

City Archives

What is the City Archives?

The City Archives is a collection of documents created by city employees; some have been published, most have not. It is located at the Central Milwaukee Public Library. Its holdings span more than 150 years of City of Milwaukee history.

There is a variety of material, including departmental annual reports, consultant reports, audio-cassette recordings of board and committee meetings, video cassettes, correspondence files, plat maps, tax records, department journals and ledgers.

Among the City Departments and agencies represented are:

Annuity & Pension Board, Building Inspector, Office of Cable Regulation, City Assessor, City Attorney, City Clerk, City Plan Commission, City Pound, City Service Commission, City Treasurer, Common Council, Comptroller, Department of Building Inspection, Department of City Development, Department of Public Works, Election Commission, Fire Department, Harbor Commission, Health Department, Housing Authority, Justice of the Peace, Mayor's Office, Office of Intergovernmental Fiscal Liaison, Police & Fire Commission, Public Debt Commission, Public Land Commission, and Public School Teacher's Annuity & Retirement Fund.

Also within the Archives are records from the City of Milwaukee's annexations of the Villages of Bay View and North Milwaukee and the Towns of Lake, Granville, and Wauwatosa. Though they document Milwaukee's growth during the period 1840-1994, the holdings are incomplete.

How is it arranged?

Each department or agency's materials are grouped together in a series. Each series has a description called a finding aid, which contains a brief historical abstract of that department and lists all subsequent series. Each individual series has a description of its contents.

Where is it located?

The City Archives is a division of the Humanities Department of the Milwaukee Public Library. Material is requested through the staff of the Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room of the Central Library, 814 W. Wisconsin Avenue and must be used in the archival reading area. The phone number of the desk is 414 286-3061.

WHO may use it?

The collection is open to the general public. Rules for use of City Archives materials follow standard archival practice. Material may not be removed from the archival reading area in the Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room. Although some materials may be duplicated, only staff may do the copying.