

# United States Continental Congress Records

## A Finding Aid to the Collection in the Library of Congress



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Manuscript Division, Library of Congress  
Washington, D.C.  
2012

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Revised by Julie Miller with the assistance of Jeffery Bryson

## Collection Summary

**Title:** United States Continental Congress Records

**Span Dates:** 1765-1825

**Bulk Dates:** (bulk 1774-1790)

**ID No.:** MSS82974

**Creator:** United States. Continental Congress

**Extent:** 700 items ; 3 containers plus 1 oversize ; 1.2 linear feet ; 3 microfilm reels

**Language:** Collection material in English

**Location:** Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

**Summary:** Original and reproduced records of the United States Continental Congress including letters and extracts from letters, circular letters, orders, resolutions, contracts, oaths of allegiance to the United States, financial documents, extracts from journals and minutes of the congress and its committees, committee reports, lists, and requisitions.

## Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

### People

Adams, John, 1735-1826.

Beaumarchais, Pierre Augustin Caron de, 1732-1799.

Bingham, William, 1752-1804.

Dickinson, John, 1732-1808.

Gates, Horatio, 1728-1806.

Hancock, John, 1737-1793.

Jay, John, 1745-1829.

Jones, John Paul, 1747-1792.

Laurens, Henry, 1724-1792.

Lee, Richard Henry, 1732-1794.

Madison, James, 1751-1836.

Morris, Robert, 1734-1806.

Thomson, Charles, 1729-1824.

### Organizations

United States. Continental Congress.

United States. Continental Congress. Secret Committee.

### Subjects

Allegiance--United States.

Finance, Public--United States.

Indians of North America--Government relations.

Oaths--United States.

### Places

United States--Appropriations and expenditures.

United States--History--19th century.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Equipment and supplies.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783--Secret service.

United States--History--Revolution, 1775-1783.

United States--Military policy.

United States--Politics and government--18th century.

## **Administrative Information**

### **Provenance**

The records of the United States Continental Congress were acquired by the Library of Congress from various sources during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### **Processing History**

The records of the United States Continental Congress were arranged and described in 1984. The collection and finding aid were revised in 2012.

### **Copyright Status**

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

### **Access and Restrictions**

The records of United States Continental Congress 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.

### **Microfilm**

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on three reels. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan.

### **Preferred Citation**

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, United States Continental Congress Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The records of the United States Continental Congress span the years 1765-1825, with the bulk of the material from 1774 to 1790. The collection consists of original and reproduction documents of the United States Continental Congress acquired by the Library from many sources.

Included are letters and extracts from letters, circular letters, orders, resolutions, contracts, oaths of allegiance to the United States, financial documents, extracts from journals and minutes of the Congress and its committees, committee reports, lists, and requisitions. Among the topics are finance, supplies, intelligence, personnel, political affairs, legislation, military matters, and Indian affairs. Charles Thomson, as secretary of the Continental Congress, is the signer of many of these documents. Other names represented include John Adams, John Dickinson, Horatio Gates, John Hancock, John Jay, John Paul Jones, Henry Laurens, Richard Henry Lee, James Madison, Robert Morris.

Of note in the collection is a bundle of forty-six bills of exchange payable to Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais (1732-1799), supplier of arms and military stores to the United States, June 15, 1779; a group of fifteen letters, January 17, 1777-November 17, 1781, to the Secret Committee of Congress and Robert Morris from William Bingham (1752-1804), merchant and agent for Congress in St. Pierre, Martinique, and after his return to the United States; and an incomplete set of monthly attendance reports for delegates to the Congress, September, 1785-May, 1788.

## **Arrangement of the Papers**

This collection is organized chronologically within three groups: original material; facsimiles, transcriptions, and photocopies; and microfilm.

# Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i>   |
|------------------|---|
| BOX 1            | Originals   |
| BOX 1            | 1774, Sept. 7, Clipping about the first prayer delivered at Congress by Jacob Duché, undated, circa nineteenth century                  |
| BOX 1            | 1775  |
| BOX 1            | July 8, Congress of Georgia to Continental Congress   |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 19, Richard Prescott's terms of surrender  |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 27, Marine Committee of the Congress to Dudley Saltonstall   |
| BOX 1            | 1776  |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 25, John Hancock to the Committee at Trenton   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 27, Robert Carter Nicholas to Congress   |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 21, W. H. Drayton to Congress  |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 27, Secret Committee orders  |
| BOX 1            | May 8, Robert Morris to John Bradford   |
| BOX 1            | May 10, Charles Thomson, resolution for exchange of prisoners by Pennsylvania Committee of Safety                                       |
| BOX 1            | June 15, Robert R. Livingston to John Livingston  |
| BOX 1            | July 26, Pennsylvania Convention, instruction to delegates  |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 1, John Hancock, Certificate appointing Benjamin Franklin and Robert Morris as members of the Committee of Secret Correspondence   |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 13, Secret Committee to Thomas Mifflin   |
| BOX 1            | Dec. 13 Lambert Cadwalader to Jasper Yeates   |
| BOX 1            | 1777, Jan. 17-1781, Nov. 17, William Bingham to Secret Committee and Robert Morris  |
| BOX 1            | 1777  |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 6, James Milligan, John Carter and John Wells to Philip Schuyler June 1, Robert Howe to Congress                                   |
| BOX 1            | June 1-Sept. 7, State of New Jersey to Jonathan D. Sergeant, account for attendance at Congress   |
| BOX 1            | Aug. 6, Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane, agreement with Jean Joseph Carrier de Montieu for military clothing and supplies             |
| BOX 1            | Sept. 1, William Heath to John Hancock  |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 17, John Hancock to Virginia Assembly  |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 10, Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton   |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 21, Commercial Committee to General Edward Hand  |
| BOX 1            | Dec. 22, Board of War orders  |
| BOX 1            | 1778  |
| BOX 1            | Feb. 23, Horatio Gates, Timothy Pickering, Richard Peters, and Joseph Nourse, Oath of allegiance to the United States, printed, undated |
| BOX 1            | Apr. 12, Engagement of the members of Congress to meet punctually, to support order, and preserve decency and politeness                |
| BOX 1            | Apr. 23, Sampson Mathews and George Clymer to General Edward Hand   |
| BOX 1            | April 26, James Lovell to William Bingham;  |
| BOX 1            | May 14, Committee for Foreign Affairs to [William Bingham] Sept. 4, Richard Henry Lee to vice president of Pennsylvania                 |

## Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i>  |
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| BOX 1            | Sept. 25, John and Alexander Wilcocks to Henry Laurens   |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 2, Resolutions of Congress for sending provision vessels to the [eastward]; respecting provisions, and other matters  |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 16, Henry Laurens to Thomas Johnson   |
| BOX 1            | 1779   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 1-1780, Jan. 1, Account of expenditures   |
| BOX 1            | May 3, Richard Peters to Robert Morris   |
| BOX 1            | May 20, Virginia Assembly to Virginia Delegates to Congress, instructions, with enclosure  |
| BOX 1            | June 15, Forty-six drafts (bills of exchange) payable to Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, signed by Charles Thomson and John Jay; Benjamin Franklin, minister to France. |
| BOX 1            | July 1, Amendment to proposition of Elbridge Gerry   |
| BOX 1            | July 9, Resolution of Congress regarding quartermaster and commissary general employees  |
| BOX 1            | Dec. 17, Samuel Huntington to Chevalier de la Luzerne  |
| BOX 1            | 1780   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 4, Benjamin Stoddert to Joseph Reed   |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 18-21, Congress Journal extracts, printed   |
| BOX 1            | Apr. 8-Aug. 9, Congress Secret Journal extracts  |
| BOX 1            | Aug. 8, Charles Pettit to president of Congress  |
| BOX 1            | Aug. 15, Resolution of Congress regarding quartermaster general's clerk  |
| BOX 1            | Aug. 22, Virginia Assembly to Virginia delegates to Congress, instructions   |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 16, Endorsement of letter from George Washington  |
| BOX 1            | 1781   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 5, Joseph Reed to Congress  |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 8, Samuel Hodgdon to Board of War and Ordnance and Board of War to Thomas Bee, Jan. 10-11   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 10, William Bowzer to Committee of Congress   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 30, James Madison, et al. to governor of Virginia   |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 5, Accounts and general state of the taxes, cover   |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 6, Joseph Jones and James Madison to governor of Virginia   |
| BOX 1            | Apr. 15, Report to Congress on estimate of U.S. debt   |
| BOX 1            | Apr. 23, Extract from minutes of Congress  |
| BOX 1            | Apr. 24, Theodorick Bland and James Madison to governor of Virginia  |
| BOX 1            | June 1, Circular letter of Congress to executives of respective states   |
| BOX 1            | Dec. 15, William Connor to Congress  |
| BOX 1            | No day or month, List of members of Congress   |
| BOX 1            | 1782   |
| BOX 1            | Feb. 19, Committee report regarding New Hampshire grants   |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 17, William Ellery to unknown   |
| BOX 1            | May 13, Congress to France's minister to the U.S. regarding the birth of the dauphin, draft  |
| BOX 1            | Sept. 25, Benjamin Lincoln to Congress   |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 13, John Dickinson to David Rittenhouse, pay order for Henry Wynkoop of Pennsylvania for attendance at Congress   |
| BOX 1            | 1783   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 24, Committee on Books for Congress, report <i>See Oversize</i>   |
| BOX 1            | Feb. 20, Resolution of Congress  |
| BOX 1            | Apr. 7, John Hancock with the United States, account   |

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| BOX 1            | June 10, Elias Boudinot to governor of New York  |
| BOX 1            | June 23, John Paul Jones to James Read   |
| BOX 1            | circa Dec. 16, Charles Thomson to William Bradford   |
| BOX 1            | No day or month, Richard Butler, list of goods for the Indians in the northern and middle departments  |
| BOX 1            | 1784   |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 6, Thomas Mifflin to Oliver Wolcott   |
| BOX 1            | June 4, Samuel Hardy and John F. Mercer to governor of Virginia  |
| BOX 1            | Aug. 19, Committee of States, acts   |
| BOX 1            | 1785   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 20, Resolution on November 1784, letters from John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson regarding Dutch loans; extract of letter from John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Paris, France, Nov. 11, 1784 |
| BOX 1            | May 27, Congress, election of surveyor from each state   |
| BOX 1            | Sept., 1785- May, 1788, Monthly attendance reports for delegates (not inclusive)   |
| BOX 1            | Dec. 29, Arthur Lee, et al. to Nathaniel Gilman  |
| BOX 1            | 1786   |
| BOX 1            | Jan. 30, Motion of Congress  |
| BOX 1            | Feb. 1, Circular letter of Charles Thomson to governor of Georgia  |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 1, Charles Thomson to governor of Georgia   |
| BOX 1            | Aug. 24, Samuel Osgood and Arthur Lee to Nathaniel Gilman  |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 11  |
| BOX 1            | Charles Thomson to governor of North Carolina regarding superintendent of Indian affairs   |
| BOX 1            | Charles Thomson to governor of South Carolina regarding superintendent of Indian affairs   |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 11, Charles Thomson to president of Delaware  |
| BOX 1            | 1787   |
| BOX 1            | May 7, Extract from minutes, election of commissioners   |
| BOX 1            | July 12, Circular letter of Charles Thomson to governors of respective states  |
| BOX 1            | July 13, Northwest Ordinance   |
| BOX 1            | Aug. 11, List of Canadian officers, soldiers, and refugees resident on Lake Champlain  |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 11, Requisitions of Congress spanning 1775, June 23 to 1787   |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 22, Commissioners of Board of Treasury with Zephaniah Platt, contract   |
| BOX 1            | 1788   |
| BOX 1            | Feb. 3, Charles Thomson to Thomas Fitzsimmons  |
| BOX 1            | Mar. 13, John Adams, contract with sundry money lenders, approved by Congress, July 4  |
| BOX 1            | Oct. 20, Edward Carrington to Edmund Jennings Randolph   |
| BOX 1            | Nov. 11, Samuel Osgood and Walter Livingston to Thomas Smith   |
| BOX 1            | 1790, List of papers in office of the secretary of state   |
| BOX 2            | Facsimiles, transcriptions, and photocopies  |
| BOX 2            | 1774, Sept. 6-1775, July 8, Journal with notes of 1765, Oct. 7-24, and auctioneer's verification, 1825, May 5  |
| BOX 2            | 1775   |
| BOX 2            | June 22, Earliest known postal frank in America, John Hancock to John Thomas   |
| BOX 2            | July 8, Olive Branch Petition  |
| BOX 2            | Oct. 9, Stephen Hopkins and Samuel Ward to Nicholas Cooke  |
| BOX 2            | Nov. 9, Agreement of Secrecy   |
| BOX 2            | 1776   |

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| BOX 2            | June 10, John Hancock, Address to Indians  |
| BOX 2            | June 10, John Hancock to Committee of Shippensburg, Pa.  |
| BOX 2            | July 6, John Hancock to Nicholas Cooke   |
| BOX 2            | July 12, Marine Committee to John Hancock  |
| BOX 2            | Oct. 13, Marine Committee to John Langdon  |
| BOX 2            | Oct. 15, Brazilla Smith and John Hancock, Bond Plan of Treaty, draft   |
| BOX 2            | No day or month, Articles of Confederation, Josiah Bartlett  |
| BOX 2            | 1777   |
| BOX 2            | Feb. 5, Marine Committee to Robert Morris  |
| BOX 2            | Feb. 12, Apr. 1, Resolutions of Congress   |
| BOX 2            | Oct. 8, Resolution of Congress thanking Washington and the army for their attack on Germantown, Pa.  |
| BOX 2            | Nov. 1, Charles Thomson, extract from minutes and portrait of Thomson  |
| BOX 2            | 1778   |
| BOX 2            | May 9, Henry Laurens, proclamation   |
| BOX 2            | Sept. 13, Brazilla Smith and Congress, bond, 1777  |
| BOX 2            | 1779, May 25, Memorial to Congress, depreciation of currency   |
| BOX 2            | 1780   |
| BOX 2            | July 11, Abraham Clark to Mrs. Moore Furman  |
| BOX 2            | Oct. 21, Benjamin Stoddert to Congress   |
| BOX 2            | Nov. 3, Resolution of Congress   |
| BOX 2            | 1781-1782, Miscellaneous photostats (unsorted)   |
| BOX 2            | 1782   |
| BOX 2            | June 5, Minutes of meeting of U.S. commissioners at Paris, France  |
| BOX 2            | July 16, Loan contract   |
| BOX 3            | 1783   |
| BOX 3            | Jan. 4, Robert R. Livingston to William Greene   |
| BOX 3            | Feb. 14, Account of James Duane with New York  |
| BOX 3            | Feb. 25, Loan contract   |
| BOX 3            | 1785, June 19-1795, Feb. 5, Cash book of secretary of foreign affairs  |
| BOX 3            | 1785, Oct. 6, Richard Henry Lee to Count de Florida Blanca   |
| BOX 3            | 1786, Oct. 2, Circular letter of Charles Thomson to governor of Georgia  |
| BOX 3            | 1788, Sept. 13-23, Minutes of Congress; and printed Journal of Congress, Sept. 13-30   |
| BOX 3            | Undated  |
| BOX 3            | Great Seal of the United States, proposed, Charles Thomson and Francis Hopkinson   |
| BOX 3            | Miscellaneous photocopies  |
| BOX 3            | Members of Congress, handwriting specimens, A-Z<br>(4 folders)   |
| BOX OV 1         | Oversize   |
| BOX OV 1         | Originals  |
| BOX OV 1         | 1783, Jan. 24, Committee on Books for Congress, report (Container 1)   |
| REEL 1           | Microfilm  |
| REEL 1           | 1774, Sept. 5-Oct. 26, Journal of First Continental Congress, Charles Thomson, secretary<br><i>Available only on microfilm, shelf no. 10,128</i> |
| REEL 2           | Undated  |

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| REEL 2 | Vol. 1, from papers of the Continental Congress, no. 79, pp. 302-308, 332-343, 380-384, 404-405; also, ciphers and shorthand from Thomas Jefferson Papers, 18 exposures<br><i>Reproduced from originals in the collection, negative copy, microfilm shelf no. 4,607</i> |
| REEL 3 | Vol. 118, from papers of the Continental Congress<br><i>Reproduced from originals in the collection, negative copy, microfilm shelf no. 4,521</i>   |