



The New York Public Library  
New York Public Library Archives

Guide to the

**Secretary records**

1895-1928

MssArc 4883

Compiled by Robert Sink and Jim Moske; machine-readable finding aid created by Jim Moske.

## Summary

**Creator:** New York Public Library. Board of Trustees. Secretary

**Title:** Secretary records

**Date:** 1895-1928

**Abstract:** Records of the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of The New York Public Library. The Secretary is a member and officer of the Board and is responsible for the keeping of the records of The New York Public Library Corporation and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees and all its committees. Those who held the position of Secretary for the period of the records here described are: George L. Rives (1895-1902), Charles H. Russell (1902-1921), William Sloane (1921-1922), and Frank L. Polk (1923-1932).

**Access:** Advance notice required.

**Physical Location:** RG 5

### Conditions Governing Access:

Board of Trustees records are closed for 50 years from time of creation.

**Conditions Governing Use:** All rights reserved. Permission to quote must be obtained in writing from the New York Public Library

**Preferred citation:** Board of Trustees Secretary Records, The New York Public Library Archives, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Compiled by Robert Sink and Jim Moske; machine-readable finding aid created by Jim Moske.

**Related Materials:**

## Creator History

The Board of Trustees, the governing body of the Library, was established in 1895 by an agreement that consolidated the Astor and Lenox Libraries and the Tilden Foundation into The New York Public Library. Initially there were twenty-one trustees, with seven being appointed by each of the three institutions that had been merged to form The Library. The trustees had no set terms of office; they served on the Board until they resigned, died, or were removed by a vote of the other trustees. New trustees were elected by the current members of the Board. Following the consolidation of the New York Public Library and The New York Free Circulating Library in 1901, the number of trustees was expanded to twenty-five. This included three New York City officials as ex-officio members: the Mayor, the Comptroller, and the President of the Board of Alderman.

When the Astor and Lenox Libraries consolidated with the Tilden Trust, one of the officers of the new Board of Trustees was the Secretary. The Secretary of the Board of Trustees is a member and officer of the Board and is responsible for the keeping of the records of The New York Public Library Corporation and the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Trustees and all its committees. Those who held the position of Secretary for the period of the records here described are: George L. Rives (1895-1902), Charles H. Russell (1902-1921), William Sloane (1921-1922), and Frank L. Polk (1923-1932).

## Scope and Content Note

The Board of Trustees Secretary Records are arranged in three series: I. Letterbooks; II. Letters Received; III. Subject Files.

The Letterbooks consist of six volumes containing copies of outgoing correspondence from the years 1895 to 1919, and one volume of letters and resolutions from 1920-27. Volumes 1-6 have indexes. Outgoing correspondence in the letterbooks is typically signed by the Secretary or the Clerk of the Board of Trustees. Letters Received are arranged alphabetically by correspondent. Many of the letters are from John Shaw Billings, Director of the New York Public Library, or from the architectural firm of Carrère & Hastings regarding the Central Building. Subject Files consist of alphabetical files kept by the Secretary. Primary topics include members of the Board of Trustees, relations with the City of New York, and operations of the Circulation and Reference Departments of the Library.

**Arrangement:** The Secretary Records are arranged in three series: I. Letterbooks, 1895-1927; II. Letters Received, 1895-1905; III. Subject Files, 1906-1928.

## Key Terms

### Subjects

Libraries -- New York (State) -- New York  
Library architecture  
Library buildings  
Public library trustees -- New York (State) -- New York  
Research libraries -- New York (State) -- New York

**Names**

New York Public Library. Board of Trustees. Secretary

Billings, John S. (John Shaw), 1838-1913

Polk, Frank L. (Frank Lyon), 1871-1943

Rives, George Lockhart, 1849-1917

Russell, Charles Howland, 1851-1921

Sloane, William

Carrère & Hastings

New York Public Library. Central Building

## Container List

### Series I. Letterbooks 1895-1927 (7 volumes)

Letterbooks consist of six volumes containing copies of outgoing correspondence from the years 1895 to 1919, and one volume of letters and resolutions from 1920-27. Volumes 1-6 have indexes. Outgoing correspondence in the letterbooks is typically signed by the Secretary or the Clerk of the Board of Trustees.

- v. 1 Outgoing letters 1895-1898
- v. 2 Outgoing letters 1898-1901
- v. 3 Outgoing letters 1902-1904
- v. 4 Outgoing letters 1904-1909
- v. 5 Outgoing letters 1909-1914
- v. 6 Outgoing letters 1914-1919
- v. 7 Outgoing letters and resolutions 1920-1927

### Series II. Letters Received 1895-1908 (4 boxes)

Letters Received are arranged in four subseries: 1895-1897, 1898-1900, 1901-1903, 1904-1908. Within each subseries letters are filed alphabetically by correspondent. Many of the letters are from John Shaw Billings, Director of the New York Public Library, or from the architectural firm of Carrère & Hastings regarding the Central Building.

#### 1895-1897

- b. 1 f. 1 A
- b. 1 f. 2 American Bible Society
- b. 1 f. 3 Avery, S.P.
- b. 1 f. 4 B
- b. 1 f. 5 Bigelow, John
- b. 1 f. 6 Billings, Dr. John Shaw
- b. 1 f. 7 Butler, William Allen
- b. 1 f. 8 C
- b. 1 f. 9 Cadwalader, John
- b. 1 f. 10 Carrère & Hastings
- b. 1 f. 11 Cox, Kenyon (NYPL seal)
- b. 1 f. 12 Cruger, S.V.R.
- b. 1 f. 13 D-E
- b. 1 f. 14 Eames, Wilberforce
- b. 1 f. 15 F
- b. 1 f. 16 Finance Committee
- b. 1 f. 17 G
- b. 1 f. 18 Green, Bernard R.
- b. 1 f. 19 H-K
- b. 1 f. 20 Kennedy, John S.
- b. 1 f. 21 L
- b. 1 f. 22 Ledyard, Lewis Cass
- b. 1 f. 23 Little, Robins (Astor Library)
- b. 1 f. 24 Lockwood, L. Ferris (Lenox Library)

Series II. Letters Received (cont.)  
1895-1897 (cont.)

- b. 1 f. 25 M
- b. 1 f. 26 McKim, Mead & White
- b. 1 f. 27 Maitland, Alexander
- b. 1 f. 28 Mansfeld, R. (Bancroft)
- b. 1 f. 29 N-S
- b. 1 f. 30 Schiff, Jacob
- b. 1 f. 31 Schuyler, Philip
- b. 1 f. 32 Scribner, Charles (New York Free Circulating Library)
- b. 1 f. 33 Scudder, Janet (NYPL seal)
- b. 1 f. 34 T-U
- b. 1 f. 35 United States Senate
- b. 1 f. 36 W
- b. 1 f. 37 Ware, William
- b. 1 f. 38 Y-Z

1898-1900

- b. 2 f. 1 A
- b. 2 f. 2 American Bible Society
- b. 2 f. 3 American Library Association (ALA)
- b. 2 f. 4 Appleton, William (Committee on Circulation)
- b. 2 f. 5 Avery, S.P.
- b. 2 f. 6 B
- b. 2 f. 7 Bigelow, John
- b. 2 f. 8 Billings, John Shaw
- b. 2 f. 9 Bostwick, Arthur
- b. 2 f. 10 Briggs, Alanson
- b. 2 f. 11 C
- b. 2 f. 12 Cadwalader, John
- b. 2 f. 13 Canfield, James H. (Columbia University)
- b. 2 f. 14 Cook, Walter (Babb, Cook & Willard)
- b. 2 f. 15 Carrère & Hastings
- b. 2 f. 16 D-E
- b. 2 f. 17 Eames, Wilberforce
- b. 2 f. 18 F
- b. 2 f. 19 Finance Committee
- b. 2 f. 20 G-H
- b. 2 f. 21 Hill, Frank P. (Brooklyn Public Library)
- b. 2 f. 22 J-K
- b. 2 f. 23 Kennedy, John S.
- b. 2 f. 24 King, Edward
- b. 2 f. 25 L
- b. 2 f. 26 Ledyard, Lewis Cass

Series II. Letters Received (cont.)  
1898-1900 (cont.)

- b. 2 f. 27 Lockwood, I. Ferris
  - b. 2 f. 28 M
  - b. 2 f. 29 McKim, Mead & White
  - b. 2 f. 30 Maitland, Alexander
  - b. 2 f. 31 N-S
  - b. 2 f. 32 Schuyler, Philip
  - b. 2 f. 33 T
  - b. 2 f. 34 W
- 1901-1903
- b. 3 f. 1 A
  - b. 3 f. 2 Aguilar Free Library
  - b. 3 f. 3 Avery, S.P.
  - b. 3 f. 4 B
  - b. 3 f. 5 Becks, George (Prompt Books)
  - b. 3 f. 6 Bigelow, John
  - b. 3 f. 7 Billings, John Shaw
  - b. 3 f. 8 C
  - b. 3 f. 9 Cadwalader, John
  - b. 3 f. 10 Carnegie, Andrew
  - b. 3 f. 11 Cook, Walter (Babb, Cook & Willard)
  - b. 3 f. 12 Carrère & Hastings
  - b. 3 f. 13 Cornerstone (Central Building)
  - b. 3 f. 14 D-E
  - b. 3 f. 15 East Side House Settlement (Webster Library)
  - b. 3 f. 16 Edson Estate (New York Free Circulating Library)
  - b. 3 f. 17 F
  - b. 3 f. 18 Farley, Archbishop John
  - b. 3 f. 19 Finance Committee
  - b. 3 f. 20 G-H
  - b. 3 f. 21 Harlem Library
  - b. 3 f. 22 Hoyt, Charles (Tilden Trust)
  - b. 3 f. 23 I
  - b. 3 f. 24 Interboro Street Railway Co. (Astor Building)
  - b. 3 f. 25 Kennedy
  - b. 3 f. 26 King, Edward
  - b. 3 f. 27 L-M
  - b. 3 f. 28 Maimonides Free Library (B'nai B'rith)
  - b. 3 f. 29 Maitland, Alexander
  - b. 3 f. 30 Mayor of New York City
  - b. 3 f. 31 N
  - b. 3 f. 32 New York Free Circulating Library for the Blind

Series II. Letters Received (cont.)  
1901-1903 (cont.)

- b. 3 f. 33 O-R
- b. 3 f. 34 Rives, George
- b. 3 f. 35 Russell, Charles H.
- b. 3 f. 36 S
- b. 3 f. 37 St. Agnes Library
- b. 3 f. 38 Schiff, Jacob
- b. 3 f. 39 School Board (New York City)
- b. 3 f. 40 Schuyler, Philip
- b. 3 f. 41 T
- b. 3 f. 42 University Settlement
- b. 3 f. 43 University of the State of New York (Free Circulating Libraries)
- b. 3 f. 44 Washington Heights Free Library

1904-1908

- b. 4 f. 1 A
- b. 4 f. 2 Anderson, Edwin H.
- b. 4 f. 3 B
- b. 4 f. 4 Briggs, Alanson
- b. 4 f. 5 C-F
- b. 4 f. 6 Finance Committee
- b. 4 f. 7 H
- b. 4 f. 8 M
- b. 4 f. 9 Opening Hours at Night (Astor Building, Branches)
- b. 4 f. 10 P
- b. 4 f. 11 Russell, Charles H.
- b. 4 f. 12 Stacks Contract (Central Building)
- b. 4 f. 13 Taxes on Library Properties
- b. 4 f. 14 University Settlement
- b. 4 f. 15 University of the State of New York (State Aid)
- b. 4 f. 16 Y

Series III. Subject Files 1906-1928 (3 boxes)

Subject Files are arranged in three subseries: Board of Trustees, Circulation Department, Reference Department. Files within each subseries are arranged alphabetically. Primary topics include individual Board members, relations with the City of New York, and operations of the Circulation and Reference Departments of The Library.

Board of Trustees

- b. 5 f. 1 Anderson, Edwin 1914-1927
- b. 5 f. 2 Billings, John Shaw 1913
- b. 5 f. 3 Books, Free Entry of 1908-1909
- b. 5 f. 4 By-Laws 1895-1907
- b. 5 f. 5 City of New York - Agent for Carnegie Sites - Alanson T. Briggs 1906-1909
- b. 5 f. 6 City of New York - Art Commission 1912-1913
- b. 5 f. 7 City of New York - Comptroller 1913

Series III. Subject Files (cont.)  
Board of Trustees (cont.)

- b. 5 f. 8 Clerk of the Board 1906-1925
- b. 5 f. 9 Columbia University - Journalism School (Newspapers) 1913
- b. 5 f. 10 Committee Appointments 1907-1925
- b. 5 f. 11 Copyright 1922-1926
- b. 5 f. 12 Finance Committee 1906-1916
- b. 5 f. 13 Legacies 1907-1918
- b. 5 f. 14 Library School 1916
- b. 5 f. 15 Medical Officer 1911-1914
- b. 5 f. 16 Meetings - Excuses 1906-1908
- b. 5 f. 17 Meetings - Excuses 1918-1928
- b. 6 f. 1 Members - Lists of
- b. 6 f. 2 Members - Alexander, John W. 1908-1916
- b. 6 f. 3 Members - Astor, Vincent 1926-1927
- b. 6 f. 4 Members - Baker, George F. 1920
- b. 6 f. 5 Members - Dodge, Cleveland 1918
- b. 6 f. 6 Members - Finley, John H. 1920
- b. 6 f. 7 Members - Halsey, Frederick R.
- b. 6 f. 8 Members - Hammond, John H. 1909-1916
- b. 6 f. 9 Members - Harkness, Edward 1919
- b. 6 f. 10 Members - Hayes, Archbishop Patrick 1919
- b. 6 f. 11 Members - James, Arthur C. 1919
- b. 6 f. 12 Members - Kane, Grenville 1922-1927
- b. 6 f. 13 Members - Kennedy, H.V.R. 1910
- b. 6 f. 14 Members - King, E. 1908
- b. 6 f. 15 Members - Milburn, John 1919
- b. 6 f. 16 Members - O'Brien, Morgan 1909-1923
- b. 6 f. 17 Members - Orr, A.E.
- b. 6 f. 18 Members - Osborn, Henry F. 1911-1919
- b. 6 f. 19 Members - Parsons, William B. 1911
- b. 6 f. 20 Members - Polk, Frank L. 1921-1927
- b. 6 f. 21 Members - Potter, Bishop 1908
- b. 6 f. 22 Members - Powell, Wilson M. 1928
- b. 6 f. 23 Members - Root, Elihu 1918-1924
- b. 6 f. 24 Members - Schuyler, Philip 1907
- b. 6 f. 25 Members - Sheldon, Edward W.
- b. 6 f. 26 Members - Sloane, William 1918-1921
- b. 6 f. 27 Members - Stokes, I.N. Phelps 1916-1918
- b. 6 f. 28 Members - Sturges, Frederick 1917
- b. 6 f. 29 Members - Taft, Henry W. 1919
- b. 6 f. 30 Members - Tod, William S. 1912-1915
- b. 6 f. 31 Members - Walters, Henry 1920



Series III. Subject Files (cont.)  
Board of Trustees (cont.)

- b. 6 f. 32 Members - Winthrop, Bronson 1921
- b. 6 f. 33 Municipal Reference Library 1912
- b. 6 f. 34 New York State - Annual Report to 1912
- b. 6 f. 35 Nominations 1911-1914
- b. 6 f. 36 President - John Bigelow 1906-1912
- b. 6 f. 37 President - John L. Cadwalader 1912-1914
- b. 6 f. 38 President - George L. Rives 1915
- b. 6 f. 39 President - Lewis Cass Ledyard 1918-1919
- b. 6 f. 40 Real Estate (Lenox Building and Harlem Library) 1908-1913
- b. 6 f. 41 Secretary, Office of 1907-1924
- b. 6 f. 42 Staff Association 1917
- b. 6 f. 43 Treasurer and Finance Committee 1906-1919
- b. 6 f. 44 Vice Presidents - John Cadwalader 1909-1911
- b. 6 f. 45 Vice Presidents - Miscellaneous
- b. 6 f. 46 Woman Trustee 1920

Circulation Department

- b. 6 f. 47 Annual Report to New York City 1908-1912
- b. 6 f. 48 Appropriations 1912-1914
- b. 6 f. 49 Branches - Carnegie - Advisory Board of Architects 1911
- b. 6 f. 50 Branches - Cathedral 1911
- b. 6 f. 51 Branches - Library for the Blind 1908
- b. 6 f. 52 Branches - St. Gabriel's Park 1908
- b. 6 f. 53 Branches - St. George 1907
- b. 6 f. 54 Budgets 1910
- b. 6 f. 55 Chief, 1909 1918
- b. 6 f. 56 Circulation Committee - Letters Sending Draft Resolutions 1905-1914
- b. 6 f. 57 Circulation Committee - Members 1908-1917
- b. 6 f. 58 Public Funds 1909
- b. 6 f. 59 Registration for Public Library Money 1905-1910

Reference Department

- b. 7 f. 1 Art Committee 1907-1912
- b. 7 f. 2 Astor Library Building 1906-1910
- b. 7 f. 3 Central Building - Exhibits 1908-1913
- b. 7 f. 4 Central Building - Generating Plant 1909
- b. 7 f. 5 Central Building - Memorial Tablets 1909-1912
- b. 7 f. 6 Central Building - Removal to 1911
- b. 7 f. 7 Central Building - Requests for Space for Special Collections 1908-1912
- b. 7 f. 8 Central Building - Reviewing Stands for Parades 1912
- b. 7 f. 9 Central Building - Society Meetings (National Academy of Science) 1912
- b. 7 f. 10 Central Building - Statues/Statuary/Busts 1910-1913
- b. 7 f. 11 Consolidation Agreement

Series III. Subject Files (cont.)  
Reference Department (cont.)

- b. 7 f. 12 Gifts, Acknowledgment of
- b. 7 f. 13 Interlibrary Loans (American Museum of Natural History) 1913
- b. 7 f. 14 Notary Public (E.R. Perry) 1909
- b. 7 f. 15 Pensioned Employees (A. McClintock) 1907
- b. 7 f. 16 Prints, Advisory Committee on 1911-1915