

made to an official person or organized body, usually in favor of change. A remonstrance is an earnest presentation of reasons for opposition or grievance. The documents are filed in chronological order, and have been listed with the filing citizens' county (or the individual's name), a précis of their appeal, and a date. The arrangement of the petitions creates a catalog of the important issues of the time, and as well as the spread of people, government, and transportation networks across the state of Pennsylvania.

The needs of the citizens were varied, but most had to do with the encouragement of public improvements (and occasionally, with the discouragement or protest of same) including new or repaired bridges, roads, canals, and dams. Residents also appealed for a local river or creek to be declared a "public highway" to ensure free movement to all and prevent obstruction by private citizens. A group of history-minded Philadelphia County citizens even petitioned in 1811 for the erection of an archives building next to Independence Hall to hold government records (7343.F.27).

Another prominent topic was the division and creation of counties (again, cases were made both for and against) as settlement increased across the state, and residents sought representation through local government; all these appeals are described in this finding aid as being for or against "new county." The citizens' reasons vary, but were mainly for purposes of making local government more local. However, a group of inhabitants of Cumberland County petitioned in 1822 to be annexed to Perry County first for tax relief, but also because they preferred not to reside in a county whose name "savors something of Royalty, being taken from the Duke of Cumberland in England, which your petitioners deem to be repugnant to the principles of our republican government." Judicial reform was also a popular appeal; it encompassed the movement of courthouses from one village to another or the removal of a judge for corruption or dereliction of duty. Citizens regularly petitioned as well for a change of venue for elections. Some wanted just to move a polling place from one particular tavern or house to another. Some wanted to create smaller districts when their polling place was too distant from their settlement. All of the varieties of polling matters are described in this list under the general term "for new election district."

Requests for the incorporation of organizations, companies, and banks, and for the holding of lotteries, particularly for churches and schools, were regularly filed. Concerns were raised on behalf of the poor and poorhouses, and for and against fish dams, taxing dogs, markets and auctions for weighing and regulating goods, including alcoholic beverages and their suppliers.

While the overwhelming majority of documents were signed by groups of people, the petitioners were also sometimes individuals. A number of military veterans of the American Revolution, or their widows and children (and a smattering of siblings), wrote to ask for "relief" in the form of a pension, donation lands, or other types of aid; most describe the veteran's terms of service, as well as injuries received during the war. All of these pleas are described in this finding aid under the general term "for veteran's benefit." Other individual citizens were