INTRODUCTION

In this microfilm publication are reproduced the appellate case files of the Supreme Court of the United States, 1792-1831. These records consist chiefly of transcripts of record of the cases in lower courts, comprising copies of the papers filed and of minute entries of the lower courts' actions in the cases. The transcripts of record beginning in 1832 have been printed and are in the Supreme Court Library.

The case files also include documents associated with the transcripts of record, such as petitions for writs of error or certiorari to lower courts, writs of error or certiorari, amendments or supplements to the transcripts of record, exhibits, citations to appellees to appear before the Supreme Court, appeal bonds, and assignments of error. In addition, there are documents resulting from the proceedings before the Supreme Court, such as agreements of counsel, depositions ordered by the Court to be taken as additional evidence, motions, orders, decrees, judgments, mandates, and correspondence. A few briefs are in these case files, but the official file of briefs beginning in 1854 is in the Supreme Court Library.

The Supreme Court of the United States, provided for in Article III, section 1, of the Constitution, was established by authority of the Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789 (1 Stat. 73). The jurisdiction of the Court extends to all cases in law and equity arising under the Constitution, the laws of the United States, and treaties made under their authority; to all cases affecting ambassadors, other public ministers, and consuls; to all cases of admiralty and maritime law; to controversies in which the United States is a party; and to controversies between two or more States, between a State and citizens of another State, between citizens of different States, between citizens of the same State claiming lands under grants of different States, and between a State or its citizens and foreign states, citizens, or subjects. In cases affecting ambassadors, ministers, and consuls, and those in which a State is a party, the Supreme Court has original jurisdiction. Its appellate jurisdiction is defined in various statutes; but as the circuit courts of appeals are competent to give final decision in the majority of cases, the Supreme Court usually hears only those cases that involve the construction or the constitutionality of legislative enactments or other issues of general importance.