

INTRODUCTION

In this microfilm publication are reproduced the rolls of attorneys and counselors admitted to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States from February 5, 1790. These records, which are in the custody of the Court, contain the signatures of the attorneys and counselors in chronological order by date of their admission to the bar of the Court. An alphabetical name index to the lawyers admitted to practice from 1790 to 1887 is reproduced on the first roll of this publication.

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 Court's jurisdiction 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 all 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 decisions 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.

The two earliest rolls of attorneys and counselors reproduced in this microcopy are on parchment; the others are in bound volumes. One of the parchment rolls contains the signatures of counselors admitted to practice from February 5, 1790, to February 20, 1807, and the other, signatures of attorneys admitted from February 8, 1790, to February 11, 1805. Some of the signatures and the dates of admission on the parchment rolls are not legible. Each roll has been reproduced four times, with varying exposures, to give the reader every possible opportunity to decipher the writing. If it is not possible to decipher the complete name or the date on the rolls the user may consult the minutes of the Court (reproduced as Microcopy 215), in which are recorded the names of attorneys and counselors admitted to practice.