

Handout for Assembling History: Researching the General Assembly Session Records

This handout is meant to accompany the recorded webinar [Assembling History](#), available on the State Archives' YouTube Channel.

Record Organization

1. By Session
 - a. By Type of Record
 - i. Committee Reports – by committee or together, then by date
 - ii. Petitions – by subject or together, then by date
 - iii. Bills & resolutions – by date or by number
 1. 1773-1790 – separated and labeled individually, arranged by date
 2. 1791-1855 – organized by date (date ratified or date first proposed)
 3. 1856-1975 – organized by number (and briefly by public & private, 1858-1868)
 4. 1975-present – organized by passed and failed, then by number

Contents

1709, 1733-1900: Bills, petitions, resolutions, committee reports, tally sheets, election certificates, governor's messages, legislative messages, resignations, miscellaneous reports

1900-1992: Bills, resolutions, petitions (up to 1931), occasional committee reports (up to 1935), joint appropriations committee & subcommittee records (just 1973-1974)

What's Digital?

The [General Assembly Session Records collection](#) in the North Carolina Digital Collections contains the records from 1709-1814.

The [State Publications collection](#) in the North Carolina Digital Collections contains the published House & Senate Journals from 1822-present.

Requesting in the Search Room

1709-1800: You can find information about these records in the Card Catalog & Online Catalog. Remember that they are also digitized and available for free in the Digital Collections!

1800-1974: These records are only described in the Card Catalog in the search room. Remember that the records from 1800-1814 are also digitized in the Digital Collections!

1974-1992: All you need is the bill or resolution number and whether it passed or failed.

1993-2014: These records are located offsite. Email us at archives@dncr.nc.gov. Again, this is just bills and resolutions, so all you should need to tell us is the title of the bill/resolution and the number.

Using the Published House and Senate Journals

- Important Dates (1791-1855)
 - What date was it introduced?
 - What dates was it voted on?
 - What date was it ratified?
 - What date was it enrolled?
- Was it brought up first in the house or in the senate?
- Is there a bill/resolution number? (1855-present)
- Any indication if it is public or private? (1858-1868)
- Does it get tabled in committee?

Applying Knowledge from Published Journals

Should I start with the senate or house records?

Where was it first introduced?

1791-1855 – arrangement by date: Where to start?

What are the important dates? Start with the ratification date, then move through the dates it was voted on.

1856-present – arrangement by number: Where to start?

Is there a bill/resolution number? For some years, there may be numbers in the House Journal but not the Senate Journal.

1858-1868 – divided into public and private: How do I know?

Was there any indication in the journal? If not, you may need to just take a stab at the numbers you found in the journal, then look through the private records.

I can't find a ratification date or a bill number: What now?

Does it get tabled in committee? Check the committee reports for the petition and/or draft of the bill/resolution. There may also be folders of “unnumbered bills.”

Rule Breakers

Petitions:

- may be found accompanying related bills, resolutions, or committee reports

- may not survive

Bills:

- may be filed on a date adjacent to one of your "important dates"
- number in the journal may be different from bill number in box
- number may only be found in one of the journals

Published Journal Indexes:

- might not include all of the relevant page numbers
- may be in the middle of the journal if the journals are combined into one volume
- may only be to the yeas and nays

Important Links

Online Catalog – www.archives.ncdcr.gov/doc

North Carolina Digital Collections – www.digital.ncdcr.gov

GASR Research Guide, 1777-1789: Marginalized Communities -

<https://archives.ncdcr.gov/documents/general-assembly-session-records-1777-1789-guide-records-marginalized-communities>