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Early Congressional Records

Annals of Congress

 [Annals of Congress](#)

The *Annals of Congress*, formally known as *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States*, cover the 1st Federal Congress under the US Constitution through the first session of the 18th Congress, from 1789 to 1824. The *Annals* were not published contemporaneously, but were compiled between 1834 and 1856, using the best records available. Speeches are paraphrased rather than presented verbatim, but the record of debate is nonetheless fuller than that available from the House and Senate *Journals*. The *Annals of Congress* were immediately succeeded by the *Register of Debates*, and subsequently by the *Congressional Globe* and *Congressional Record*. Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Congressional Globe

 [Congressional Globe](#)

The *Congressional Globe* contains the congressional debates of the 23rd through 42nd Federal Congresses under the US Constitution (1833-73). The *Congressional Globe* is the third of the four series of publications containing the debates of Congress. It was preceded by the *Annals of Congress* and the *Register of Debates* and succeeded by the *Congressional Record*. The first five volumes of the *Globe* (23rd Congress, 1st Session through 25th Congress, 1st Session, 1833-37) overlap with the *Register of Debates*. Initially the *Congressional Globe* contained a "condensed report" or abstract rather than a verbatim report of the debates and proceedings. With the 32nd Congress (1851), however, the *Congressional Globe* began to provide something approaching verbatim transcription. The contents of the appendix of each volume vary from Congress to Congress, but appendixes typically contain presidential messages, reports of the heads of departments and cabinet officers, texts of laws, and appropriations. Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Congressional Record

 [Congressional Record](#)

The *Congressional Record* began publication in 1873. Printed by the Government Printing Office, it is the fourth and final series of publications containing the debates of Congress under the US Constitution. (It was preceded by the *Annals of Congress*, *Register of Debates*, and *Congressional Globe*.) The *Record* is far more comprehensive than its predecessors in reporting Congressional debates. Appendixes appear in most volumes, the earlier ones limited mainly to speeches of members.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Early U.S. Congress House Journals

 [Early U.S. Congress House Journals](#)

The Early *United States House of Representatives Journal* collection from 1789-1875. From its inaugural session, the United States House of Representatives has kept an official journal of its proceedings in accordance with Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution, which provides that: Each House shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either House, on any question, shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal. The *House of Representatives Journal* notes the matters considered by the House as well as votes and other actions taken. It does not record the actual debates.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Early U.S. Congress Senate Executive Journals

 [Early U.S. Congress Senate Executive Journals](#)

Early Senate Executive Journal collection from 1789-1875. From its inaugural session the United States Senate, in addition to its legislative journal, has maintained a separate record of its executive proceedings. These proceedings relate to its functions of confirming presidential nominees and consenting to treaties.

The Senate Executive Journal was not made public until 1828, when the Senate decided to print and publish the proceedings for all the previous Congresses and thereafter to publish the journal for each session at its close. In early sessions, the entries are much shorter than those in the legislative journal. A special feature in volume 1 of the Senate Executive Journal is a seven-page list entitled An Alphabetical List of the Senators of the United States From the commencement of the Government to the termination of the Nineteenth Congress.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Early U.S. Congress Senate Journals

 [Early U.S. Congress Senate Journals](#)

The Early *United States Senate Journal* collection from 1789-1875. From its inaugural session, the United States Senate has kept a journal of its proceedings in accordance with Article I, Section 5 of the Constitution, which provides that: Each House shall keep a journal of its proceedings, and from time to time publish the same, excepting such parts as may in their judgment require secrecy; and the yeas and nays of the members of either House, on any question, shall, at the desire of one-fifth of those present, be entered on the journal. The *Senate Journal* notes the matters considered by the Senate as well as votes and other actions taken. It does not record the actual debates.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Elliot's Debates

 [Elliot's Debates](#)

The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution is a five-volume collection compiled by Jonathan Elliot in the mid-nineteenth century. The volumes contain materials about the national government's transitional period between the closing of the Constitutional Convention in September 1787 and the opening of the First Federal Congress under the US Constitution in March 1789. *Elliot's Debates* collect the documents pertinent to the discussions on ratification: the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the Journal of the Constitutional Convention, the text of the proposed Constitution, and the debates in the various states.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Farrand's Records

 [Farrand's Records](#)

Max Farrand's *The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*. Published in 1911, Farrand's work gathered the documentary records of the Constitutional Convention into four volumes. The notes taken at that time by James Madison, and later revised by him, form the largest single block of material other than the official proceedings. The volumes also includes notes and letters by many other participants, as well as the various constitutional plans proposed during the convention.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Journals of the Continental Congress

 [Journals of the Continental Congress](#)

The First Continental Congress met from September 5 to October 26, 1774. The Second Continental Congress ran from May 10, 1775, to March 2, 1789. The *Journals of the Continental Congress* are the records of the daily proceedings of the Congress as kept by the office of its secretary, Charles Thomson. The *Journals* were printed contemporaneously in different editions and in several subsequent reprint editions. None of these early editions, however, included the confidential sections of the records, which were not published until 1821. This edition, which is complete, was published by the Library of Congress from 1904 to 1937, and is based on the manuscript *Journals* and other manuscript records of the Continental Congress in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. Further information on how this edition was assembled, as well as notes explaining features introduced by the editors, may be found in the Prefatory Note to volumes 1 and 2.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Letters of Delegates to Congress

 [Letters of Delegates to Congress](#)

The twenty-six volumes of the *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789* aims to make available all the documents written by delegates that bear directly upon their work during their years of actual service in the First and Second Continental Congresses, 1774-1789. The current twenty-five volumes of text include approximately twenty thousand entries gathered from institutions throughout the world, accompanied by a single cumulative index. Although letters

from delegates comprise the preponderance of the entries, there are many diaries, public papers, essays, and other documents. Together with the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, the volumes provide the means for a comprehensive, in-depth examination of the operations of the Continental Congress during the critical years of the founding of the United States. Further information on how this edition was assembled, as well as notes explaining features introduced by the editors, may be found in volume 1.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.


Maclay's Journal

 [Maclay's Journal](#)

Journal of William Maclay, United States Senator from Pennsylvania, 1789-1791. William Maclay was one of the first two senators from Pennsylvania. He drew a two-year term in the allotment of term lengths for the 1st Congress. Within two months of the opening of the first session, he had begun to keep a diary, which he continued almost daily for the three sessions of the 1st Congress. Because Senate sessions were closed to the public until 1795, his is one of the few accounts of Senate floor activity in the early Congresses. This edition of the diary is published in 1891, and is edited by Edgar S. Maclay, a descendant of William.

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Register of Debates

 [Register of Debates](#)

The *Register of Debates* is a record of the congressional debates of the 18th Congress, 2nd Session through the 25th Congress, 1st Session (1824-37) under the US Constitution. It is the second of the four series of publications containing the debates of Congress. It was preceded by the *Annals of Congress* and succeeded by the *Congressional Globe*. While each volume consists of an index, more complete access to the information may be obtained indirectly by using the indexes of the House and Senate *Journals* during the relevant session of Congress, which provide the dates on which action was taken. These dates can then be consulted in the *Register of Debates*. Appendixes include, but are not limited, to presidential messages and the text of laws. The *Register of Debates* is not a verbatim account of the proceedings, but rather a summary of the "leading debates and incidents" of the period. It was published contemporaneously with the proceedings by a commercial printer, Gales and Seaton. The *Register of Debates* and its successor, the *Congressional Globe*, overlap for a period of time (23rd Congress, 1st Session through 25th Congress, 1st Session; 1833-37).

Description mainly provided by Library of Congress.

Current Congressional Records

Congressional Record For Current Years

 [Congressional Record For Current Years](#)

US Congress Current Legislative Activity

 [US Congress Current Legislative Activity](#)