



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the City of Roxbury records

Finding aid prepared by Kristen Swett

This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

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Repository:	City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division
Title:	City of Roxbury records
Collection No.:	1300.001
Dates:	1768-1888 (Bulk, 1821-1868)
Quantity:	50.0 Cubic feet (22 boxes, 254 volumes)

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Historical note

In 1630, the Massachusetts Bay Colony founded six villages including Boston, Charlestown, Watertown, Medford, Dorchester and Roxbury. Roxbury was connected to Boston by a narrow neck of land which is now Washington Street. The first mention of the town occurs in the records of the third Court of Assistants, held Sept.

28, 1630, as one of the plantations on which a part of the general tax of 50 pounds was levied, and that day has therefore been fixed upon as the official date of its settlement. Roxbury was the sixth town incorporated in Massachusetts. The original boundaries of the town included Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, West Roxbury and present-day Roxbury. Roxbury became a part of Norfolk County on June 20, 1793.

Roxbury had many resources the colonists were looking for: open farmland, timber and stone for building, and the Stony Brook for waterpower. Additionally, its location on the only road to Boston gave the town an advantage in transportation and trade and a strategic military position. Roxbury was defined by its rocky hills, drumlins left by a prehistoric glacier. In the area of Roxbury Highlands are many outcroppings of native Roxbury puddingstone, a kind of composite rock used over the centuries in buildings throughout the Boston area.

Washington, Dudley, Centre, Roxbury, and Warren streets were all laid out in the first years of settlement. The town center was located at John Eliot Square, where the first meetinghouse was built in 1632, with its burying ground nearby at the corner of Eustis and Washington streets.

Growth created the need for more municipal services, so the citizens of Roxbury voted to incorporate as a city on March 12, 1846. West Roxbury was set off from Roxbury and incorporated as a town on 24 May 1851. Roxbury was annexed to Boston by an Act of the Legislature passed June 1, 1867. On September 9, 1867, the citizens of Roxbury and Boston accepted the annexation act. The annexation took effect on January 6, 1868.

Source: Roxbury Crossing Historical Society website (http://www.rcht.org/roxbury_history.htm) and "The Town of Roxbury: its memorable persons and places..." by Francis S. Drake.

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Scope and Contents note

This collection includes records of the City and Town of Roxbury prior to annexation to Boston. Records of Roxbury are also currently in the custody of the Boston Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Division. This collection is divided into 8 series: Series I - Town records; Series II - City Council records; Series III - City Clerk records; Series IV - Auditor records; Series V - Assessor records; Series VI - Collector records; Series VII - Treasurer records; and Series VIII - Publications. Volumes are numbered consecutively within each series. Boxes are numbered consecutively within the whole collection.

Series I includes records of the Town of Roxbury prior to incorporation as a city in 1846. Series II includes records of the Roxbury City Council. Series III includes records created by and filed with the City Clerk. As keeper of the records for the City of Roxbury, the City Clerk's records include a wide range of record types documenting various city functions and filings. Series IV includes records filed with the City Auditor. Series V includes records documenting tax assessments. Series VI includes records documenting the collection of taxes. Series VII includes records of the City Treasury which document the financial activities of the City of Roxbury. Series VIII includes annual reports, municipal registers, addresses and other reports published by the City of Roxbury.

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Series I: Town records, 1768-1846 (4 record cartons, 3 volumes, 8 folders)

Records created during the years of town government in Roxbury. Included are the proceedings of the Selectmen from 1822-1846, volumes 5 and 6 of the Town Records which cover 1832-1846, Town Papers from 1830 and 1832-1846, and miscellaneous manuscripts, petitions and records.

Volume

I-1		Record of the Meeting and Proceedings of the Selectmen of the Town of Roxbury, 1822 March 5-1846 April 16 (1 volume)
I-2-3		Town Records "vol. 5-6", 1832-1846 (2 volumes) Record of Town Meetings as taken by the Town Clerk. Volume 5 covers the period 1832-1845. Volume 6 covers the period 1845-March 1846. Volume 6 is also Volume 1 of City Records.
		<u>Town Papers, 1768-1846 with gaps (Bulk, 1830-1846)</u>
Box	Folder	
1	1	Entry of Strays, 1768, 1773, 1776, 1782, 1783 (1 item) Record of stray animals found wandering in town. Includes description of animal and name of individual reporting animal.
1	2	Entry of horses and cattle allowed to go upon the common, 1774-1778 (1 item)
1	3	Humane Society of Massachusetts Regulations, 1784? (1 item)
2	1	Petition relative to support of schools, 1796 (1 item)
2	2	Records, 1826, 1832 (1 folder)
2	3-5	Records, undated (3 folders) <u>Records, 1830-1846</u>
Box		
5		1830, 1832-1833, 1834-1836 (1 record carton)
6		1836-1840 (1 record carton)
7		1840-1844 (1 record carton)
8		1844-1846 (1 record carton)

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Series II: City Council records, 1846-1867 (22 volumes, 11 record cartons, 10 folders)

Records created by the City Council of Roxbury. Included are minutes of the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and the Common Council, 1846-1867; City Council papers; and miscellaneous broadsides, records, and reports.

Volume		
II-1-8		Mayor and Board of Aldermen minutes, "vol. 1-8", 1846-1867 (8 volumes)
Box		
4		Index to Mayor and Board of Aldermen minutes, 1846-1847 (8 volumes)
Volume		
II-9-14		Common Council minutes, "vol. 1-6", 1846-1867 (6 volumes) <u>Records, 1846-1867</u>
Box	Folder	
1	5	Broadsides: City Council Committees, 1848, 1852-1855 (5 items)
2	6	Broadside: Government of the City of Roxbury, 1862-1863 (1 item)
1	6	Common Council ballot, 1848-1849 (1 item)
1	7-8	Index to Town Papers, 1846 April-1848 April (2 items)
1	9	Record of the Proceedings of the City of Roxbury and the Town of West Roxbury relating to the division of property, 1851 (1 item)
1	10	Documents relating to the Rural Cemetery, 1847-1848 (1 folder)

- 2 8 Package No. 12 of Town Papers of 1846-1847, 1846-1847 (1 folder)
 - 2 9 Package No. 10 of Town Papers for 1847-1848, 1847-1848 (1 folder)
 - 2 10 Annual report of the Chief Engineer of the Fire Department, 1854 February 27 (1 item)
- City Council papers, 1846-1867

Box

- 8 1846
- 9 1846-1849
- 9 Copy of Original Charter of the City of Roxbury
- 10 1849-1852
- 11 1852-1855
- 12 1855-1857
- 13 1857-1859
- 14 1860-1862
- 15 1862-1866
- 16 1866-1867
- 16 Oversized documents
- 17 Oversized documents
- 18 Oversized documents

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Series III: City Clerk records, 1837-1868 (Bulk, 1846-1867) (60 volumes, 1 oversized volume)

- Volume
- III-1 Ordinances, 1846-1867 (1 volume)
 - III-2 Record of General Meetings of the Inhabitants of the City, 1847-1853 (1 volume)
 - III-3 Record of Officers Sworn, 1847-1867 (1 volume)
Record of the city officers who personally appeared before the City Clerk to subscribe the oath.
 - III-4 Census of population of the Town of Roxbury, 1837 (1 volume)
Includes name of head of household and number in household. As taken by the Assessors, agreeable to an Act of the Legislature 21 Mar 1837.
 - III-5-6 Census and statistics of ward 2, 1845 (2 volumes)
Recorded in pencil. Includes census and statistics re: cattle, horses etc. for ward 2 only.
 - III-7-14 Census returns, 1850 (8 volumes)
- Oversize
- O-1 Census of the City of Roxbury, 1865 (1 oversized volume)
- Volume
- III-15 Record of Organization of churches and religious societies, 1847-1867 (1 volume)
Record of the Organization of the Trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church and Liberal Christian Organization of Roxbury.
 - III-16-17 Registers of Dogs, 1864, 1866 (2 volumes)
Includes name of owner, residence, number of dogs. Alphabetical by name of

- owner.
- III-18 Record of dogs registered, 1865-1867 (1 volume)
Includes date, No., Name of Owner, Residence, Name of Dog, Sex, Age, Description and Fee.
- III-19 List of qualified voters, 1846-1857 (1 volume)
Published lists of qualified voters in each ward. Printed by the Town Clerk per order of the Selectmen in 1846. Printed by the City Clerk per order of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen in 1847-1857.
- III-20 Record of votes cast in the several wards, 1846 Nov 9-1857 May 4 (1 volume)
Records number of votes by ward for each election.
- III-21 Returns of votes, 1857-1867 (1 volume)
- III-22 Record of warrants for elections and votes cast for ward 2, 1860-1867 (1 volume)
- III-23 Record of warrants for elections and votes cast for ward 3, 1846-1854 (1 volume)
- III-24 Record of warrants for elections and votes cast for ward 5, 1855-1867 (1 volume)
- III-25 Enrolment of the Militia, 1840-1848 (1 volume)
- III-26 Record of Soldiers and Officers, 1861-1862 (1 volume)
- III-27 Record of Soldiers in the Army, circa 1861-1865 (1 volume)
Names of persons enlisted in the United States Service from Roxbury. Includes name, company and regiment. Indexed.
- III-28 List of Persons enrolled in the Army and Navy, 1864 January (1 volume)
- III-29 Enrolment of the Militia, 1864 (1 volume)
- III-30 List of Persons exempt from Military duty, 1864 (1 volume)
- III-31-33 List of Persons liable to Enrolment in the Militia, 1864-1866 (3 volumes)
- III-34-35 Militia Enrollment, 1867 (2 volumes)
- III-36 Record of Streets [transcription], 1648-1846 (1 volume)
Transcription of items relating to streets from original town records. Index to entries in vol. 6 included. Spine reads 1652-1842.
- III-37 Index to the Streets of Roxbury and all proceedings of the City Council relating to them from the commencement of city government to 1862, 1846-1862 (1 volume)
- | | | |
|-----------|--------|--|
| Box | Folder | |
| 2 | 7 | Index to Roxbury Streets, 1868 (1 Volume) |
| Volume | | |
| III-38 | | Record of Joint Stock Companies, 1852-1853 (1 volume) |
| III-39 | | Fence viewer decisions, 1834-1867, 1874-1888 (1 volume)
Record of decisions of fence viewers for the town and city of Roxbury. Also includes decisions from 1874-1888 as part of Boston. Includes some plans. |
| III-40 | | Index of names, 1866-1867 (1 volume)
Unidentified index. |
| III-41 | | Index to Lien Book, undated (1 volume) |
| III-42-59 | | Personal Property mortgages, 1832-1868 (18 volumes: 9 volumes and 9 indexes) |

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Series IV: Auditor records (4 record cartons)

Bills and payment receipts, circa 1820-1867 with gaps

Box	
19	1847-1857
20	1857-1861
21	1862-1867, circa 1820s-1830s

Deeds to City property, 1818, 1832, 1842-1867

Box	
22	1818, 1832, 1842-1867

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Series V: Assessor records, 1821-1867 (87 volumes)

Valuations of real and personal property, 1821-1867 (35 Volumes)

Valuations of real and personal estate. Arranged alphabetically by name of individual and by ward for each year. Entries may include location such as street or name of owner. The books for 1821-1831 include poll books. After 1831, the poll books are bound separately.

Volume	
V-1	1821-1824
V-2	1825-1829
V-3	1830-1831
V-4	1832-1835
V-5	1836-1838
V-6	1839
V-7	1840-1841
V-8	1842-1843
V-9	1844-1845
V-10	1846
V-11	1847
V-12	1848
V-13	1849
V-14	1850
V-15	1851
V-16	1852
V-17	1853
V-18	1854
V-19	1855
V-20	1856
V-21	1857
V-22	1858
V-23	1859
V-24	1860
V-25	1861

V-26	1862
V-27	1863
V-28	1864
V-29	1865
V-30	1866
V-31	1867 ward 1
V-32	1867 ward 2
V-33	1867 ward 3
V-34	1867 ward 4
V-35	1867 ward 5

Polls, 1832-1850, 1852-1867 (26 Volumes)

Alphabetical list of names of persons assessed a poll tax and remarks. Poll books prior to 1832 are bound with the valuations of real and personal property.

Volume	
V-36	1832-1835
V-37	1836-1839
V-38	1840-1841
V-39	1842-1843
V-40	1844-1845
V-41	1846
V-42	1847
V-43	1848
V-44	1849
V-45	1850
V-46	1852
V-47	1853
V-48	1854
V-49	1855
V-50	1856
V-51	1857
V-52	1858
V-53	1859
V-54	1860
V-55	1861
V-56	1862
V-57	1863
V-58	1864
V-59	1865
V-60	1866
V-61	1867

Street books, 1860-1867 (8 Volumes)

Tax valuations arranged by street address.

Volume

V-62	1860
V-63	1861
V-64	1862
V-65	1863
V-66	1864
V-67	1865
V-68	1866
V-69	1867

State, County and City tax records, 1841-1846, 1849-1862 (18 Volumes)

Record of assessment of State, County and City tax. Alphabetical by name of individual. 1841-1845 - County and Town tax. 1846-1853 - County and City tax. 1854-1862 - State, County and City tax. Volumes for 1847-1848 are missing.

Volume	
V-70	1841
V-71	1842-1843
V-72	1844-1845
V-73	1846
V-74	1849
V-75	1850
V-76	1851
V-77	1852
V-78	1853
V-79	1854
V-80	1855
V-81	1856
V-82	1857
V-83	1858
V-84	1859
V-85	1860
V-86	1861
V-87	1862

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Series VI: Collector records, 1842-1866 with gaps (23 volumes)

State, County and City tax records, 1842-1844, 1848-1866 (23 Volumes)

Record of collection of State, County and City tax. Records the date taxes were paid or abated. Volumes for 1836-1841, 1845-1847 and 1867 are missing.

Volume	
VI-1	1824-1835
VI-2	1842
VI-3	1843
VI-4	1844

VI-5	1848
VI-6	1849
VI-7	1850
VI-8	1851
VI-9	1852
VI-10	1853
VI-11	1854
VI-12	1855
VI-13	1856
VI-14	1857
VI-15	1858
VI-16	1859
VI-17	1860
VI-18	1861
VI-19	1862
VI-20	1863
VI-21	1864
VI-22	1865
VI-23	1866

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Series VII: Treasurer records, 1830-1869 (31 volumes)

Volume

VII-1-4	Mayor's drafts, 1846-1849, 1854-1861, 1864-1868 (4 volumes)
VII-5	City drafts, 1865-1868 (1 volume)
VII-6-13	Ledgers, 1835-1868 (8 volumes)
VII-14-19	Cashbooks, 1846-1858, 1862-1869 (6 volumes)
VII-20-22	Notes and Bonds Payable to the City of Roxbury, 1830-1867 (3 volumes)
VII-23	Journal, 1865-1868 (1 volume)
VII-24	Trial Balance, 1865-1868 (1 volume)
VII-25	Appropriations, 1831-1837, 1865-1867 (2 volume)
VII-26	Forest Hills Cemetery ledger, 1858-1868 (1 volume)
VII-27	Waste book, 1866-1867 (1 volume)
VII-28	Daily Cash Settlement, 1867 (1 volume)
VII-29-30	Payroll of Families of Volunteers, 1863, 1865-1867 (2 volumes)
VII-31	Fire Department Payroll receipt book, 1858-1867 (1 volume)

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Series VIII: Publications, 1838-1867, 1876 (Bulk, 1838-1867) (27 volumes, 23 folders)

Volumes

VIII-1-21 City Documents, 1847-1867 (21 volumes)

VIII-22-26 Municipal Register, 1855, 1859-1862 (5 volumes)

Box Folder

3 1 Auditor: Annual report of the receipts and expenditures, 1838-1842, 1844

3 2 Auditor: Annual report of the receipts and expenditures, 1845-1846

Volume

VIII-27 Auditor: Annual report of the receipts and expenditures [includes Municipal Register for 1846-1847], 1847 (1 volume)

Box Folder

3 3 Auditor: Annual report of the receipts and expenditures, 1850

3 4 School: Annual reports, 1851, 1853-1854

3 5 School: Annual reports, 1855-1857

3 6 School: Annual reports, 1858-1860

3 7 School: Annual reports, 1861-1863

3 8 School: Annual reports, 1864-1867

3 9 Annual Appropriations for 1852-1853, 1852

3 10 Mayor's Address at Organization of City Government, 1846 April 26

3 11 Address of Mayor H.A.S. Dearborn, 1847 April 5

3 12 Proceedings on death of John Quincy Adams, 1848

3 13 Address by George Putnam at the Consecration of the Cemetery at Forest Hills, 1848 June 28

3 14 An Act to Amend the City Charter, 1848

3 15 An Address on the Life and Character of the late Mayor H.A.S. Dearborn, 1851 September 3

3 16 Inaugural address of Mayor James Ritchie, 1855 January 1

3 17 Valedictory Address of Mayor Jacob S. Sleeper, 1858 December 27

3 18 Salaries for City Officials 1860-1861, 1860

3 19 Address of Mayor William Gaston, 1861 January 7

3 20 "The Primary Schools of Roxbury", 1862 April 23

3 21 Address of Mayor George Lewis, 1865 January 2

3 22 Reports in Relation to the Annexation of Roxbury to Boston, 1867

3 23 Roxbury Centennial: An Account of the Celebration in Roxbury, 1876 November 22

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