Smithsonian
Institution Archives

Minutes, 1846-1995

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, D.C., *osiaref@si.edu*
Title:	Minutes
Date:	1846-1995
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Administrative Information

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Historical Note

The Smithsonian Institution was created by authority of an Act of Congress approved August 10, 1846. The Act entrusted direction of the Smithsonian to a body called the Establishment, composed of the President; the Vice President; the Chief Justice of the United States; the secretaries of State, War, Navy, Interior, and Agriculture; the Attorney General; and the Postmaster General. In fact, however, the Establishment last met in 1877, and control of the Smithsonian has always been exercised by its Board of Regents. The membership of the Regents consists of the Vice President and the Chief Justice of the United States; three members each of the Senate and House of Representatives; two citizens of the District of Columbia; and seven citizens of the several states, no two from the same state. (Prior to 1970 the category of Citizen Regents not residents of Washington consisted of four members). By custom the Chief Justice is Chancellor. The office was at first held by the Vice President. However, when Millard Fillmore succeeded to the presidency on the death of Zachary Taylor in 1851, Chief Justice Roger Brooke Taney was chosen in his stead. The office has always been filled by the Chief Justice since that time.

The Regents of the Smithsonian have included distinguished Americans from many walks of life. Ex officio members (Vice President) have been: Spiro T. Agnew, Chester A. Arthur, Allen W. Barkley, John C. Breckenridge, George Bush, Schuyler Colfax, Calvin Coolidge, Charles Curtis, George M. Dallas, Charles G. Dawes, Charles W. Fairbanks, Millard Fillmore, Gerald R. Ford, John N. Garner, Hannibal Hamlin, Thomas A. Hendricks, Garret A. Hobart, Hubert H. Humphrey, Andrew Johnson, Lyndon B. Johnson, William R. King, Thomas R. Marshall, Walter F. Mondale, Levi P. Morton, Richard M. Nixon, Nelson A. Rockefeller, Theodore Roosevelt, James S. Sherman, Adlai E. Stevenson, Harry S. Truman, Henry A. Wallace, William A. Wheeler, Henry Wilson.

Ex officio members (Chief Justice) have been: Roger B. Taney, Salmon P. Chase, Nathan Clifford, Morrison R. Waite, Samuel F. Miller, Melville W. Fuller, Edward D. White, William Howard Taft, Charles Evans Hughes, Harlan F. Stone, Fred M. Vinson, Earl Warren, Warren E. Burger.

Regents on the part of the Senate have been: Clinton P. Anderson, Newton Booth, Sidney Breese, Lewis Cass, Robert Milledge Charlton, Bennet Champ Clark, Francis M. Cockrell, Shelby Moore Cullom, Garrett Davis, Jefferson Davis, George Franklin Edmunds, George Evans, Edwin J. Garn, Walter F. George, Barry Goldwater, George Gray, Hannibal Hamlin, Nathaniel Peter Hill, George Frisbie Hoar, Henry French Hollis, Henry M. Jackson, William Lindsay, Henry Cabot Lodge, Medill McCormick, James Murray Mason, Samuel Bell Maxey, Robert B. Morgan, Frank E. Moss, Claiborne Pell, George Wharton Pepper, David A. Reed, Leverett Saltonstall, Hugh Scott, Alexander H. Smith, Robert A. Taft, Lyman Trumbull, Wallace H. White, Jr., Robert Enoch Withers.

Regents on the part of the House of Representatives have included: Edward P. Boland, Frank T. Bow, William Campbell Breckenridge, Overton Brooks, Benjamin Butterworth, Clarence Cannon, Lucius Cartrell, Hiester Clymer, William Colcock, William P. Cole, Jr., Maurice Connolly, Silvio O. Conte, Edward E. Cox, Edward H. Crump, John Dalzell, Nathaniel Deering, Hugh A. Dinsmore, William English, John Farnsworth, Scott Ferris, Graham Fitch, James Garfield, Charles L. Gifford, T. Alan Goldsborough, Frank L. Greene, Gerry Hazleton, Benjamin Hill, Henry Hilliard, Ebenezer Hoar, William Hough, William M. Howard, Albert Johnson, Leroy Johnson, Joseph Johnston, Michael Kirwan, James T. Lloyd, Robert Luce, Robert McClelland, Samuel K. McConnell, Jr., George H. Mahon, George McCrary, Edward McPherson, James R. Mann, George Perkins Marsh, Norman Y. Mineta, A. J. Monteague, R. Walton Moore, Walter H. Newton, Robert Dale Owen, James Patterson, William Phelps, Luke Poland, John Van Schaick Lansing Pruyn, B. Carroll Reece, Ernest W. Roberts, Otho Robards Singleton, Frank Thompson, Jr., John M. Vorys, Hiram Warner, Joseph Wheeler.

Citizen Regents have been: David C. Acheson, Louis Agassiz, James B. Angell, Anne L. Armstrong, William Backhouse Astor, J. Paul Austin, Alexander Dallas Bache, George Edmund Badger, George Bancroft, Alexander Graham Bell, James Gabriel Berrett, John McPherson Berrien, Robert W. Bingham, Sayles Jenks Bowen, William G. Bowen, Robert S. Brookings, John Nicholas Brown, William A. M. Burden, Vannevar Bush, Charles F. Choate, Jr., Rufus Choate, Arthur H. Compton, Henry David Cooke, Henry Coppee, Samuel Sullivan Cox, Edward H. Crump, James Dwight Dana, Harvey N. Davis, William Lewis Dayton, Everette Lee Degolyer, Richard Delafield, Frederic A. Delano, Charles Devens, Matthew Gault Emery, Cornelius Conway Felton, Robert V. Fleming, Murray Gell-Mann, Robert F. Goheen, Asa Gray, George Gray, Crawford Hallock Greenwalt, Nancy Hanks, Caryl Parker Haskins, Gideon Hawley, John B. Henderson, John B. Henderson, Jr., A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., Gardner Greene Hubbard, Charles Evans Hughes, Carlisle H. Humelsine, Jerome C. Hunsaker, William Preston Johnston, Irwin B. Laughlin, Walter Lenox, Augustus P. Loring, John Maclean, William Beans Magruder, John Walker Maury, Montgomery Cunningham Meigs, John C. Merriam, R. Walton Moore, Roland S. Morris, Dwight W. Morrow, Richard Olney, Peter Parker, Noah Porter, William Campbell Preston, Owen Josephus Roberts, Richard Rush, William Winston Seaton, Alexander Roby Shepherd, William Tecumseh Sherman, Otho Robards Singleton, Joseph Gilbert Totten, John Thomas Towers, Frederic C. Walcott, Richard Wallach, Thomas J. Watson, Jr., James E. Webb, James Clarke Welling, Andrew Dickson White, Henry White, Theodore Dwight Woolsey.

Descriptive Entry

These records are the official minutes of the Board. They are compiled at the direction of the Secretary of the Smithsonian, who is also secretary to the Board, after approval by the Regents' Executive Committee and by the Regents themselves. The minutes are edited, not a verbatim account of proceedings. For reasons unknown, there are no manuscript minutes for the period from 1857 through 1890; and researchers must rely on printed minutes published in the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution instead. Minutes are transferred regularly from the Secretary's Office to the Archives. Minutes less than 15 years old are closed to researchers. Indexes exist for the period from 1907 to 1946 and can be useful.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

Museum trustees
Museums -- Administration

Types of Materials:

Manuscripts

Names:

Fillmore, Millard, 1800-1874
Smithsonian Institution -- Administration
Taney, Roger Brooke, 1777-1864
Taylor, Zachary, 1784-1850

Container Listing

Series 1: MINUTES, BOUND IN 8 VOLUMES, 1846-1856, 1891-1968.

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	Box 3
Box 3 of 17	Volume III, 1905-1907 (indexed)
	Box 4
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Box 5 of 17	Volume V, 1920-1931 (indexed) Digital Content: Volume V, 1920-1931 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_1920-1931]
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Box 9 of 17	Folder 4 Minutes of: May 13, 1964 Digital Content: Minutes of: May 13, 1964 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_19640513]
Box 9 of 17	Folder 5 Minutes of: May 8, 1968 Digital Content: Minutes of: May 8, 1968 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_19680508]
Box 9 of 17	Folder 6 Minutes of: January 15, 1969 Digital Content: Minutes of: January 15, 1969 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_19690115]
Box 9 of 17	Folder 7 Minutes of: May 21, 1969 Digital Content: Minutes of: May 21, 1969 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_19690521]
Box 9 of 17	Folder 8 Minutes of: November 5, 1969 Digital Content: Minutes of: November 5, 1969 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_19691105]
Box 9 of 17	Folder 9 Minutes of: January 28, 1970 Digital Content: Minutes of: January 28, 1970 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_19700128]
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Box 13 of 17	Folder 7 Minutes of: January 25, 1982 Digital Content: Minutes of: January 25, 1982 [SIA_000001_BORMTG_19820125]
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