

11.
March 20, 1986

To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Charles Sullivan. Historical Commission *dw*

Re: Council Order 17 of February 3, 1986

On February 3 the City Council passed an order introduced by Councillor Duehay and Vice Mayor Vellucci requesting that the Historical Commission investigate the use of the Library's Cambridge History Fund to prepare a comprehensive history of Cambridge since 1896.

Apart from the Commission's five-volume Survey of Architectural History in Cambridge (1965-1977), there have been no recent serious histories of the City. The best remains Lucius Paige's 1877 History of Cambridge. The Cambridge of 1896 was a collection of historical essays published to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of city government. Samuel Atkins Eliot published a history of Cambridge men and events in 1916, and the Bicentennial Commission arranged for the publication of Cambridge Reconsidered in 1976. The Commission published A Photographic History of Cambridge in 1984, and the Cambridge Historical Society has been publishing articles on Cambridge history in its Proceedings since 1905. Despite all these efforts, there is no complete modern history of the city.

The Commission is eager to begin such a history, but is very concerned that sufficient resources be available to do it properly. If a qualified historian could be found for the job it would require at least four years to complete. Outside grants could surely be found, but the city would have to make a financial commitment on the order of \$25,000 per year to prepare a manuscript; publication costs would be additional if a commercial publisher then cannot be persuaded to take it over. The Commission has the resources, the interest, and the ability to support such a project on the same basis that it produced the five volume architectural survey and the photographic history, but our historians are presently working on a new version of Report I: East Cambridge and funds for additional staff are not presently available.

The upcoming 150th anniversary of the incorporation of the city in 1846 would provide an appropriate target date for publication of a general history. Cambridge had been a town for 215 years when it became a city, and in 1996 will have been a city for 150 more. A new work would employ much recent research on all aspects of Cambridge's history, and the result could be an invaluable tool for students, citizens and historians alike.

The Cambridge History Fund consists of a \$10,000 gift to the Cambridge Public Library and accumulated interest of \$11,231. Only the interest can be spent, and the Library already has an historical publication project on hand for which some of this will be used. This would be inadequate even to begin a major history project, but at its present level allows the Library to undertake useful small projects in Cambridge history.

cc: Joseph Sakey



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139
TEL. 498-9011

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

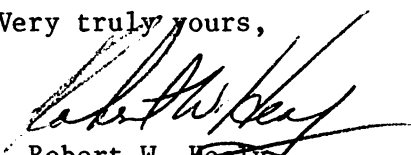
RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

March 24, 1986

To the Honorable, the City Council:

In response to Awaiting Report No. 4 regarding the writing of a comprehensive history of Cambridge, I submit the attached report from Charles Sullivan, Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

Very truly yours,



Robert W. Healy
City Manager

Re: response to Awaiting Report Item No. 4 on
the writing of a comprehensive history of
Cambridge.

In City Council,

March 24, 1986

Placed on File

CW
MS
RF