



Early Congressional Private Claims in the U.S. Senate, 1797–1811

Since the establishment of the Federal Government in 1789, American citizens have exercised the right, as guaranteed by the First Amendment, to petition Congress regarding any public or private matter. Private claims typically involved the redress of grievances, payment of monetary compensation, or solicitation of government sponsorship for a private cause or enterprise. Many of the early private claims submitted to both the Senate and House of Representatives have been microfilmed as part of a preservation project to film all of the unbound records of Congress from 1789 to 1817.

Private claims are part of Records of the United States Senate (Record Group 46) in the custody of the Center for Legislative Archives in the National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

Records of the U. S. Senate (RG 46)

The U.S. Senate records are arranged according to several categories that reflect the business of the Senate, including records of legislative proceedings, executive proceedings, impeachment proceedings, and records of the Office of the Secretary. Private claims, part of the records of legislative proceedings, are arranged in the series titled “Petitions and Memorials, Resolutions of State Legislatures, and Related Documents.” Claim files usually include the claimant’s original petition, supporting affidavits, committee reports, and correspondence.

___M1704, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Fifth Congress, 1797–1799*. 5 rolls. DP.

Petitions and memorials submitted to the Committee on Claims and the Committee on Pensions appear on **roll 3**, arranged alphabetically by the surname of the petitioner. Petitions and memorials submitted to the Committee on Public Lands are arranged chronologically.

___M1706, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Sixth Congress, 1799–1801*. 8 rolls. DP.

Roll 4 contains petitions and memorials submitted to the Committee on Claims, arranged alphabetically by petitioner.

___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 4 contains petitions and memorials submitted to the Committee on Claims and the Committee on Pensions, both arranged alphabetically by name of claimant.

___M1403, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Eighth Congress, 1803–1805*. 5 rolls. DP.

Petitions and memorials submitted to the committees on Claims and Pensions appear on **roll 3**, arranged alphabetically by name of petitioner.

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___M1708, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Ninth Congress, 1805–1807*. 7 rolls. DP.
Roll 5 of this publication contains petitions and memorials submitted to the Committee on Claims and the Committee on Pensions, both arranged alphabetically by name, and the Committee on Public Lands, arranged chronologically.

___M1712, *Unbound Records of the U.S. Senate, Eleventh Congress, 1809–1811*. 7 rolls. DP.
Petitions and memorials for general claims and pensions appear on **rolls 5–6**, arranged alphabetically by name of claimant.

For more information, see the following reference reports:

- *American State Papers: Public Lands and Claims*
- *Records of the U.S. Congress Relating to Private Claims*
- *Early Congressional Private Claims in the U.S. House of Representatives, 1789–1817*
- *The Accompanying Papers of the U.S. House of Representatives, 1865–1877*

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