 1789–1823*. 3 rolls. DP. This publication reproduces the original handwritten journals kept by the Secretary of the Senate, in which he recorded the floor actions pertaining to those executive functions (nominations and treaties) that the Senate shared with the President. The journal volumes reproduced here are the final, transcribed versions, which the Secretary of the Senate endorsed with his signature as the official record of proceedings and then sent to the printer for publication.

Several rough or first draft executive journals also exist for the Second Congress, 1st session, and the Fifth Congress, 2nd and special sessions. These drafts contained annotations and corrections, often written on slips of papers attached to the journal pages with sealing wax. They were recorded in the rough journals for the regular proceedings of the Senate, and are reproduced in Microfilm Publication M1251, *Journal of the Legislative Proceedings of the U.S. Senate, 1789–1817*.

Published volumes of the *Senate Executive Journal* are available in the reference reading room of the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

The *Senate Executive Journal* (1789–1875) is also available to search online through the American Memory homepage on the Library of Congress website at <http://www.loc.gov/ammem/amlaw>.

For more information, see the following reference report: *Presidential Nominations for Federal Employment: Researching the Records of the U.S. Senate*.

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