



To: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

From: Susan M. Flannery, Library Director *SMF*

Date: August 19, 1998

Re: City Manager Memo, Dated 6/24/98
City Council Order #024, Dated 6/22/98

LIBRARY GENEALOGY RESEARCH POLICIES

Unlike the City Clerk's Office, Cemetery Department, or Election Commission, the Cambridge Public Library's service to people doing genealogical research does not involve documents which are official public records subject to the public records access laws such as the marriage, birth, and death records; voting lists; grave records; etc.

The library provides access to materials which it has added to its collection such as City of Cambridge directories, atlases, newspapers, etc. within which valuable genealogical information may be found. The library also includes a collection of family histories and genealogies as well as valuable genealogical source materials such as the *Proceedings of the New England Historical and Genealogical Society*. One of the goals of the library for FY99 is the completion of the entry of records for the genealogical collection into the electronic data base. In FY98 the library expended \$3,168.00 from trust funds to replace microfilm copies of the *Cambridge Chronicle* for the years 1846 through 1990.

In general, library users are expected to do their own research, with staff happy to assist in locating materials, getting the user started on the project, and answering questions. Substantive genealogical research by librarians, beyond the scope of the library's regular service, is available upon request at a fee of \$25.00 per hour plus \$0.15 per page for photocopying,

In recent years there has been an upswing of public interest in genealogy and tracing one's family roots. Many older people engage in genealogy projects, wishing to pass on a record of the family to their children and grandchildren. Frequently, out of state vacationers in the area include time in their vacation to visit sources of possible genealogical information concerning relatives who once lived in Cambridge. To assist such people the library staff has produced a brochure, *Tracing Your Roots: Genealogical Resources in the Cambridge Area*, which lists local agencies and institutions with genealogical resources. The brochure describes the resources and services available at the various locations, and provides the addresses, telephone numbers, and hours of operation. At present this brochure is being revised and updated.

Main Library	Boudreau Branch	Central Square Branch	Collins Branch	O'Connell Branch	North Branch	Valente Branch
449 Broadway	245 Concord Avenue	45 Pearl Street	64 Aberdeen Avenue	48 Sixth Street	70 Rindge Avenue	826 Cambridge Street
Cambridge, MA 02138	02138	02139	02138	02141	02140	02141
617-349-4040	349-4017	349-4010	349-4021	349-4019	349-4023	349-4015

A general complaint, especially from those beginning such research for the first time, is the problem of identifying which city agencies to go to for various pieces of genealogical information. A publication available in all locations, listing what records are located in which city departments and offices, their addresses, hours, and any charges, would be very useful.

November 1995



Printed on recycled paper

A stylized black line drawing of a tree with a thick trunk and several branches, located in the top left corner of the advertisement.

Tracing your roots
Genealogical resources
in the Cambridge area

REFERENCE DEPARTMENT
CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY
449 BROADWAY
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

A small line drawing of a city skyline with various buildings, including a church with a steeple and a modern skyscraper.

CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

SEARCH: A HANDBOOK FOR ADOPTEES AND BIRTHPARENTS, 2nd ed., by Jayne Askin, 1992. 362.73 As48s

—adoption records are court records, and in many states are sealed by court order. Searching genealogical information involving adoption presents special problems dealt with in this book.

SHAKING YOUR FAMILY TREE: A BASIC GUIDE TO TRACING YOUR FAMILY'S GENEALOGY, by Ralph J. Crandall, 1986. 929.1 C851s

UNPUZZLING YOUR PAST: A BASIC GUIDE TO GENEALOGY, by Emily Anne Croom, 1989. 929.1 C882u

WHERE TO WRITE FOR VITAL RECORDS. U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, GPO, 1993. R929.1 W574
—an essential guide to obtaining out-of-state records.

WORLDWIDE FAMILY HISTORY, by Noel Curren-Briggs, 1982. 929.1 N682w
—nearly every American's search becomes international eventually.

"Family history is not a simple matter. You will not be able to find out everything you want to know from any one book, relative, library, archive or photograph. Like a detective, you will have to listen carefully for 'leads' that will help you discover more and more."

Arthur Kurzweil

From Generation to Generation, 1994.

TRACING YOUR ROOTS

Genealogical Resources in the Cambridge Area

"Our past is not behind us, it is our very being."

David Ben-Gurion

Genealogical Materials at the Cambridge Public Library

If your ancestors were Cambridge residents, you can begin your search for information about them here at the Cambridge Public Library. We are not a genealogical research center, but we have some materials that may be useful. To do a thorough search you will want to follow the leads you get here by using the other resources in the Cambridge and Boston area.

Cambridge City Directories for the years 1848 - 1968 (with gaps); on microfilm for the years 1847 - 1972 (gap of years 1947 - 53)

- list residents in alphabetical order, with addresses, occupations, and family members

Ask at the Reference desk; directories are kept in the Cambridge Room, microfilm and reading machines are available in the Reference Room.

The Cambridge Chronicle on microfilm for the years 1846 to the present

- contains birth, death, and marriage announcements of some Cambridge residents
- is indexed beginning with 1967; a separate obituary index beginning with 1985

Microfilm and reading machines are available in the Reference Room.

Other Genealogical Material:

- compilations of Cambridge vital records up to 1850 — in Cambridge Room
- compilations of vital records of many Massachusetts towns to 1850 — in Local History Room
- Cambridge tax lists, police listings, and street listings from 1837 to the present — on microfilm in Reference Room
- various published family histories — in Local History Room
- various genealogical indexes, including the American Genealogical Foundation Index, the American Genealogical-Biography Index, and the D.A.R. Lineage records — in Local History Room

Genealogical Resources in the Boston Area

Greater Boston has rich and varied resources available to the beginning genealogist. Below is a list of places to search, with addresses, business hours, and notes to give you an idea of what information may be found in each place. Write or phone for fee schedules. Generally searchers may do their own research for free. Good hunting!

Cambridge City Clerk
795 Massachusetts Ave.
Cambridge, MA 02139

Phone: (617) 349-4260
Hours: 8:30 am- 5 pm, Mon - Fri

The City Clerk will perform searches of the city's records of Cambridge births, deaths, and marriages dating back to 1635. Write or phone for fee schedules. Searchers may do their own research free during office hours.

Useful Genealogy Guides

The books and videotapes listed below will be valuable to you as you organize your family history, record the results of your searches, and extend your research beyond the Cambridge area.

ANCESTRY'S RED BOOK: AMERICAN STATE, COUNTY & TOWN SOURCES, by Alice Eichhol., 1992. R929.1 An21

—a comprehensive guide that will shorten your search time tremendously.

BLACK GENEALOGY, by Charles Blockson. 1991.

Central Square Branch
[BLKST] 929.1 B62b

FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION: HOW TO TRACE YOUR JEWISH GENEALOGY AND FAMILY HISTORY, by Arthur Kurzweil, 1994. 929.1 K967f

—a unique and inspirational guide.

THE GENEALOGIST'S COMPANION & SOURCEBOOK, by Emily Anne Croom, 1994. 929.1 C882g

THE GENEALOGIST'S VIDEO RESEARCH GUIDE, pts 1-3
VHS 929.1 Gen 1-3 (videotape)

GOING TO SALT LAKE CITY TO DO FAMILY HISTORY RESEARCH, 2nd ed., by J. Carlyle Parker, 1993. 026 P226g
—also describes the local Family History Centers maintained by the Mormon church.

MASSACHUSETTS GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH, by George K. Schweitzer, 1990. Copley Square
WE BR F63.S39 1990

RESEARCHER'S GUIDE TO AMERICAN GENEALOGY, 2nd ed., by Val D. Greenwood, 1990. R929.1 G859r

New England Historic Genealogical Society
99-101 Newbury St.
Boston, MA 02116

Phone: (617) 536-5740
Hours: 9 am- 5 pm, Tues, Fri, Sat
9 am - 9 pm, Wed, Thurs

The New England Historic Genealogical Society contains copies of Massachusetts vital records up to 1895, and a large collection of local and family histories of the United States, Canada, Great Britain and Ireland.

Note: NEHGS is a member organization. Non-members are admitted to use the society's collection for a daily fee of \$10.00. On Wednesdays and Thursdays from 5 pm - 9 pm, an evening pass may be purchased for \$5.00.

Family History Center — Cambridge
2 Longfellow Park (off Brattle St.)
Cambridge, MA 02138

Phone: none
Hours: 6 pm - 8 pm, Wed
10 am - 12 m, Thurs
9 am - 1 pm, 2nd & 4th Sat of month

Family History Center — Weston
150 Brown St., Rte 30
Weston, MA 02193

Phone: (617) 235-2164
Hours: 7 pm - 9 pm, Tues
9 am - 3 pm, Fri and 1st, 3rd & 4th Sat
9 am - noon 2nd Sat

The Family History Centers give access to the massive genealogical databases of the Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah. The extensive national and international records collected by the church are not limited to Mormons, and are of great value to all genealogists. Instruction in searching the records is given at the local Family History Centers.

Registry of Vital Records and Statistics (Massachusetts)
Research Office
470 Atlantic Ave.
Boston, MA 02210-2224

Phone: (617) 753-8600
Hours: 9 am - noon, 2 pm - 4:30 pm, Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri (closed Weds)

The state Registry contains records of births, deaths, marriages, and divorces in Massachusetts since 1901.

Massachusetts Archives at Columbia Point
220 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125

Phone: (617) 727-2816
Hours: 9 am - 5 pm, Mon - Fri
9 am - 3 pm, Sat

The state Archives contain vital statistics before 1901, early census records, early tax records, Port of Boston passenger lists, and some early land, military, and court records.

National Archives — New England Region
380 Trapelo Rd.
Waltham, MA 02154

Phone: (617) 647-8100
Hours: 8 am - 4:30 pm, Mon - Fri
8 am - 4:30 pm, 1st Sat of month (call ahead to verify)

The National Archives contain United States census records, naturalization records, passenger arrival lists (New England ports only), some Revolutionary War military and pension records, and access by microfilm to the holdings of the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

Note: The National Archives do not contain any vital records.

Middlesex County Probate Court
Middlesex County Courthouse
208 Cambridge St., 2nd & 3rd flrs
Cambridge, MA 02141

Phone: (617) 494-4545
Hours: 8 am - 4 pm, Mon - Fri

Suffolk County Probate Court
Old Suffolk County Courthouse, Rm 120
3 Center Plaza
Boston, MA 02108

Phone: (617) 725-8300
Hours: 8:30 am - 4:30 pm, Mon - Fri

The courts maintain records of all wills probated in Middlesex and Suffolk Counties. Searchers must do their own research; the courts do not answer phone or mail inquiries.

Middlesex County Registry of Deeds
Middlesex County Courthouse
208 Cambridge St.
Cambridge, MA 02141

Phone: (617) 494-4500
Hours: 8 am - 4 pm, Mon - Fri

Suffolk County Registry of Deeds
Old Suffolk County Courthouse, 5th flr
3 Center Plaza
Boston, MA 02108

Phone: (617) 725-8575
Hours: 8 am - 4:45 pm, Mon - Fri

The registries of deeds maintain all land ownership records for Middlesex and Suffolk Counties. Searchers must do their own research; the registries do not answer phone or mail inquiries.

Boston Public Library
Copley Square
666 Boylston St.
Boston, MA 02117

Phone: (617) 536-5400
Hours: 9 am - 9 pm, Mon - Thurs
9 am - 5 pm, Fri & Sat

The Social Science Department contains published family histories. The Microtext Department contains on microfilm or microfiche: federal census records for New England, ship passenger lists for New England ports, court and probate records for Middlesex, Suffolk, and Hampshire counties, many Massachusetts town records, city directories from over 200 cities and towns in the U.S. including Cambridge, and the largest collection of microfilmed newspapers in the state.

State Library of Massachusetts
341 State House
Beacon St.
Boston, MA 02133

Phone: (617) 727-2590
Hours: 9 am - 5 pm, Mon - Fri

The State Library contains extensive newspaper collections and indexes, town and county histories, and city directories back to 1787. For more information on the holdings of the State Library, refer to "A Guide to Massachusetts Genealogical Material in the State Library of Massachusetts," in the Cambridge Public Library's ebony file under "Genealogy."

Policy and Procedure for Use of the Local History Resources at the Cambridge Public Library

The Cambridge Public Library has a collection of Cambridge historical materials and a modest collection of resources relating to the history of Massachusetts and New England, including town and family histories. These materials constitute special collections and are housed separately. The majority of these items, however, are catalogued and searchable through the Main Library card catalog.

In general, patrons should expect to do their own research, however, library staff are happy to assist in locating materials, getting patrons started, and answering questions. Patrons who wish to have librarians perform substantive research on their behalf will be charged a fee of \$25 per hour plus \$.15 per page for photocopying.

Patrons are asked to handle all historical materials with care. Many books are very fragile and require special handling. Photocopying will only be by permission of the librarian on duty. Patrons are reminded that they bear the responsibility for damage done to materials while in their possession.

Materials from the New England History Room do not circulate.

New England History Room

Historical materials concerning Massachusetts and New England are located in the New England History Room. This room is open to the public Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Patrons wishing to consult this collection must first register at the reference desk, and leave identification with the librarian on duty. A record will be kept of the date and the name and address of each person using the collection.

After 5:00 p.m. and on weekends, the New England History Room is closed. This is due to lack of staff and is required both for the protection of the collection and for the safety of the public. When the New England History Room is closed, the Reference staff will retrieve specific titles for use in the Reference Room. Patrons must fill out a request card for each title they wish retrieved. Staff may need to limit the number of requests during very busy periods.

Cambridge History Room

The Cambridge History Room houses most of the materials concerning the history of Cambridge, although some duplicate materials are also available in the Reference Room, and a few are available for circulation in the general collection. The Cambridge History Room is not open to the public, but library staff will be happy to assist in locating appropriate materials and retrieving them.

All Cambridge History Room materials must be used in the Reference Room. As with the New England History Room collection, patrons are asked to register at the reference desk, and to fill out a request form for each title they wish retrieved.

Genealogical Resources

Many patrons use the local history resources at the Cambridge Public Library to do genealogical research. In order to assist these patrons, the library staff has produced a brochure, *Tracing your Roots: Genealogical Resources in the Cambridge Area* which is available in the Reference Room. The brochure describes materials available at the Library, as well as more comprehensive collections in the Greater Boston area. The address, phone, and hours of operation are given for each location as well as a description of the resources and services provided.

Conclusion

The Reference staff is eager to share resources and to help with your historical research. Please do not hesitate to ask us for assistance!



OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

(617) 349-4260

FAX (617) 349-4307

tty/TDD (617) 492-0235

D. MARGARET DRURY
CITY CLERK

DONNA P. LOPEZ
DEPUTY CITY CLERK

TO: Robert W. Healy, City Manager

FROM: ^{DMD}
D. Margaret Drury, City Clerk

DATE: November 3, 1998

RE: City Council Order No. 24 of June 22, 1998

The records which genealogy researchers request from the City Clerk's Office are bound indices and records of births, deaths and marriages. The books are kept in the City Clerk Office vault, so all the books must be retrieved and then re-shelved by the Clerk's Office staff. The staff does not have time to do genealogy research for customers. Just getting the books for the customers so that they can do their own research and then re-shelving them can be very time-consuming, and can lead to longer waiting times for residents seeking copies of birth certificates, death certificates, etc., especially during the busy lunch hours.

The records kept in the Clerk's Office date back to the 1600s and many are quite fragile. While most members of the public attempt to treat the record books with care and respect, allowing the public to do their own research in these books hastens their destruction. Refurbishing deteriorating record books is an ongoing project and expense of the Clerk's Office.

The City Clerk's Office has original certificates for all of the Cambridge records from 1888 on, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts maintains a complete set of vital records from the year 1888 through the present. However, there is no duplicate for Cambridge original records for the years of 1635 through 1888. Hence, the Clerk's Office no longer allows public access to the original record books for these years. The Cambridge Public Library has a book which is a compilation of these early records produced by the Commonwealth. The Clerk's Office is working with the library to make another copy of that book to keep on

file at the City Clerk's Office. In the meantime, the Clerk's Office directs customers seeking that information to the Cambridge Public Library.

Some town and city clerk offices in the Commonwealth have developed procedures and/or fees which limit genealogical research. The Boston Registrar's Office only accepts mail-in requests and only for records after 1870. The Boston office staff does the research and charges \$10 per hour or any fraction thereof for this research. The Gloucester City Clerk's Office "discourages" genealogical research and refers customers to the library, the state archives and to professional genealogy researchers. The Fall River City Clerk's Office does not fill requests for genealogy information during lunch hour, charges the hourly rate of the staff person assisting the customer and does not allow members of the public to handle the books.

The goal of the Cambridge City Clerk's Office is to provide service to people who are engaged in genealogy research without sacrificing service to citizens who need copies of birth certificates, business certificates, etc., and often try to accomplish these tasks during their lunch hours (when the City Clerk's Office staff also need to schedule lunch hours). To achieve this balance, the staff would like to experiment with limiting the hours for genealogical assistance so that assistance is available from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

With regard to Ms. Flannery's suggestion that there be a publication available in all locations that lists what records are located in which city departments and offices, their addresses and hours and any charges, the City Clerk's Office would be happy to cooperate with the Library to provide such information.



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE
CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

TEL. 349-4300
FAX. 349-4307



17.

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
ROBERT W. HEALY
City Manager

RICHARD C. ROSSI
Deputy City Manager

November 9, 1998

To The Honorable, The City Council:

Please find attached responses to Awaiting Report Item No. 4, regarding a report on the present policy on genealogy research and how it can be made more efficient, received from Library Director Susan Flannery and City Clerk D. Margaret Drury.

As a note, the pamphlet attached to this response entitled *Tracing your Roots* is currently being updated by the Library and will be forwarded to the Council directly by Susan Flannery when completed.

Very truly yours,

Robert W. Healy
City Manager

RWH/mec
Attachments

Consent Agenda #17

7175

Relative to AW #4, regarding
a report on the presnt policy
on genealogy research and how
it can be made more efficient.

In City Council November 9, 1998

Placed on File