



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the Office of the City Clerk records

Finding aid prepared by Kristen Swett
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Repository:	City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division
Title:	Office of the City Clerk records
Collection No.:	0300.001
Dates:	1829-1984 (Bulk, 1900-1984)
Quantity:	9.5 Cubic feet (9 record cartons and 2 document cases)

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Historical note

The first mention of a Town Recorder is the following action of the Selectmen, July 5, 1641: "Our brother John Oliver (a selectman) is chosen Treasurer for the Towne, and to keep the Towne's booke." From 1693-1822, the custodian of the Town records was called the Town Clerk. The Acts of 1821, c. 110 sec. 10 stated that the City Clerk shall have all the powers, and perform all the duties belonging to the Town Clerk of the Town of Boston.

As provided by the City Charter, the City Clerk of Boston is elected by the City Council for a term of three years. The Office of the Clerk, under direction of the City Clerk, accepts, files, records, and maintains all

municipal records. The City Clerk publishes the agenda for all City Council meetings, records all Council and related Mayoral actions, and edits and compiles the minutes of Council meetings. The Department also maintains the City Council document system database and publishes, on a yearly basis, all ordinances and amended codes. The City Clerk is also responsible for overseeing the work of the Archives Commission.

Services to the public include the sale of various licenses and permits, notarizing and attesting to documents, and filing, recording and copying papers in the custody of the Clerk. Services to City government consist of providing informational resources and technical assistance, administration of the state's open meeting law, administration of oaths of office, attestation of various legal papers, and custody of records. The Archives Commission oversees the protection of City records, files and other items of historic interest.

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Scope and Contents note

This collection includes administrative files and reference files from the Office of the City Clerk. The collection is divided into 7 series - Series I: Card index, Series II: Correspondence, Series III: Opinions, Series IV: Inaugural Records, Series V: Administrative files, Series VI: Reference files, and Series VII: Reports.

Series I is a consolidation of several card indexes used in the Clerk's Office from the early to mid 1900s. The card indexes include references to locations in the City Clerk's Office of records, publications, and historical books on Boston as well as frequently referenced historical and organizational information. The index references locations in the Clerk's Office such as shelves, file drawers, vault, etc. which are no longer applicable. However, the cards also index the opinions, administrative files and reference files which are a part of this collection. The cards do reference some records that were transferred by the City Clerk to the Boston Public Library circa 1970 for safekeeping which have not yet been returned to the City Archives. Many of the historical books on Boston included in the card index can be found in the Archives' Reference Library located in the Reference Room.

Series II is a file of correspondence to and from the City Clerk and the Assistant City Clerk dating from 1883-1983. It includes requests for information, opinions and general office functions.

Series III is a file of opinions kept by the City Clerk on various city-related matters. Most opinions are from the Corporation Counsel. Also included are forms of proceeding for City Clerk functions. The first part is numbered A1-A30 and the second part is numbered 1-254. These numbers refer to former file drawers in the Clerk's Office. The card index references these opinions.

Series IV is a collection of material from the inaugural and first meeting ceremonies of city government from 1899-1984 with the bulk of the material from 1922-1984. It includes invitations, programs, addresses, orders of exercises, etc.

Series V is a collection of administrative files and filings kept by the Clerk's Office. The subseries of general files include records of office functions such as budgeting, purchasing and records management. The other subseries are filings kept by the City Clerk for administrative purposes. These include Administrative Services Department directives sent to department heads, mayoral appointment letters, reports of the Finance Commission, City Council records of lands donated to the City of Boston and records on the Retirement System.

Series VI is a collection of files on various topics relating to Boston or to the Office of the City Clerk's

functions that were kept by the City Clerk for reference purposes. Most of the material dates from the early 1900s-1950. Also includes two reference binders, one containing historical and procedural information and the other containing a list of city officials from 1908-1953.

Series VII is a collection of reports by the State on topics relating to Boston and municipal functions kept by the City Clerk for reference purposes. References to these reports are included in the card index.

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Series I: Card indexes, circa 1900-1975 (3 card file boxes)

The card indexes includes several obsolete indexes formerly used in the City Clerk's Office merged into one A-Z file, a card index to Special Acts relating to individuals, and a card index for the Church records. The consolidated indexes referenced former locations in the City Clerk's Office such as file drawers, the vault and shelves which are no longer applicable. The historical books on Boston which were a part of the City Clerk's Historical Reference Library may now be found in the Archives Reference Library which is located in the Reference Room. The index also references records which were transferred to the Boston Public Library circa 1970 by the City Clerk for safekeeping that have not yet been returned to the Archives. The index also includes information on topics relating to Boston such as wards, annexations, City Council, School Committee members, etc. The historical card index references files in the Opinions series, Administrative files series and Reference files series.

Box

1	A-L
2	M-Z
3	Index to Special Acts Relating to Individuals
3	Index to Church records

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Series II: Correspondence, 1883-1983 (Bulk, 1907-1983) (3 volumes and 11 folders)

Correspondence to and from City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk 1883-1983 with the bulk of correspondence from 1907-1983. Includes requests for information, opinions, and departmental communications. Includes 3 volumes of correspondence and 11 folders of loose correspondence. The 3 volumes are filed in folders 1-3.

Box	Folder	
4	1	1885-1886
4	2	1883-1900
4	3	1900-1901
4	4	1907-1926
4	5	1927-1935
4	6	1936-1942
4	7	1943-1954
4	8	1955-1958
4	9	1959-1960

4	10	1961
4	11	1962-1968
4	12	1969-1974
4	13	1975-1983
4	14	1980-1983

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Series III: Opinions, etc., 1829, 1871-1965 (35 folders)

Includes opinions of the Corporation Counsel requested and filed by the City Clerk, forms of proceeding of the City Clerk's Office and other miscellaneous records. The first eight folders include opinions numbered A1-A38 which references a "drawer A" formerly in the City Clerk's Office. The card file index includes this reference number. The other folders include opinions numbered 1-254 which are also included in the card file index.

Box	Folder	
4	15	A1-A11, 1880-1896
4	16	A12 - Stray Cattle Form of Proceeding, 1829, 1887
4	17	A13-A16, 1894-1906
4	18	A17 - Elections, 1892-1907
4	19	A18-A28, 1885-1926
4	20	A29 - List of Rewards offered by Mayor and City Council, 1871-1926
4	21	A30-A32, 1916-1965
4	22	A33-A38, 1900-1955
5	1	1-46, 1893-1906
5	2	47-86, 1906-1913
5	3	88 - Wards
5	4	89-95, 1916-1959
5	5	96-100a, 1919-1940
5	6	101 - Suffolk County, 1914-1926
5	7	102-109 1/2, 1924-1939
5	8	110 - Constables, circa 1940s
5	9	111-116, 1906-1959
5	10	116a, circa 1920-1961
5	11	116b-124, 1847-1961
5	12	125-131, 1936-1942
5	13	132 - Police expenditures, 1934, 1958
5	14	133-143, 1931-1940
5	15	144-145, 1940-1960
5	16	146-159b, 1911-1966
5	17	160, 1938-1966
5	18	161-175, 1928-1957
5	19	176 - Tax rates, 1939-1956
5	20	177-207, 1909-1954

6	1	208-215
6	2	216 - Reorganization of City Departments, 1946-1960
6	3	217-219, 1952-1956
6	4	220 - Urban Redevelopment, circa 1800s-1960
6	5	221 - Boston Municipal Research Bureau, 1931-1959
6	6	225-239 1/2, 1932-1966
6	7	240-254, 1967-1978

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Series IV: Inaugural records, 1899-1984 (Bulk, 1922-1984) (37 folders)

Includes invitations, programs, addresses, orders of exercises and correspondence relating to the inauguration and first meeting ceremonies.

Box	Folder	
6	8	Inaugural records, 1899
6	9	Inaugural records, 1914
6	10	Inaugural records, 1922
6	11	Inaugural records, 1923
6	12	Annual Luncheon, 1926
6	13	Inaugural records, 1930
6	14	Inaugural records, 1934
6	15	Inaugural records, 1938
6	16	Inaugural records, 1940
6	17	Inaugural records, 1942
6	18	Inaugural records, 1944
6	19	Inaugural records, 1946
6	20	Inaugural records, 1948
6	21	Annual Address and First Meeting records, 1949
6	22	Inaugural records, 1950
6	23	Annual Address and First Meeting records, 1951
6	24	Inaugural records, 1952
6	25	Annual Address and First Meeting records, 1953
6	26	Inaugural records, 1954
6	27	Annual Address and First Meeting records, 1955
6	28	Inaugural records, 1956
6	29	Inaugural records, 1958
6	30	Annual Address and First meeting records, 1959
6	31	Inaugural records, 1960
6	32	First meeting records, 1962
6	33	Inaugural records, 1964
6	34	Annual Address and First Meeting records, 1966
6	35	Annual Address, 1967

6	36	Inaugural records, 1968
6	37	First Meeting records, 1970
6	38	Inaugural records, 1972
6	39	First Meeting records, 1974
6	40	Inaugural records, 1976
6	41	First Meeting records, 1978
6	42	Inaugural records, 1980
6	43	First Council Meeting records, 1982
6	44	Inaugural records, 1984

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Series V: Administrative files, circa 1893-1981 (221 folders)

Administrative files of the City Clerk relating to functions of the City Clerk's Office including employees, budget and records management. Also includes filings kept by the City Clerk. Series is divided into 5 sub-series: A. General files, B. ASD Directives, C. Mayoral Appointments, D. Finance Commission Reports, E. Lands and Wills, and F. Retirement System records.

Subseries A: General files, 1893-1981 (47 folders)

Administrative files of City Clerk's Office relating to employees, budget, equipment, records management, etc. Also, includes files relating to microfilming of Boston records and storage of master microfilm in the Boston Public Library.

Box	Folder	
7	1	Archival Instruction Program, 1958
7	2	Audits and Various Reports on City Clerk Department, 1910-1961
7	3	Audits, Notices of, 1948-1977
7	4	Budget, 1908-1945
7	5	Budget - Miscellaneous papers, 1969-1977
7	6	Budget Estimates, 1909, 1932-1939
7	7	Budget Estimates, 1940-1944
7	8	Budget Estimates, 1958-1961
7	9	Budget Estimates, 1962-1966
7	10	Budget Estimates, 1967-1970
7	11	Budget - Office Copy, 1971-1975
7	12	Budget - Office Copy, 1975-1978
7	13	Budget - Office Copy, 1978-1981
7	14	Budget, Program, 1972, 1974-1977
7	15	Certification of service of City Council members and Department heads, 1949-1962
7	16	Civil Service postings locations, circa 1930-1940
7	17	Conferences, Requests to attend, 1948-1978
7	18	Doyle, Wilfred - Acting Corporation Counsel, 1940
7	19	Employees of City Clerk's Office, circa 1893-1959

7	20	Executive Orders of Gov. Leverett Saltonstall, 1942
7	21	Executive Orders of Mayor, 1933-1934
7	22	Finance Commission, Comments on, 1924
7	23	Historical Library, Purchases, etc., undated
7	24	Hunting and fishing licenses, 1919, 1967-1977
7	25	Jitney licenses, circa 1920-29, 1950
7	26	Mayor's Circular letters, 1909-1943 with gaps
7	27	Mayor's Circular letters, 1968-1979
7	28	Miscellaneous messages and statistics, undated
7	29	Miscellaneous orders, undated
7	30	Office Equipment, circa 1950-1959
7	31	Oration, undated
7	32	Photostat contract and data, circa 1940-1959
7	33	Public Notice re: Appropriation bill, 1910 Feb 4
7	34	Public Records, Commissioner of, 1913, 1915, 1917
7	35	Records in the custody of the City Clerk, circa 1899-1970
8	1	Records in the custody of the City Clerk, circa 1899-1961
8	2	Records in the custody of the City Clerk, circa 1899-1961
8	3	Records destruction, 1975
8	4	Records, Microfilming of (catalogs), undated
8	5	Records, Microfilming of, circa 1930-1948
8	6	Records, Microfilming of, 1938-1942, 1950, 1960
8	7	Records Preservation, 1915-1973
8	8	Salaries, 1905-1959
8	9	Tax title lands, Sale of, 1937-1938
8	10	Typewriters, circa 1916-1949
8	11	Uniform Commercial Code, 1957-1958
8	12	White, George Robert Fund, 1934, 1945, 1968

Subseries B: Administrative Services Department directives, 1958-1981 with gaps (22 folders)

Directives sent from Administrative Services Department to City Department Heads.

Box	Folder	
8	13	1958
8	14	1960
8	15	1961
8	16	1962
8	17	1963
8	18	1964
8	19	1965
8	20	1966
8	21	1967
8	22	1968
8	23	1969

8	24	1970
8	25	1971
8	26	1972
8	27	1973
8	28	1974
8	29	1975
8	30	1976
8	31	1977
8	32	1978
8	33	1979
8	34	1981

Series C: Mayoral Appointments, 1899-1978 (Bulk, 1954-1978) (8 folders)

The file for 1899-1954 includes lists of appointments. The files for 1954-1978 include copies of letters of appointments.

Box	Folder	
8	35	circa 1899-1954
8	36	1954-1959
8	37	1960-1959
8	38	1964-1967
8	39	1968-1971 A-K
9	1	1968-1971 L-Z
9	2	1972-1975
9	3	1976-1978

Subseries D: Finance Commission reports, 1921, 1943-1969 (7 folders)

Box	Folder	
9	4	1921
9	5	1943-1948
9	6	1948-1950
9	7	1950-1954
9	8	1954-1955
9	9	1955-1957
9	10	1957-1969

Subseries E: Lands and Wills, 1904, 1915-1966 (7 folders)

Copies of City Council orders relating to donations of land to City of Boston.

Box	Folder	
9	11	1904, 1915-1924
9	12	1924-1929
9	13	1930-1937
9	14	1938-1941
9	15	1942-1949
9	16	1950-1954
9	17	1955-1966

Subseries F: Retirement System records, circa 1935-1957 (7 folders)

Box	Folder	
		Correspondence, etc. relating to Retirement System, pensions etc.
9	18	circa 1935-1936
9	19	circa 1937-1944
9	20	circa 1935-1957
9a	1	1949-1950
9a	2	1951-1952
9a	3	1953-1954
9a	4	1955

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Series VI: Reference files, circa 1889-1972 (Bulk, 1920-1959) (113 folders)

Reference files kept by City Clerk on topics relating to Boston and city government. Also includes a reference binder of historical and procedural information and a list of city officials from 1908-1953.

Sub series A: Reference binders, 1875-1953 (1 document case)

Two binders of reference information kept by the City Clerk. One includes historical information on city government and information on rules and procedures and the other includes lists of officials from 1908-1953.

Box	Folder	
10	1	Acting Mayor, duties of, 1940 June 5
10	2	Annuities, 1948
10	3	"Centennial Graphic, New York", 1875
10	4	City Charter with Amendments and Rules of the City Council [1], 1934-1935
10	5	City Charter with Amendments and Rules of the City Council [2], 1934-1935
10	6	City Clerk's Office, 1942-1947, undated
10	7	City Council Meetings, 1930-1951
10	8	City Council Rules, 1930-1942
10	9	City Council Miscellaneous [1], 1905, 1939-1951
10	10	City Council Miscellaneous [2], undated
10	11	City Government, 1932-1951
10	12	City Planning, 1939-1950, undated
10	13	Committee Appointments, 1931-1951
10	14	Curley Campaign, 1937, undated
10	15	Drawing of Jurors, undated
10	16	Election Returns [1], 1924-1944
10	17	Election Returns [2], 1945-1950, undated
10	18	Population, 1945, 1950, undated
10	19	Taxes, 1931-1953
10	20	Wards, 1931-1934, undated

10 21 Miscellaneous, 1925-1951, undated
 10 22 City Officials, 1908-1953 (1 volume)

This typewritten binder picks up where the publication "Catalogue of the City Councils of Boston, Roxbury and Charlestown" leaves off in 1908. This volumes continues the City Councils and other city officials from 1908 to 1953 and also includes a list of the members of the School Committee from 1789-1959.

Sub series B: Files, circa 1889-1970

Box	Folder	
11	1	Aldermen, undated
11	2	Atlantic Avenue Elevated Structure, 1938-1939
11	3	Back taxes, circa 1929
11	4	Barry, Commodore John - Address by Hon. James M. Curley, 1929 Sep 22
11	5	Bathtubs, Prohibition of, 1929-1948
11	6	Bay-State Gas Trust, 1893
11	7	Boston Common and Public Garden, undated
11	8	Boston Elevated Railway Company, 1916-circa 1959
11	9	Boston League of Women Voters, 1915, 1930
11	11	Bunker Hill Monument Association, 1925
11	10	Bridge over Massachusetts Turnpike, 1970
11	12	Census, circa 1930-1945
11	13	Census - News clippings, 1930-1940
11	14	Central Traffic Artery, 1941, 1953
11	15	Charter Revisions (Plan E and Plan A), 1946-1949
11	16	Cities and towns, circa 1930-1940
11	17	City Council, undated
11	18	City Hospital Finances, 1956
11	19	City Planning Board Ten-Year Plan, 1941
11	20	Civil Defense, 1950
11	21	Collins, Mayor John F., 1961
11	22	Compensation and Classification, circa 1950
11	23	Consolidation of Departments, undated
11	24	Consolidation of Departments, circa 1930-1939
11	25	Consolidation of Departments, 1952
11	26	Curley, James M., 1917, 1936
11	27	Curley, Mayor - Reply to Finance Commission report, 1923 Feb 20
11	28	Dogs, Muzzling and Restraining of, 1915
11	29	Dolan Case, 1937-1939
11	30	Dorchester Heights, 1972
11	31	Egleston Square, Origin of name, 1964
11	32	Eight Hour Day, undated
11	33	Employees, Number of, circa 1905-1959
11	34	Employees - War Salaries, circa 1920
11	35	Finances, 1941, 1949

11	36	Financial Analysis of Boston, circa 1930-1949
11	37	Fire of 1760, undated
11	38	Firemen - Seventy hour work week, 1942 May 12
11	39	Franklin, Benjamin - Fake letter from, 1900
11	40	Franklin Fund, undated
11	41	Garbage, Disposal of, circa 1950-1959
11	42	Goodwin, Frank A., circa 1920-1939
11	43	Health Department, 1953
11	44	Hynes, Mayor John B., circa 1950-1959
11	45	Hynes, Mayor John B. - Memorial Program, 1970
11	46	Itinerant Vendors, circa 1911
11	47	Jenney Manufacturing Company, undated
11	48	Jitney Licenses, 1919
11	49	Kennedy, Edward M. - Speech at Dedication of City Hall, 1969 Feb 11
11	50	Labor Decisions, 1942
11	51	League of Nations, 1919
11	52	Liquor Licenses, undated
11	53	Markets, 1914
11	54	Massachusetts Legislative Procedure, 1955
11	55	Mayoralty Statistics, undated
11	56	Metropolitan Boston Committee and two plans, 1930
11	57	Metropolitan Boston - Miscellaneous Statistics, circa 1930-1939
11	58	Metropolitan Boston - Publications, circa 1930-1939
11	59	Milwaukee, Report on, 1932
11	60	Municipal Finances, 1928
11	61	Municipal Lighting - Vetoes, 1932-1933
11	62	New Boston Committee, 1949-1950
11	63	Oaths, undated
11	64	Organization of Executive Branch, Report of Finance Commission on, 1950
11	65	Parks, 1908-1916
12	1	Pay as you go policy, 1915
12	2	Per capita cost of Municipal Government, 1936
12	3	Police Strike of 1919, 1941
12	4	Population, circa 1930-1959
12	5	Reorganization of Departments, circa 1930-1939
12	6	Residence, Certificate of, undated
12	7	Sanitary Inspection of Tenement House Districts, 1889
12	8	School Committee, 1904
12	9	Sewer Department, 1908
12	10	Standard Oil Licenses, undated
12	11	Standardization, circa 1920-1959
12	12	Street Lighting, undated
12	13	Taxation, circa 1930-1949

12	14	Taxes, circa 1925-1936
12	15	Tax Limit, 1918, 1922
12	16	Tax Limit, 1925-1928
12	17	Tax Limit, 1929, 1933
12	18	Tax Rate, circa 1928-1947
12	19	Thorndike Memorial, 1923, 1948-1949, 1953
12	20	Transit, Argument of Mayor Matthews before Transit Commission, 1894
12	21	Veterans, 1930-1932, 1955
12	22	Veterans, Committee to Memorialize, 1946-1949
12	23	Washington Portrait, undated
12	24	Wellington Hill Land, undated
12	25	World Trade Center, circa 1950-1959
12	26	Zoning Regulations, 1931

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Series VII: Reports, 1839-1956 (32 folders)

Includes reports by the State on matters concerning Boston or municipal functions kept by the City Clerk for reference.

Box	Folder	
12	27	Harbor, 1839, 1850, 1864, 1868
12	28	Commonwealth Flats, 1868
12	29	Congestion of Traffic in the Streets of Boston, 1908
12	30	Directors of the Port of Boston, 1915
12	31	Charter Revision, 1915, 1924, 1934
12	32	Construction, Alteration and Maintenance of Buildings, 1915
12	33	South Bay, 1915, 1931
12	34	Taxation, 1915, 1916, 1938
12	35	Statement of Grants and Allowances to Institutions, 1917
12	36	Amendments passed by the Constitutional Convention, 1918
12	37	Traffic Tunnel to connect Boston and East Boston, 1921
12	38	Study of Accounting System of the City of Boston, 1922
12	39	Payroll Statistics, 1922-1923
12	40	Jury Service, 1923
12	41	Commission on Pensions, 1925
12	42	Obsolete laws, 1926
12	43	Fees for Municipal Licenses and Permits, 1926, 1930
12	44	Abolition of Grade Crossings, 1929
12	45	Licensing of Taxicab Stands in Boston, 1930
12	46	Pension awarded to Oliver B. Garrett, 1930
12	47	County Salaries, 1930
12	48	Control and Conduct of Public Utilities, 1930

12	49	Liquor Regulation, 1933
12	50	Transient Vendors, 1938
12	51	Budget and Appropriation Procedures, 1941
12	52	Investigation of Retirement System, 1945
12	53	Survey of the Supply System of the City of Boston, 1949
12	54	Survey of the Police Department of the City of Boston, 1949
12	55	Veterans, 1950-1951
12	56	Massachusetts Port Authority, 1956
12	57	Additional Vehicular Crossing between Boston Proper and East Boston, 1956
12	58	Trustees of Boston Metropolitan District, 1956

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