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LETTERS SENT BY THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
TO JUDGES AND CLERKS
1874-1904

On the 34 rolls of microfilm publication are reproduced 34 volumes (letter books) containing copies of letters sent by the Department of Justice, 1874-1904, to judges and clerks of Federal and Territorial courts. Most of the letters concern matters such as transmitting volumes of court reports, supplying transcripts of records in cases, and settling accounts, but some relate to such subjects as charges against judges and other court officials, the policy of judges on the bench, qualifications of applicants for judicial officers, the need for legislation, and the relationship between the judges and the Attorney General in the interpretation of law. Before 1874 letters similar to these were included among the series of general and miscellaneous letters and the series of letters concerning judiciary expenses.

The Department of Justice was established by an act Congress approved June 22, 1870. The act continued and expanded in the new Department the legal and administrative duties of the Office of the Attorney General, which had been created under the Judiciary Act of September 24, 1789, with the original duties of conducting suits in the Supreme Court and giving opinions upon questions of law at the request of the President or heads of departments. To the Department was given general supervision of U.S. attorneys and marshals, and to it were transferred the Solicitor of the Treasury and the law officers of the State and Navy Departments and of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. To it were also transferred, from the Department of Interior, the supervision of accounts of district attorneys, marshals, clerks, and officers of the courts, and the control of the judiciary fund from which the expenses of the courts and the safekeeping of prisoners. The Department also inherited some other duties from the Office of the Attorney General, and additional duties were assigned to it from time to time by later legislation.

The letters are arranged chronologically. Pages are numbered consecutively within each volume, but the blank numbered pages have not been filmed. The letters consist of fair copies through April 29, 1890, and of carbon copies thereafter. Beginning in May 1885 many copies show the file numbers of letters-received subject or cases files of the Department of Justice. The 34 volumes are in two numerical sequences and begin again with numeral 1 on Roll 5. At the front of each volume is an index that is arranged alphabetically by the name of the

State or Territory and thereunder by judicial district. The index includes subject, date, and page number of each letter sent, and file number (if any) of the letters-received subject or case file of the Department of Justice.

The records reproduced in this microcopy are part of the records in the National Archives designated as Record Group 60, General Records of the Department of Justice.

Related records in the same record group include several series of letters sent; the department indexes; the Attorney General's Papers, 1790-1870 (only a few items earlier than 1818); and letters received. During the period 1867-1904 copies of letters sent to different classes of persons were entered in various series of letter books, which among several series follows: General and Miscellaneous Letters, 1818-1904 (Microcopy 699); Letters Concerning Judiciary Expenses, 1849-84 (Microcopy 700); Instructions to United States Attorneys and Marshals, 1867-1904 (Microcopy 701); Letters to Executive Officers and to Members of Congress, 1871-1904 (Microcopy 702); and Letters to Judges and Clerks, 1874-1904, (reproduced in this microcopy). Since 1904 carbon copies of letters sent have been filed with the related incoming correspondence in numerically designated subject or case files.

Related letters received are in the series of Attorney General's Papers, 1790-1870, and in two series of the Department of Justice records—the "Source-Chronological Files," 1870-84, and the "Year Files," 1884-1904. The Attorney General's Papers and the Source-Chronological Files are arranged by the source from which the communication was received and thereunder chronologically. Sources include the President, departments of the Federal Government, the Senate, the House of Representatives, and U.S. judicial districts. The Year Files, which consist of letters-received subject or case files arranged numerically by file number. The records reproduced in this microcopy were prepared for filming by Norman D. Moore, who also wrote these introductory remarks and provided the other editorial material.

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