

CITY ARCHIVES

The purpose of the City Archives' Historical Records Program is to identify, collect, preserve, arrange and describe records of historical significance originated by City government. Our goal is to make these records available to City officials and employees, as well as the general public. As an institution, the City Archives serves as the final resting place for records of enduring political, economic, legal, and cultural value. As a rich, diverse collection of historical records from various City agencies, the City Archives represents the most unique and esteemed component of the City's Records Management Program.

The City Archives wants to inform researchers not affiliated with the City government about the nature of our institution, and the resources which are available to the public. We also hope to share our enthusiasm for the preservation of the City's documentary heritage with those who are interested in City history. The existence of a City Archives ensures that future generations of City officials and employees, private citizens and scholars will know about the contributions of City government towards the growth and development of Los Angeles.

While a body of government records collectively known as the "city archives" has existed since the 1830s, the City Archives as an institution was established in 1980. The City Archives administers the historical records component of a City-wide Records Management Program. The Records Management Division of the City Clerk's Office is responsible for the storage, maintenance, disposition and referencing of all non-current records created by the various agencies of the City government, including those of historical significance housed in the City Archives. The Los Angeles City Records Center and Archives is the base of the operations for the City Clerk's Records Management Division.

Historically, the Los Angeles City Clerk's Office has assumed responsibility for keeping official City records and making them available to the public as well as to City officials and employees. This responsibility was outlined in the first City Charter of 1876, and continued in the Charters of 1889 and 1925 to the present date. In response to the proliferation of records after the second World War, City officials moved to streamline and consolidate the management and disposition of various municipal government records. Early investigation into the new discipline of Records Management during the late 1950s prompted City government officials to examine the feasibility of establishing a centralized, more comprehensive plan for storing needed records and destroying obsolete ones. In 1966, The City Council created the Records Management Division of the City Clerk's Office. As stated before, the City Archives was established in 1980.

While the City Archives has records from as early as 1827, the great bulk of our records are from the Twentieth Century. They include records of the Los Angeles City Council Minutes (to ten years earlier than present); City Council Petitions and Files (to five years earlier than present); past and current versions of the City Charter; Administrative and Municipal Codes (to present); Contracts;

Deeds to and from the City; Election Files (Precinct maps from 1908 to present); Departmental Annual Reports; maps; photographs (almost all after 1925); financial reports and ledgers of the City Auditor, City Controller and Treasurer; and local municipality records from Eagle Rock, Hollywood; San Pedro, Tujunga, Venice, Watts and Wilmington prior to their becoming part of the City of Los Angeles. We have the office files of Mayor Yorty, a little of Poulson's, and those of Riordan. We have the files of many of the Council Members from Tom Bradley and Art Snyder to the present. The staff of the City Archives has prepared finding aids and inventories which index the historical records of City Departments, City Council and Mayor.

Reference service is the top priority of the City Archives. We welcome questions and comments regarding our program, and invite you to make use of our resources for your research project. The City Archives and the City Records Center are located in the C. Erwin Piper Technical Center at 555 Ramirez Street, Space 320, Los Angeles, CA 90012. We are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Photocopying services are available for a nominal fee and parking is free. We advise you to make your records requests prior to arriving. This will speed up the progress of your research. If you would like to make an appointment to visit the City Archives and use our facility, please feel free to contact Todd Gaydowski, City Records Management Officer at (213) 485-8783 or tgaydowski@clerk.lacity.org, or acting City Archivist, Jay Jones at (213) 485-3512 or jjones@clerk.lacity.org.