

Watertown Free Public Library

123 Main Street

Watertown, Massachusetts 02472

Local History Collection

**Town of Watertown Police
Department logbooks, 1908-1930
(inclusive)**

TW102

Summary

Collection name: Town of Watertown Police Department logbooks, 1908-1930 (inclusive)

Collection number: TW102

Repository: Watertown Free Public Library (Watertown, Massachusetts)

Creator: Town of Watertown Police Department

Extent: 0.5 cubic feet (2 clamshell boxes)

Language: English

Provenance: The immediate source of this collection is unknown.

Processing information: Logbooks were previously designated by the call numbers HIST 363.24 WAT 1918, HIST 363.24 WAT 1908-1909, and HIST 363.24 WAT 1922-1923. Finding Aid created by Caroline Littlewood in 2020.

Conditions governing access: Collection is open for use in the Local History Room, Watertown Free Public Library.

Preferred citation: Town of Watertown Police Department logbooks, TW102, Watertown Free Public Library Local History Collection, Watertown, Mass.

Historical Note

Town police officers, organized under the Town of Watertown Police Department, are charged with the protection of citizens, prevention of crime, enforcement of by-laws and regulations, direction of traffic, and general maintenance of law and order. The Town of Watertown appointed its first professional police officer in 1864. For the next few decades, the Department consisted of only two regular officers and a handful of paid and unpaid special police. The first Police Chief was appointed in 1893 to oversee a force of five regular officers. By 1900, the size of the Department had doubled. By 1920, it consisted of eighteen patrolmen, one sergeant, and two lieutenants, all serving under the Chief of Police.

Watertown police work changed considerably around 1900, when the town installed a police signal system. In between responding to police signals, patrol officers monitored

their districts for suspicious activity and threats to property. In addition to regular tasks, like directing traffic, checking for unlocked doors, and recovering lost property, police also occasionally participated in liquor raids and took town censuses.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of four logbooks maintained by police officers of varying ranks. Logbooks document daily police activities and incidents in Watertown. Logs include descriptions of incidents (e.g. missing person reported, traffic light broken), names of persons involved (suspects, victims), locations, and dispositions. There is one 1908-1909 book which is missing a title page; the first remaining page of this book is labeled "10.477 Stephen J. Quinn 59 Elmwood St. Newton / 20 H. Stanley" and "Harry Marie 302 Washington St. Brighton." The collection also contains logbooks for January 1918 to July 1918, December 1922 to May 1923, and August 1929 to January 1930.

Officers mentioned in one or more logbooks:

- [Vernon S.] Brown
- [James P.] Burke
- [John J.] Clifford
- Durgan
- [John F.] Dwyer app. 1890
- [John F.] Gleason app. 1906
- [William A.] Howard
- [John F/E.] McNamara
- [John F.] Milmore
- [Jeremiah D.] Regan
- [Dennis J.] Sullivan

Inventory

| Box | Dates | Legacy call number (internal use only) |
|-----|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | 29 Jun. 1908 - 17 Mar. 1909 | HIST 363.24 WAT 1908-1909 |
| 2 | 11 Jan. 1918 - 24 Jul. 1918 | HIST 363.24 WAT 1918 |
| 2 | 12 Dec. 1922 - 26 May 1923 | HIST 363.24 WAT 1922-1923 |
| 2 | 23 Aug. 1929 - 19 Jan. 1930 | None |

Related Materials

An index of entries in the 1908-1909 logbook is available upon request.

Access Points

Subjects:

City and town life

Crime

Drunkenness (Crime)

Juvenile delinquency

Officials and employees

Police—records and correspondence

Traffic accidents