



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the Parks Department legal records

Finding aid prepared by Patrick T. Collins

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Repository:	City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division
Title:	Parks Department legal records
Collection No.:	4400.001
Dates:	1880-1992 (Bulk, 1885-1960)
Quantity:	5.5 Cubic feet (4 Record Cartons, 1 Oversize Flatbox, 2 Flat Files)

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Biographical/Historical note

Power to establish parks in the City of Boston was granted by the Commonwealth on May 6, 1875, subject to acceptance by the people. This act was accepted by a vote of the citizens on June 9, 1875. The first Board of Park Commissioners was appointed on July 8, 1875 and confirmed on July 15, 1875. The Board consisted of three members who served without compensation. As thus constituted, the department continued up to 1913, when by the provisions of Chapter 10, Ordinances of 1912, which went into effect in March of 1913, it was merged with the Public Grounds, Bath and Music Departments, under the name of Park and Recreation Department. The chairman of the Board of Commissioners became a salaried official and was required to devote his entire time to the work, likewise the Deputy Commissioner. In 1920, the Cemetery Department was merged with the Park Department, the latter title being substituted for Park and Recreation Department. On May 1, 1954, the

department became the Parks and Recreation Department. The four Associate Commissioners serve without compensation.

The Office of the Superintendent of [the Common and] Public Grounds was established by ordinance on February 28, 1870. The Superintendent had charge of, and was the only person authorized to trim the trees in the streets of the city and of all the public grounds, except the parks established under Stat. 1875, Chap. 185. He also had charge of all the public grounds. The Bath Department was established by ordinance in 1898. The Trustees had care and custody of all the bath-houses and indoor gymnasia. The Music Department was established by ordinance on April 23, 1898. It was placed in charge of a board of five commissioners, known as the Music Trustees. The board was given charge and control of the selection of public music, to be given either indoors or in the open air, for parades, concerts, public celebrations and other purposes under the authority of the City Council, except entertainments for children on the Fourth of July. It engaged the performers, made the contracts and expended all moneys paid from the City treasury for such music.

The Boston Parks and Recreation Department provides residents and visitors with clean, green, safe, and accessible open space in more than 2,200 acres of park land throughout the city including parks, playgrounds, athletic facilities, city squares, urban wilds, street trees, three active cemeteries, 16 historic burying grounds, and two golf courses.

In addition to maintaining the historic integrity of such famous landmarks as Boston Common, the Public Garden, and the other parks that comprise Frederick Law Olmsted's Emerald Necklace, the Department services and upgrades facilities ranging from tot lots to the 527-acre Franklin Park.

The Department also programs a wide range of community events and live entertainment in the parks under its jurisdiction. The Boston Park Rangers act as the Department's eyes and ears while enhancing public safety. Appointed by the Mayor, the Boston Parks and Recreation Commission serves as the policy-making citizen body that oversees the operation of the Department and considers matters of public concern.

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Scope and Contents note

This series consists of 5.5 cubic feet of records from the Boston Parks and Recreation Department. The records cover the dates from 1880-1992, with bulk dates of 1885-1960. These records deal with various park projects of the Boston Parks Department (and its predecessors) from the 1880s through the early 1970s. Documents include land takings, deeds, land transfers, sales of land, leases, as well as other legal agreements between the Boston Parks Department (or its predecessors) and government entities (including local, state, and federal) private citizens, corporations, and other businesses. In addition there are a large number of plans for various projects including blue prints, engineer drawings, and maps.

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Arrangement note

This series had no apparent order upon accession by the Archives. Subsequently it has been arranged alphabetically with groupings of letters serving as the top level series (e.g. Series I: A - F) and each letter of the alphabet serving as a sub-series within that specific grouping. Within each sub-series documents have been arranged according to the name of the specific park, river, or building, by the geographic location (e.g. street name or neighborhood) within the City of Boston, or the organization dealt with in each document. Each individual location or entity has been placed in its own folder(s). Documents dealing with the same location or entity have been ordered chronologically within each folder. Oversized materials have been removed and placed in appropriate archival housing, including flat boxes and flat files. Photographs have also been removed and filed

together in the Photographs series. The result of this organization is five individual series: four covering all of the letters and a final fifth series for photographs. There are no documents present that fall under the letters X, Y, or Z.

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Series I: A - F

A (9 Folders)

Box	Folder	
1	1	Airports (1 Folder)
1	2	Alvah Kittredge Park (1 Folder)
1	3	Aquarium (1 Folder)
1	4	Arborway (1 Folder)
1	5	Arena Building (1 Folder)
Drawer		
2		Arlington Street (1 Folder, and Oversize Material)

Box	Folder
1	6

Box	Folder
1	7

FlatBox		Arnold Arboretum (1 Folder, and Oversize Material)
1		
1	8	Audubon Road (1 Folder)
1	9	Autumn Street (1 Folder)

B (12 Folders)

Box	Folder	
1	10	Back Bay Park (1 Folder)
1	11	Baker Street, West Roxbury (1 Folder, and Oversize Material)

Drawer	
1	

Drawer		
1		
1	12	Bellevue Street (1 Folder)
4	187	Berners Square (1 Folder, and Oversize Material)
1	13	

FlatBox		
1		
1	14	Blue Hill Avenue (1 Folder)
FlatBox		
1		Blue Hills Parkway (1 Folder, and Oversize Material)

Box	Folder
1	15

Box	Folder	
1	16	Boston Athenaeum (1 Folder)

1	17	Boston Common (1 Folder)
1	18	Boston Parks and Recreation Department (1 Folder)
1	19	Boylston Road (1 Folder)
1	20	Brighton Square (1 Folder)
1	21	Brookline Avenue (1 Folder)

C (31 Folders)

Box Folder

1	22	Camp Meigs (1 Folder)
1	23	Canterbury Street (1 Folder)
1	24	Carson Street Play Area (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

FlatBox

1

FlatBox

1

Carter Playground (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Box Folder

1 25

Box Folder

1 26-27

Castle Island (2 Folders and Oversize Material)

Drawer

1

Drawer

1

2

FlatBox

1

Drawer

2

Centre Street, Roslindale (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

1

Box Folder

1 28

Box Folder

1 29

Chandler's Pond (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer

1

Drawer

1

1 30

Charles Gate East (1 Folder)

Drawer

2

Charles Gate West (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

1

Box Folder

1 31

FlatBox

1

Box	Folder	
1	32	Charles River (1 Folder)
Drawer		
2		Charles River Reservation (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
1	33	
Drawer		
1		
Box	Folder	
1	34	Charlesbank Open-Air Gymnasium (1 Folder)
1	35	Charlestown (1 Folder)
1	36	Charlestown Playground (1 Folder)
FlatBox		
1		Chestnut Hill Avenue (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
1	37	
Box	Folder	
1	38	Chestnut Hill Park (1 Folder)
1	39	Columbia Road (1 Folder)
1	40	Columbia Yacht Club (1 Folder)
1	41	Columbus Avenue, Roxbury (1 Folder)
1	42	Columbus Avenue Playground (1 Folder)
1	43	Columbus Memorial Playground (1 Folder)
4	187	Commonwealth Avenue (4 Folders and Oversize Material)
Drawer		
2		
Drawer		
2		
Box	Folder	
2	46-47	
Drawer		
1		
Drawer		
2		Cottage Farm Road (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
2	48	
Box	Folder	
2	49	Courtney Road (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Drawer		
2		
Drawer		
2		
2	50-52	Cummings Estate, Woburn (3 Folders)

D (8 Folders)

Box	Folder	
2	53	Dewey Beach (1 Folder)
2	54	Dorchester (1 Folder)
2	55	Dorchester Avenue (1 Folder)
2	56	Dorchester Heights (1 Folder)
2	57	Dorchester Park (1 Folder)
2	58	Dover Street (1 Folder)
2	59	Dow Footbridge (aka: Norfolk Street Playground) (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

FlatBox

1

Drawer

1

2 60

Downer Street, Roxbury (1 Folder)

E (1 Folder)

Box Folder

2 61

Eden Street Playground (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer

2

Drawer

2

F (11 Folders)

Box Folder

2 62-63

Fairview Cemetery (2 Folders and Oversize Material)

Drawer

1

Drawer

1

2 64

Faneuil Street, Brighton (1 Folder)

2 65

Faraday Street, Hyde Park (1 Folder)

2 66

Fellow Street (1 Folder)

2 67

Fens, The (1 Folder)

2 68

Fort Hill Square (1 Folder)

2 69

Franklin Field (1 Folder)

2 70

Franklin Park (1 Folder)

2 71

Franklin Park Zoo (1 Folder)

2 72

Free Port Street Beach Flats, Dorchester (1 Folder)

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Series II: G - L

G (4 Folders)

Box Folder

2 73

Garvey Playground (See also: William H. Garvey Playground) (1 Folder and

Oversize Material)

FlatBox

1

2 74

Green Street, West Roxbury (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer

1

Drawer

1

2 75

Glen Lane (1 Folder)

2 76

Governor's Island (1 Folder)

H (6 Folders)

Box Folder

2 77

Hallet Street (1 Folder)

2 78

Hamilton Park (1 Folder)

Drawer

1

Hanson Street Play Area (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Box Folder

4 187

Box Folder

2 79

Box Folder

2 80

Highland Park (1 Folder)

2 81

Hunneman Street (1 Folder)

Drawer

2

Hyde Park (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Box Folder

2 82

FlatBox

1

I (1 Folder)

Box Folder

2 83

Independence Square (1 Folder)

J (10 Folders)

Box Folder

2 84

J. J. sullivan Playground (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer

2

Drawer

2

2 85

Jamaica Pond (1 Folder)

Drawer

1

Jefferson Playground (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Box Folder

2 86

Box	Folder	
2	87	Jewish War Veteran's Drive (1 Folder)
3	89	John J. Ryan Playground (2 Folders and Oversize Material)
Drawer		
1		
Drawer		
1		
Box	Folder	
2	88	
FlatBox		
1		
3	90	John T. Moynihan Memorial Play Center (1 Folder)
3	91	Joseph Doucette Stadium (1 Folder)
FlatBox		
1		Joyce Kilmer Park (2 Folders and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
3	92-93	
Box	Folder	
4	187	
		K (2 Folders)
Box	Folder	
3	94	Kimball Street (1 Folder)
3	95	King's Chapel (1 Folder)
		L (4 Folders)
Box	Folder	
3	96	Lake Shore Road (1 Folder)
3	97	Leo M. Birmingham Parkway (1 Folder)
FlatBox		
1		Lomasney Park (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
3	98	
Drawer		
1		
Box	Folder	
3	99	Lowell Square (1 Folder)

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Series III: M - R

M (13 Folders)

Box	Folder	
3	100	Malden Street (1 Folder)
3	101	M (illegible) Wharf (1 Folder)
3	102	Malloch's Wharf (1 Folder)

3	103	Mapes Street, Dorchester (1 Folder)
3	104	Marine Park (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
FlatBox		
1		
3	105	Massachusetts Avenue (1 Folder)
3	106	McConnell Park (1 Folder)
3	107	Mission Hill Playground (1 Folder)
Drawer		
2		Morrissey Boulevard (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
3	108	
FlatBox		
1		
Box	Folder	
3	109	Moseley Street, Dorchester (1 Folder)
Drawer		
2		Mother Brook (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
3	110	
Box	Folder	
3	111	Mount Hope Playground (1 Folder)
3	112	Muddy River (1 Folder)
		N (9 Folders)
Box	Folder	
3	113	Nashua Street (1 Folder)
3	114	Nashua Street Playground (1 Folder)
3	115	Natural History Garden (1 Folder)
3	116	Neponset Playground (1 Folder)
FlatBox		
1		Neponset River Parkway (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
3	117	
Drawer		
2		
Drawer		
1		Neponset River Reservation (2 Folders and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
3	118-118.a	
FlatBox		
1		
Drawer		
2		
		<u>Norfolk Street Playground (See: Dow Footbridge)</u>
Box	Folder	

3 119 North Square (1 Folder)
 3 120 North End Park (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer
 1

Drawer
 1

3 121 North End Playground (1 Folder)

O (5 Folders)

FlatBox
 1

Old Colony Parkway (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer
 2

Box Folder
 3 122

Drawer
 1

Drawer
 1

Old Harbor, Boston (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Box Folder
 3 123

Box Folder
 3 124

Orient Heights Beach (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Box Folder
 3 125

Orients Heights Playground (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 126

Orleans Street (1 Folder)

P (11 Folders)

Box Folder
 3 127

Park Roadways (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 128

Park Street (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 129

Parkman House (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 130

Pine Bank Building (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 131

Pitts and Hale Streets Playground (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 132

Porter Street (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 133

Post Office Square (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 134

Preble Circle (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 135

Private Joseph Amatucci Playground (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 136

Poplar Street (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 137

Public Garden (1 Folder)

Q (1 Folder)

Box Folder
 3 138

Quincy Street (1 Folder)

R (11 Folders)

3	139	Readville (1 Folder) <u>Readville Memorial Playground (See: William D. Doyle Memorial Playground)</u>
Box	Folder	
3	140	Readville Street (1 Folder)
3	141	Reverend Francis X. Coppens Square (1 Folder)
3	142	Ringer Playground (1 Folder)
4	143	Ripley Playground (1 Folder)
4	144	Robert F. Ryan Memorial Playground (1 Folder)
Drawer		
1		Roberts Playground (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
4	145	
Box	Folder	
4	146	Roslindale Square (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Drawer		
2		
Drawer		
2		
4	147	Ross Estate (1 Folder)
4	148	Roxbury (1 Folder)
4	149	Russet Road, West Roxbury (1 Folder)

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Series IV: S - W

S (14 Folders)

Box	Folder	
4	150	Saunders Stadium (1 Folder) <u>Savin Hill (See: South Boston, "Transfer of Care and Control, 7 Oct 1949)</u>
Box	Folder	
4	151	Schools (1 Folder)
4	152	Seaver Street (1 Folder)
4	153	Sergeant Joseph Holmes, Jr. Square (1 Folder)
4	154	Shelburne Street (1 Folder)
4	155	Sigourney Street, West Roxbury (1 Folder)
4	156	Smelt Brook Creek (1 Folder)
4	157	Soldiers Field Road (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
FlatBox		
1		
Drawer		
2		South Boston (2 Folders and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
4	158-159	
FlatBox		

1		
Box	Folder	
4	160	South Street, West Roxbury (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Drawer		
1		
Drawer		
1		
4	161	Spring Street Brook (1 Folder)
FlatBox		
1		Stony Brook Reservation (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Drawer		
1		
Box	Folder	
4	162	
Box	Folder	
4	163	Sullivan Square (1 Folder)
4	164	Sumner Street, East Boston (1 Folder)
		T (4 Folders)
Box	Folder	
4	165	Tenean Beach (1 Folder) <u>Tenean Street (See: South Boston, "Transfer of Care and Control, 7 Oct 1949")</u>
Box	Folder	
4	166	Thetford Avenue, Dorchester (1 Folder)
Drawer		
1		Tot-Lot, Walnut Avenue (1 Folder and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
4	167	
Box	Folder	
4	168	Tremont Street (1 Folder)
		U (1 Folder)
Box	Folder	
4	169	Union Park (1 Folder)
		V (5 Folders)
Box	Folder	
4	170	Vancouver Street (1 Folder)
FlatBox		
1		Veteran's of Foreign Wars Parkway (2 Folders and Oversize Material)
Box	Folder	
4	171-172	
Drawer		
2		
1		
Box	Folder	
4	173	Victory Road (1 Folder)

4 174 Voses Grove (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

FlatBox

1

W (12 Folders)

Wall Street (See: Poplar Street)

Box Folder

4 175 Washington Street (1 Folder)

4 176 West Roxbury Parkway (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer

2

Drawer

2

4 177 Wexford Street (1 Folder and Oversize Material)

Drawer

1

Drawer

1

William Amerena Park (See: World War Memorial Park)

Box Folder

4 178 William D. Doyle Memorial Playground (1 Folder)

4 179 William H. Garvey Playground (See also: Garvey Playground) (1 Folder)

4 180 William Gary Walsh Playground (1 Folder)

4 181 Wilton Street, Hyde Park (1 Folder)

4 182 Wood Island Park (See also: World War Memorial Park) (1 Folder)

4 183 Wood Playground (1 Folder)

4 184-186 World War Memorial Park (3 Folders)

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Series V: Photographs (1 Folder)

Box Folder

4 187 Photographs (1 Folder)

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