

**PROVIDENCE PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Special Collections**  
**015-03-01**  
**Providence Public Library photograph collection**  
**1878-2000**

**OVERVIEW OF THE COLLECTION**

Number: 015-03-01

Title: Providence Public Library photograph collection

Creator: Providence Public Library

Dates: 1878-2000

Quantity: 10 boxes and 1 oversized folder (total 6.6 linear feet)

**ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION**

Acquisition: Materials are institutional records of the Providence Public Library and were produced and collected as such.

Accruals: Accruals are expected.

Custodial history: Materials were created by Providence Public Library.

Processed by: The collection was processed by Tom O'Donnell, Taylor McNeilly, Meghan Sullivan-Silva and Kate Wells in 2013-2014.

Conservation: Not applicable

Language: Materials are in English

**RIGHTS AND ACCESS**

Access: This collection is open under the rules and regulations of the Providence Public Library, Special Collections department.

Preferred Citation: Researchers are requested to use the following citation format:  
*[item title], Providence Public Library photograph collection, Special Collections, Providence Public Library*

Property Rights: Copyright has been assigned to Providence Public Library.

**INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS**

Separated material Not applicable.

Published descriptions	Not applicable.
Location of originals	Not applicable.
Location of copies	Not applicable.
Publication note	Not applicable.
Subject headings	Providence Public Library (R.I.) Providence (R.I.)—Buildings Photographs. aat Negatives (photographic). aat Clippings (information artifacts). aat.

**SEE ALSO**

Not applicable.

**HISTORICAL NOTE**

Chartered by the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in 1875, the Providence Public Library (PPL) is a privately governed and support library with a public library mission. The PPL opened in 1878 on the second floor of the Butler Exchange building in Exchange Place. In 1880, it moved to a larger, street level location on Snow Street below the Mowry and Goff School. The Library quickly required more space and in 1896 ground was broken for the Renaissance building at 225 Washington Street. The building was made possible by a large gift from John Nicholas Brown.

The branch library system was begun in 1928 with the construction of the first branch library in Wanskuck. Over the next three decades additional branches were created including Rochambeau, Smith Hill, South Providence, Mount Pleasant, Olneyville, Tockwotton, Washington Park and a Business Branch downtown. In 1954 an addition to the central library on Washington Street was added enlarging the building to take over the entire block between Empire and Greene Streets. In 2009, the City of Providence assumed responsibility for the branch libraries and formed the Providence Community Libraries.

Since 1877, the PPL has had only seven library directors including William E. Foster (served 1877-1930), Clarence E. Sherman (served 1930-1957), Stuart C. Sherman (served 1957-1967), F. Charles Taylor (served 1968-1978), Annalee Bundy (served 1978-1988), Dale Thompson (served 1988-2014) and H. Jack Martin (served 2014 to present).

**SCOPE AND CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTION**

The collection contains photographs of the Providence Public Library and includes images of the buildings, staff and programs. The bulk of the collection includes images of the building and staff of

the Washington Street / Empire Street library (aka Central Branch). Also included are images of various branches, architectural drawings, negative and clippings.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE COLLECTION**

The collection is organized into five series: Central Branch, Branch Libraries, Miscellaneous images, Photograph Albums and Oversized prints. Series 1 related to the Central Branch is further subdivided into sub-series including Exterior architectural images, Interior architectural images and Programs & staff. Items are organized chronologically at the folder level.

## **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

### **Series 1 – Providence Public Library, Central branch**

Includes photographs and clippings of the main building of the Providence Public Library. Prior to the construction of the current building on Washington Street, the PPL was housed for several years in the Butler Exchange building in Exchange Place and then later on Snow Street. In 1898, construction was completed for the main building on 225 Washington Street. In 1953, an addition to the building extended the library on to Empire Street, thereby taking over the whole corner of the intersection.

#### **Subseries 1.1 Exterior**

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>
PPL Exterior, Butler Exchange & Snow St.	1	1
PPL Exterior, 1900-1919	1	2
PPL Exterior, 1920-1939	1	3
PPL Exterior, 1940-1951	1	4
PPL Addition Construction: architectural renderings & proposals	1	5
PPL Exterior Addition Construction	1	6
PPL Exterior, 1953-1959	1	7
PPL Exterior, 1960-1969	1	8
PPL Exterior, 1970-	1	9
Exterior, undated	1	10

#### **Subseries 1.2 Interior**

Interior, Butler Exchange & Snow St.	2	11
Interior, 1900-1919	2	12
Interior, 1900-1919	2	13
Interior, 1900-1919	2	14
Interior, 1900-1919	2	15
Interior, 1920-1939	2	16
Dubuque Mural Children's Room, circa 1935	2	17
Interior, 1940-1951	3	18
Interior, 1952-1959	3	19
Interior, 1960-1969	3	20

Interior, 1960-1969	3	21
Interior, 1970-1979	3	22
Interior renovations, 1986-1988	3	23
Interior, 1990-present	3	24
Interior, undated	3	25

**Subseries 1.3 Programs and Staff**

Directors – William E. Foster	4	26	
Directors – Clarence Sherman	4	27	
Directors – Stuart Sherman	4	28	
Directors – F. Charles Taylor	4	29	
Directors – Annalee Bundy	4	30	
Directors – Dale Thompson	4	31	
Special Collections Department	4	32	
Bookmobiles	4	33	
Delivery vehicles	4	34	
Programs and staff, 1900-1929			4 35
Programs and staff, 1930-1939	4	36	
Programs and staff, 1940-1949	4	37	
Programs and staff, 1940-1949	4	38	
Programs and staff, 1950-1959	5	39	
Programs and staff, 1950-1959	5	40	
Programs and staff, 1960-1969	5	41	
Programs and staff, 1970-1979	5	42	
Programs and staff, 1970-1979	5	43	
Programs and staff, 1970-1979	5	44	
Programs and staff, 1980-1989	5	45	
Programs and staff, 1980-1989	6	46	
Programs and staff, 1990-1999	6	47	
Programs and staff, 1990-1999	6	48	
Programs and staff, 1990-1999	6	49	
Programs and staff, 1990-1999	6	50	
Programs and staff, 1990-1999	6	51	
Programs and staff, 2000-	6	52	

**Series 2: Providence Public Library, Branch Libraries**

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>
Business branch	7	53
*old Market Square, 162 Westminster St., 27 Dorrance St., 95 Fountain St		
Fox Point branch	7	54
*Brook Street, Tockwotton branch at 121 Hope Street, Wickenden Street		
Knight Memorial	7	55
Olneyville Free Public Library (never a PPL branch)	7	56

Smith Hill	7	57
*North End branch, 35 Orms St. & 31 Candace Street		
South Providence branch	8	58
*Burnside Street & 441 Prarie Avenue		
Wanskuck branch	8	59
Washington Park branch	8	60
School Sub-branches	8	61
*Esek Hopkins School, John Howland School, Manton Avenue Grammar School, Nathan Bishop Junior High, Nathaniel Greene Junior High, Oliver Hazard Perry Junior High, Sackett Street School		

### **Series 3: Miscellaneous**

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box #</u>	<u>Folder #</u>
Clippings and Ephemera, Central	9	62
Clippings and Ephemera, Branches	9	63
Unidentified images	9	64
Negatives, Central	9	65
Negatives, Central	9	66
Negatives, Central	9	67
Negatives, Branches	9	68

### **Series 4: Photograph Album**

Photograph album by A.L. Bodwell, 1900	10
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### **Series 5: Oversized**

Includes eleven large format prints, one architectural drawing, two pen & ink illustrations and various publicity materials.	map drawer 6
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