
 Department of Records

SEARCH



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RECORDS : Archives

Philadelphia City Archives

3101 Market Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104

Effective September 27, 2010

Hours of Operation

Hours: 8:30 AM-5:00 PM, Monday, Wednesday, Friday, with the exception of
holidays. [Holiday list](#).

Tuesday and Thursday - Closed

Telephone: 215-685-9401

The City Archives

The City Archives is the official historical memory of the City of Philadelphia. Within its 20,000 cubic feet of holdings may be found records that appeal to a very wide spectrum of interests.

You may access portions of the Archives online through [PHILS](#).

Use of The Archives

As the official archives of the City and County of Philadelphia the City Archives is used by City officials to determine laws and precedent-making decisions of the past which may have an impact on the City Government's actions and decisions of the present. The Archives makes available to its solicitors and other City officials, as well as to the public at large, records such as ordinances and other City Council records, City Solicitor's opinions, rules and regulations, Mayor's files, Charters, Minutes of Boards and Commissions, Historical Court Records; financial records of the Finance Department, City Controller and Sinking Fund Commission; property records, and files of the Home Rule Charter Commission. For anyone trying to determine when a drive was opened in Fairmount Park, whether a City regulation was ever put into force, or the intent of the framers of the Home Rule Charter, the City Archives should be their destination. Deeds and mortgages are also used extensively by searchers for the City's title insurance companies.

Types of Records Available

The City Archives is also a magnet for genealogical researchers. In fact, the most frequent users of the City Archives are patrons who are interested in their family history or who are professional genealogists doing research for others. The City Archives holds the earliest and longest continuous run of birth and death records of any political subdivision in the Commonwealth. Registrations of birth and death records begin on July 1, 1860 and continue to June 30, 1915. However, there are also a cubic foot of late registrations filed under an 1867 supplement to the vital statistics act which include births dating back to 1829; and an earlier form of death record known as a cemetery return which date from 1806 to June 30, 1860. The City Archives holds marriage records from July 1, 1860 to December 31, 1885 for which we issue certificates and copies of marriages from the Orphans Court Division that date from 1886 to 1915. It also holds naturalizations of the City and County Courts for the periods 1794-1904 and 1914-1930. Other records which would be of interest to genealogical researchers include Police roster and roll books for the period 1854-1925, deeds of Philadelphia County, 1683-1952; mortgages of Philadelphia County, 1736-1963; city directories, ; 1785-1930, 1935-1936; Department of Personnel, roster cards; and records of Blockley Almshouse and the County prisons.

A Valuable Resource for Research

Since its establishment by the Home Rule Charter in 1952 the City Archives has been a resource for graduate and undergraduate students, persons preparing doctoral dissertations and scholarly publications. Its holdings have been of especial interest to social historians. For persons doing research on the City's under classes records of the Alms House and its successor, Philadelphia General Hospital, 1751-late 1940s; of the County Prisons 1790-1948, and of the City and County criminal courts, 1750's to 1874, are especially fertile fields for research. Records of county taxes, 1773-1851, may be used for determining the economic and class structure of the City and its surrounding districts, townships and boroughs. Tax records and land records are valuable sources for research on capital accumulation. Records of the City surveyors, road records of the Court of Quarter Sessions, and records of the City Council's Watering Committee and of the City's Water Department are invaluable for tracing the development of the City's infrastructure. Minutes and files of the its Board of Health and Health Department record efforts to control disease in an urban setting. The records of the City Planning Commission and of the Department of Licenses and Inspections, its efforts to control urban blight while the Records of the Department of Public Welfare (now Human Services) show the City's efforts to deal with the human consequences of urban blight.

Other Available Resources

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Phila.gov | [City Archives - PHILS](#) | Technical problems: webissues@phila.gov | [privacy policy](#)

Directions to the Philadelphia City Archives



Important Telephone Numbers

General Information	215-685-9400
City Archives	215-685-9401

Directions from Western Pennsylvania

Take the Pennsylvania Turnpike to I-76/Valley Forge/Philadelphia (exit 326). Follow I-76 (Schuylkill Expressway) east to University City/30th Street Station (exit 345). Stay in the right lane and watch for signs indicating 30th Street; (exit 345).

At top of exit ramp, turn right onto Arch St. and follow the curve to left. Turn right at the second traffic light (30th and Market Streets) and travel one block to 3101 Market Street

Directions from the East and Northeast

Take the New Jersey Turnpike South to Exit 4 (NJ-73). Take NJ-73 North to Betsy Ross Bridge/NJ-90, which is a left-hand exit. Cross the Betsy Ross Bridge and follow signs for I-95 South. Follow I-95 South to I-676 West. Follow I-676 West to the I-76 East exit (Philadelphia Int'l Airport). Follow I-76 (Schuylkill Expressway) east to University City/30th Street Station (exit 345).

At top of exit ramp, turn right onto Arch St. and follow the curve to left. Turn right at the second traffic light (30th and Market Streets) and travel one block to 3101 Market Street

Directions from the South

Take I-95 North, past Chester and Airport exits and take the exit to Center City/I-76 Schuylkill Expressway (Exit 13). Turn left onto S 26th Street. Take the ramp onto I-76 W. Follow I-76 west to South Street (Exit 346A); stay in the left lane for this exit. After exiting, turn left onto South Street. Stay in the right lane and turn right onto 33rd Street. Turn right at the third traffic light (33rd and Market Streets) and travel two blocks to 3101 Market Street.

Directions from the Philadelphia International Airport

Take the SEPTA Airport Line (Formerly R-1) train to 30th Street Station, then follow the directions below for train travelers. If driving, take I-95 North and follow directions for drivers coming from the south.

Directions from Amtrak and SEPTA trains

From 30th Street Station, walk along Market Street one block to 3101 Market Street. If taking the Market-Frankford Subway (Blue) or Subway-Surface (Green) line, on the Mezzanine Level follow the signs towards the 31st Street Exit.

Parking

There are two surface lots, one operated by the Philadelphia Parking Authority at 3101 Market Street, and a second lot, operated by Park America, directly across Market Street. Both lots charge a flat rate of \$12.00 per business day (from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.). Metered parking kiosks, are located along the south end of Market Street and will accept quarters, dollar bills, and credit cards. Beaware of signs that detail parking and meter regulations.

Public Transportation

SEPTA, the regional mass transit agency, operates busses, trolleys, subways and trains with stops at 30th Street Station and provides links with SEPTA's regional rail lines including the Airport Shuttle. For more information, contact SEPTA at (215) 580-7800; www.septa.org or Amtrak at (800) 872-7245; www.amtrak.com.

Area Hotels

Three hotels are within walking distance of the Philadelphia Dept of Archives

- Sheraton University City, 36th and Chestnut Streets, (215) 387-8000
- Penn Tower Hotel, 399 South 34th St, (215) 387-8333
- The Inn at Penn (The Hilton), 36th and Sansom Street, (215) 222-0200