

Records of the General Assembly, 1636-2005 State Archives Record Group No. 002

History

The General Assembly is Connecticut's legislative body. The General Court of Massachusetts' commissioned a group of eight leaders "to govern the people at Connecticut" for the year beginning March 1636. This group was also known as the General Court.

The Fundamental Orders of 1639 provided for all freemen of the colony to elect a governor, six magistrates, and four deputies from each of the three towns. As new towns organized, the number of deputies grew as well. The Charter of 1662 provided for the elected positions of governor, deputy governor, twelve assistants, and two representatives from each town.

In March 1662/63 and on several later dates, the General Court passed acts allowing a group of Assistants to act in emergencies when the General Court was not in session. The Assistants became the governor's council which, by an act of October 1698, became the Upper House, while the deputies elected by the towns constituted the Lower House. After this formalization of the two bodies, new legislation required concurring action by both houses.

For many years the General court also served as the colony's and later the state's highest judicial court as well as a probate court. It did, however, establish lower level courts: the Particular Court, 1638, the Court of Assistants and County Courts, 1665-1666; separate probate courts, 1698; the Superior Court, 1711 and the Supreme Court of Errors, 1784. The Constitution of 1818 established a specific separation of judicial, executive, and legislative powers.

The present Constitution, adopted in 1965, provides for a Senate of 30 to 50 members and a House of Representatives of 125 to 225 members. Elector in each respective senatorial or assembly districts chose each member for two-year terms. The legislature holds regular length sessions in odd-numbered years, and shorter session in the even-number years. It conducts its business through a system of joint committee comprised of members from both houses.

Scope and Content

This group consists of the official records of the General Assembly and its committees except for the individual bill files including hearing transcripts. Researchers will find those records in Law and Legislative unit of the State Library. The offices of speaker and president pro tempore have only recently begun to place their records with the State Archives. These files include constituent correspondence, reports, memos and other informational documentation. Some committee files including official minutes and correspondence have also come to the State Archives in recent years.

Provenance

The early records in this group came to the Archives in many transfers of various sizes from the office of the Secretary of the State, who is responsible under the Constitution for the "safe-keeping and custody of the public records and documents." The official files of proposed legislation and resolution still come through the Secretary of the State's office.

The General Assembly is exempt from the Public Records Act that governs documentation created in the executive branch. Many committee records and members files have been lost. Some recent transfers of committee records and leadership files have come directly from the members and staff.

Related Record

Many General Assembly records are available in published form. The series listed below indicate if a published version exists. The State Library also has bound copies of Senate and House proceedings since 1945 and transcripts of standing committee hearings since 1943. For records of the State Constitutional Convention of 1965 see RG 6, Secretary of the State. Other early General Assembly records are available in RG 1, Connecticut Archives.

Series List

1. **Records of the Colony of Connecticut, 1636-1776**
Proceedings of the General Assembly.
See Record Group 1, Early General Records or J.H. Trumbull and Charles J. Hoadly, eds., The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut (15 vols.) Also available on microfilm from Research Publications, Inc.
2. **Records of the State of Connecticut, 1776-1933**
Proceedings of the General Assembly.
See Record Group 1, Early General Records or J.C. Hoadley et al, eds., The Public Records of the State of Connecticut for 1776-1811. (15 vols.)
Records for 1776-1792 are also available on microfilm from Research Publications, Inc.
3. **"Connecticut Archives," 1629-1820**
Papers and correspondence of the General Assembly and elected and appointed officials including the governor. Grouped by topic, then mostly chronologically.
Also available on microfilm. 303 vols., 66 boxes, and 55 index volumes. 120 c.f.
Vols. CA 1-303
Boxes 1-66
4. **General Assembly papers, 1821-1983**
Petitions, acts, resolutions, appointment and resignation documents, reports of committees and officers, governor's messages, and other materials related to legislative business.
Partially processed. Series 17-19 contain reports originally in this group.
Arranged chronologically by year then grouped by document type or subject.
Materials prior to 1913 are located in this building.
Materials after 1913 are located at an off-site facility.
See container lists. 556 cubic feet.
Main Vault
& Off-site¹
5. **Senate, 1708-1869**
a) Journal of the Senate, 1707-1740, 1819-1869.
Summary of actions taken in the Senate. Available in published form since 1840.
Microfilm available: 1707-1740, 974.6 C711; 1819-1869, 974.6 C711S.
See container list 22 vols. 4 c.f.
b) Executive Journal of the Senate, 1819-1850.
Summary record of actions, primarily appointments, taken in executive session.
1 vol. .10 c.f.
c) Record of the Senate, 1879-1955.
Forms indicating subject, author, number and action taken on resolutions, petitions and bills.
The first volume, 1877, contains no entries. See container list
18 vols. .5 c.f.
d) Roll of the Senate, 1842-1878.
List of members, by session and by district, certified by the Secretary of the State.
1 vol. .10 c.f.
Main Vault

¹ Materials cannot be retrieved on a same day basis. Please see History and Genealogy Staff for rules and procedures concerning archival material stored at off-site facilities.

6. [Reserved for the records of individual senators]

9. House of Representatives, 1708-1905

Main vault

- a) Journal of the House of Representatives, 1708-1738, 1779, 1870.
Summary record of actions taken in the House. Available in published form since 1837.
Early years were recorded in waste books, sometimes bound out of order and sometimes incomplete. Microfilm available: 1708-1738, ~~974.6 C711~~; 1779-1841, ~~974.6 C711h~~. *HIST REF MICRO KFC 3618, H84[mf(a)]*
See container list. 49 vols. 9 c.f.
- b) Record of the House of Representatives, 1873-1955.
Forms indicating subject, author, number and action taken on resolutions, petitions and bills.
See container list. 54 vols. 5 c.f.
- c) Rolls of the House, 1780-1878.

List of members, certified by the Secretary of the State. 7 vols. .5 c.f.
1780 - 1790, by session and by town
1792 - 1800, by session and by town
1801 - 1810, by session and by town
1811 - 1820, by session and by town
1821 - 1830, by session and by town
1831 - 1839, by session and by town
1843 - 1878, by session and by town

Vol. 1
Vol. 2
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Vol. 5
Vol. 6
Vol. 7

10. Members' files, 1972-2000

Main vault
& Probate

- Subject and correspondence files created and maintained by representatives.
Arranged alphabetically by representative's name.
- Representative David Lavine, 100th District, 1977-1986.
1 c.f. See container list.
- Representative Mary Mushinsky, 85th District, 1995.
.10 c.f. Accession 99-182.
- Representative Janet Poliaskey, 38th District, 1983-1990.
2.75 c.f. See container list.
- Representative Mae S. Schmidle, 106th District, 1990.
.25 c.f. Accession 99-024.
- Representative Ronald L. Smoko, 91st District, 1984
.05 c.f. Accession 99-170.
- Representative John W. Thompson, 13th District, 1988-1996.
2 c.f. See container list.
- Representative Richard D. Tulisano, 29th District, 1972-1994.
1972-1994. 52 c.f. See container list Tulisano No. 1
1995-2000. 28 c.f. See container list Tulisano No. 2.

12. Docket books, 1810-1901

Box A&B

Numerical list of petitions and memorials to the General Assembly.
7 vols. and 2 folders in 2 boxes. .75 c.f.

13. Engrossed bills, 1859-1990

Main vault

Record copies of bills, entered in volumes with signatures of the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the Governor. Available in published form since 1879.
See container list.

14. Rejected bills, 1808-1911

Main vault

Includes petitions, memorials, remonstrances, drafts of legislation and resolutions, committee reports and other official papers. 75 c.f.
1808-1870 See published finding aid *Rejected Bills, 1808-1870*.
1871-1911 see container list.
1913-1998 see container list. (General Assembly Papers)

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| 15. Constitutional Convention, 1818²
Journal of the Constitutional Convention. Bound with the House Journals for the period, 1779-1791. | Main vault |
| 16. Constitutional Convention, 1902¹
Consists of stenographic record of debates and proceedings and official rolls of delegates. 10 vols. 1 c.f. | Main vault |
| 17. Treasurer, 1880-1888
Annual reports to the General Assembly. 10 vols. .20 c.f. | Box 179A |
| 18. Controller, 1879-1886
Annual reports to the General Assembly. 8 vols. .20 c.f. | Box 179A |
| 19. Railroads, 1840-1908
Annual reports of railroad companies to the General Assembly, with related papers; reports of the Joint Committee on Railroads; articles of association register as required by "General Railroad Law" c. 1870; petitions pertaining to union depots at Waterbury, Norwich and Niantic and to amend the Housatonic Railroad Co. charter. 1 vol. 3 boxes. 1.75 c.f. | Box 180A-C |
| 21. Insane persons, 1865
Report of replies from towns to Joint Select Committee questionnaire on a possible new asylum. Includes number of insane persons and cost of maintenance. .25 c.f. | Box 180D |
| 22. Adjutant General, 1866
Printed report of deceased Connecticut volunteers during Civil War. 1 volume. 2 c.f. | Main vault |
| 24. Reports from other agencies and offices, 1895-1977
Printed annual and biannual reports presented to General Assembly by various agencies, offices, committees and commissions. Reports include overview of agency/office and yearly statistics. 15 c.f. See sub-series list. | Main vault |
| 25. Commissions, Committees and Councils, 1939-2005
Reports, minutes, hearing transcripts and other materials on the work of various regular, special and interim committees, commissions, and councils. See also Task Forces (Series 029), Member's Files (Series 010) and Reports from other agencies and offices (Series 024) For a complete list of Commissions see sub-series list. | Main vault |
| 26. Statistics for manual; original returns, 1886-1921
1886; 1889; 1907; 1909; 1911; 1913; 1915; 1917; 1919; 1921; 1921. 11 vols. | Box 181 &
182 |
| 27. Visitors Register, 1912-1931
State Capitol. 1 vol. | Main vault |
| 28. General Legislative Reunion, 1886
Scrapbook. 1 vol. | Main vault |
| 29. Task Forces, 1974-1996
Reports, meeting minutes, agendas and other materials relating to various task forces created by the Governor or individual Committees and Commissions. See also Committees, Commissions and Councils (Series 025) and Members Files (Series 010). For a complete list of task forces see sub-series list. | Main vault |

²Records of the 1965 Constitutional Convention are located in RG 6, Secretary of the State, series 38.

30. Senate Clerks, 1989

Main 7

Labor contract arbitration award files submitted for approval by the General Assembly.
.10 cubic feet. Accession 94-007.

31. House Clerks, 1989

See "Senate Clerks" above

32. President Pro Tempore, 1972-1984

Main 7

Subject files on state agencies, congressmen, committees and task forces. 19.5 cubic feet.
See container list.

33. Speaker of the House, 1988-1992

Main 7

Files of Representative Irving J. Stolberg, Speaker of the House. 7 cubic feet.
See container list.