

CLASS A

INTRODUCTION

Class A contains the records of the lawmaking division of state government as it has operated under the traditional principle of a threefold separation of powers. The records of the legislative department reveal the origin and development of the principle of representative government in America and its crystallization into the "Republican Form" of government. This class is subdivided into seven parts: Part 1, Journals, Minutes and Proceedings; Part 2, Legislative Debates; Part 3, Proceedings of Extraordinary Bodies; Part 4, Committee Reports; Part 5, Hearings and Investigations; Part 6, Legislative Papers; and Part X, Miscellany.

Part 1 presents the proceedings, session by session, of the legislative assemblies of the American colonies, territories and states. The plan has been to copy the complete file of journals, beginning in each state with the earliest record extant, down to a terminal date varying from state to state. This date is governed by the scarcity of these journals in the research libraries of the country and also by the value of legislative proceedings at a particular period. The plan provides for terminal extensions at a later date if it seems feasible. The printed editions of the journals have been microfilmed when they could be found. Manuscript copies have been used for the period previous to the printed records or to fill in gaps when there was no provision for printing. If the original manuscript copy has disappeared an attempt has been made to reconstruct the proceedings from secondary or semiofficial accounts published in newspapers.

This microfacsimile condensation of the legislative records of the states is the result of a nation-wide search which has continued for more than fifteen years. It will be supplemented for the colonial period from records available only in the British Public Record Office. Piecing together a series from such varied sources has required precise work which has proceeded with the same care and exactness needed in constructing the statutory law in Class B.

Part 1 of Class A is a significant segment of the microfilms, as it is the foundation on which the Records of the States has been built. Since its beginning in 1941 it has afforded an opportunity to demonstrate the feasibility of a comprehensive program of itinerant microphotography. Its success in collecting one group of source materials suggested the desirability of an expanded program in allied fields. The problems of procedure encountered and solved during this pioneer stage served well in the later phases of the work.

Legislative journals form the core of the microfilm collection. They make up by far the largest of any of the series and contain the most generally useful group of source materials in any of the classes. Historically the