

The Early Family Papers
Wellesley Historical Society

Repository Identifier

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Local Identifier

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Name and Location of Repository

The Wellesley Historical Society
229 Washington Street
Wellesley, MA 02481
(781) 235-6690
www.wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org

Title

The Early Family Papers, 1885 – 2006

Date

1885 – 2006

Extent

12 linear feet; 15 boxes

Names of Creators

James Andrew Early (1865?-1919)
John Joseph “Jack” Early (1896-1921)
Eleanor Mary Early (1895-1969)
Elizabeth Lee Early (1899-1967)
Philip Clement Early (1901-1970)
Edna Dorothy Early (1904-1979)
Catherine Joan Early (1905-1983)

Biographical Note

James A. Early and Sarah Jane Dolan (c.1864 – 1921) were married at St. John's Church, Wellesley, in 1891. They had seven children, six of whom survived until adulthood. The Earlys moved to the Wellesley area around the turn of the twentieth century. James Early took ownership of a parcel of land on Washington Street in Wellesley Hills on October 29, 1904. It was on this land that he built, the next year, what would become the family home at 93 Washington Street.

The Early family originally owned a grocery business in Newton Lower Falls in the late nineteenth century; ledgers in the collection indicate that the grocery business likely began operating in the 1890s, around the time of James and Sarah’s marriage. The business was owned and operated by James.

Eleanor Mary Early (1895 – 1969) was the oldest child in the family and grew up to be a successful novelist; she never married. James and Sarah’s second child was John “Jack” Joseph

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Early (1896 – 1921), who served in World War I. He was one of the founders of the American Legion post in Wellesley and was elected Wellesley Selectman at the age of 23, the youngest at that time. A photograph of the young selectman is included in this collection. Jack died in 1921 of a heart attack, possibly related to his exposure to gas while fighting overseas in Europe during World War I.

Eleanor and Jack's younger siblings were Elizabeth Lee Early (1899 – 1967), Catherine Early (born and died December 18, 1900), Philip Clement Early (1901 – 1970), Edna Dorothy Early (1904 – 1979), and Catherine Joan Early (1905 – 1983).

All of the Early children attended public schools in Wellesley.

Eleanor Early

Eleanor Early graduated from Wheelock College in 1917, after which she pursued a career as a writer and journalist in Boston. She wrote for the *Boston Herald-Traveler*, the *Boston Post*, the *Record American*, and the *Boston Globe*. In the late 1930s she left Boston to join the staff of the *New York Times*. She also lived for a time in Washington, D.C. She traveled extensively, and those experiences informed her writing, which extended beyond newspaper reporting; she also was a radio commentator and magazine columnist. She wrote books on travel, cooking, and history, as well as novels. She returned to Boston just a few years before her death in 1969.

John “Jack” Early

Jack Early attended Wellesley public schools, then went into business as a stock messenger boy. He had an early interest in the military and was an early volunteer for the U.S. Army in May 1917, as the war raged in Europe. He attended the Officer's Training Camp in Plattsburgh, New York, where he was commissioned Second Lieutenant; he was among the youngest officers in the U.S. Army at that time. In May 1917 he traveled to Camp Mills, where he joined the newly formed Rainbow Division, but then was assigned to the 166th Infantry Division and became Captain of Company L of the 3rd Division. He served with the 166th in Lorraine, France, and saw much action there; by all accounts he performed heroically and was awarded the Legion of Honor and the Distinguished Service Cross. In May 1918 he was promoted to Second Lieutenant, and later, in August 1918, he was assigned Adjutant of the 1st Battalion. In this capacity he served as a Summary Court Officer, as well as Officer in Charge of Civil Affairs and Inferior Provost Court for Rolandseck, Rolandswerth, and Unkelbach (Germany). When the Armistice was signed in November 1918, Early was still at the front; he served with the Army of Occupation until May 1919, when he returned to the States. Upon his return he established Wellesley Post 72 of the American Legion and served as its first Commander. In 1920 he was elected as a Wellesley Selectman; he was reelected in 1921 for a three-year term, but he died in Ohio of a heart attack following a Rainbow Division reunion.

Scope and Content Note

The Early Family Papers (1885 – 2006) consist of 11 document boxes, 1 Archives Oversize Box, 3 Cartons, and various oversize materials in flat file drawers. There are 4 boxes of correspondence; 5 boxes of manuscripts; 2 boxes of printed materials; an oversize box containing art projects, newsletters, and maps; and boxes containing legal and financial documents, photographs, maps and miscellaneous materials relating to the Early family. Most of

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the materials date to the first two decades of the twentieth century, with others produced as early as the 1880s and as late as 2006.

The earliest materials date from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century and include business ledgers from James A. Early's grocery business, which was located in Newton Lower Falls. The ledgers record transactions and client account information c.1890 – 1915.

Most of the materials in the Early Family Papers relate to Jack and Eleanor Early; materials created by Eleanor Early have been separated within the correspondence, manuscript, printed materials, and oversized series. The bulk of Jack Early's materials relate his service in the United States Army during World War I. Manuscripts from pre-World War I years are from the Early children's school days, c.1905-1915.

Correspondence (1885 – 1921) forms the largest single series in the collection and is arranged chronologically in 4 sub-series: three boxes of letters to Jack Early from family and friends during his service in WWI (1917 – 1919), one box of letters from Eleanor Early to Jack Early during WWI (1917 – 1919), 1 box of correspondence between the U.S. Army, the Lee, Higginson Service Club and Jack Early (1917 – 1920), and one box of correspondence to other members of the Early family (1885 – 1921).

Index Terms

American Legion—History
American Legion, Department of Massachusetts—History, Local
Armed Forces
Early, Eleanor
Early, John Joseph, 1896-1921
Education, Elementary
Education, Secondary
Elementary Schools
High school students—United States
Homework
Newton Lower Falls (Mass.)
United States—Armed Forces
United States. Army
Wellesley (Mass.)
World War, 1914-1918
World War, 1914-1918—Anecdotes
World War, 1914-1918—Campaigns—Belgium
World War, 1914-1918—Campaigns—France
World War, 1914-1918—Correspondence
World War, 1914-1918—Finances
World War, 1914-1918—Public Opinion

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System of Arrangement

The collection is organized into ten series, arranged topically. Materials within each series are organized chronologically. Series I is further organized into four subseries, each a distinctive collection of correspondence.

- I. Correspondence, 1917-1921
 - 1: World War I Correspondence, addressed to Jack Early, 1917-1919
 - 2: Letters from Eleanor Early to Jack Early, 1917-1919
 - 3: Early family correspondence, 1885-c.1939
 - 4: Official correspondence between the U.S. Army and Jack Early, 1917-1920
- II. Manuscripts, 1901-1917
- III. Photographs, 1886-1919
- IV. Legal Documents, 1918-1919
- V. Financial Documents, 1912-1918
- VI. Reports and Speeches, 1916-1920
- VII. Printed Materials from Jack Early's papers, 1914-1921
- VIII. Printed Materials from Eleanor Early's papers, 1939-1969
- IX. Maps and Lists, c. 1910-1919
- X. James A. Early Grocery Store Business Ledger Books, c. 1892-1915

Conditions Governing Access

The Collection is open for research purposes by appointment only. Please contact the Wellesley Historical Society for more information.

info@wellesleyhistoricalsociety.org
(781) 235-6690

Physical Access

Some of the materials are fragile.

Conservation Note

Most of the newspaper clippings which were in the collection have been reproduced on archival, acid-free paper and are included with their contextual materials. Much of the paper quality in the correspondence and school papers folders is deteriorating and will need to be reproduced in the future to prevent a loss of information. Maps in Oversize as well as in Flat File Drawers are deteriorating. The covers of the ledgers in Cartons 1-3 were disintegrating with red rot; the covers have been removed, but use caution when handling these items, because red rot can cause skin irritation and allergic reactions if the dust is inhaled.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use

Copyright restrictions may apply.

Languages and Scripts of the Material

Almost all of the materials are in English. Some correspondence and map annotations are in French. Some Correspondence and map annotations are in German.

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Immediate Source of Acquisition

2006.10

E-1

Accruals

The Historical Society may add materials to this collection in the future; however, no further accruals are currently expected.

Related Materials

Wellesley Historical Society, Item: Steamer trunk (2006.10.1)

Wellesley Historical Society, Item: Jack Early military belt, c. 1917 (2010.2)

Wellesley Historical Society, Photograph Collection

Wellesley Historical Society, American Legion, Wellesley Post 72 Collection

Related Collections

Eleanor Early Papers, John J. Burns Library Archives & Manuscripts, Boston College

Description

DACS-compliant Finding Aid created in March 2018 by Alden Ludlow, following and reformatting the legacy finding aid created by Jennifer A. Jovin, completed May 23, 2007. Re-processing of this collection was made possible through grants from the Wellesley Community Preservation Commission (CPC) and from the Massachusetts State Historical Records Advisory Board (SHRAB).

Bibliography

Boston Herald-Traveler. Eleanor Early. Obituary. August 27 1969.

The Townsman. "Tribute to Wellesley Man." June 3, 1921.

The Townsman. "Funeral of Capt. John Early." September 23, 1921.

The Townsman. "John Early Dies Suddenly in Ohio, Heart Failure the Cause."
September 16, 1921

Reppy, Alison, First Lieutenant Intelligence Officer, First Battalion. *Rainbow Memories: Character Sketches and History of the First Battalion, 166th Infantry, 42nd Division, American Expeditionary Forces*. Published by the Executive Committee, First Battalion, 166th Infantry, 1919.

Taylor, Denise. "An Adventurous Life Examined." *The Boston Globe*. July 6, 2006. URL http://archive.boston.com/news/local/articles/2006/07/06/an_adventurous_life_examined/

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Container List

I. Correspondence

This series is divided into four sub-series of correspondence between Early family members and others, including friends and official military correspondents.

Sub-Series I: World War I Correspondence, 1917-1919

This large subseries contains correspondence to Jack Early from his parents, siblings, and friends while he was in military training in the U.S. and then overseas in France. (Correspondence to Jack Early from his sister Eleanor has been collected in Subseries II). Many of the letters come from his sister, Elizabeth, though there are also many from outside his immediate family, including letters from Margaret Pierson, who seems to have been a cousin. The family kept Jack informed of news at home and often included newspaper clippings to keep him apprised of the local and national response to the war. The letters reveal a close-knit family and an affectionate mother who were concerned for Jack's safety and well-being while he was in Europe. Box 3, Folder 9 contains a copy of a letter sent to Eleanor Early by Father Carpenter, a priest, upon the death of Jack Early.

Box 1

Folder 1: January 1917
Folder 2: February 1917
Folder 3: August 1917
Folder 4: September 1917
Folder 5: October 1917
Folder 6: November 1917
Folder 7: December 1917
Folder 8: January 1918

Box 2

Folder 1: February 1918
Folder 2: March 1918
Folder 3: April 1918
Folder 4: June 1918
Folder 5: July 1918
Folder 6: August 1918

Box 3

Folder 1: September 1918
Folder 2: October 1918
Folder 3: November 1918
Folder 4: December 1918
Folder 5: January 1919

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- Folder 6: February 1919
- Folder 7: March 1919
- Folder 8: April 1919
- Folder 9: November 1921

Subseries II: Letters from Eleanor Early to Jack Early, 1917-1919

This subseries contains Eleanor Early's letters to Jack, and reveal a quick wit and an easygoing sister-brother relationship based on mutual affection. Eleanor wrote these wartime letters while establishing herself as a journalist in Boston, thus she often included samples of her own writing and also other newspaper stories she thought her brother would enjoy.

Box 4

- Folder 1: September to December 1917
- Folder 2: January-February 1918
- Folder 3: March-April 1918
- Folder 4: June to August 1918
- Folder 5: September-October 1918
- Folder 6: November-December 1918
- Folder 7: January to March 1919

Subseries III: Early Family Correspondence, 1885-c.1939

The earliest letters in this subseries date to 1885, before Sarah Jane Dolan married James Andrew Early; most of Sarah Dolan Early's papers are located at the Newton Historical Society. One folder in this sub-series contains letters written to Eleanor, both from her brother Jack and a Lieutenant Larry; Eleanor's relationship to Larry is unclear. Folder 3 contains letters written in school to Philip Early from his classmates, all dated November 27, 1911; he was ill and unable to attend school for a time, and they wish him well.

Box 4

- Folder 8: Letters to Sarah Dolan (Mrs. James A. Early), 1885-1886, 1920
- Folder 9: Letters received by Eleanor Early, 1909-1919
- Folder 10: Letters to Philip Early, 1911, 1921
- Folder 11: Letter to cousin Mil from Elizabeth Early, c.1917 (?)
- Folder 12: Letter from Eleanor Early to her father James, undated
- Folder 13: Miscellaneous correspondence and postal memorabilia
- Folder 14: Letters from Eleanor Early to Margaret Urann, c.1939

Subseries IV: Official Correspondence between the United States Army and Jack Early, 1917-1920

This correspondence sub-series contains special orders and field orders to Lieutenant Early from the United States Army. The sub-series also contains

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correspondence in the format of general newsletters from Lee, Higginson Service Club addressed to “the Boys in the Service;” these newsletters were designed to keep the soldiers abroad up-to-date with the status of their comrades.

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 1: Official correspondence between U.S. Army and Jack Early
- Folder 2: Lee, Higginson Service Club Correspondence Service, 1918
- Folder 3: Lee, Higginson Service Club Correspondence Service, 1919

II. Manuscripts, 1901-1917

This series contains school papers created by the Early children as well as some of their contemporaries. The material spans the period between 1901 and 1917, which covers Eleanor’s primary schooling through Catherine’s early adolescence. Eleanor attended Hamilton School (elementary level) during these years.

Eleanor Early School Papers, 1901-1911

Box 5

- Folder 1: 1901-1902
- Folder 2: 1903-1907
- Folder 3: 1907-1911
- Folder 4: Grade 6 (North) school papers
- Folder 5: Grade 7 school papers
- Folder 6: Grade 9 school notebooks, 1909-1910
- Folder 7: Wellesley High School notebook
- Folder 8: Wellesley High School Physics notebook c. 1914
- Folder 9: Stories
- Folder 10: Undated scrapbook/project
- Folder 11: Miscellaneous undated papers
- Folder 12: Miscellaneous undated papers

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 4: Eleanor Early school papers, Color Theory report, 1911

Jack Early School Papers c. 1911

Box 6

- Folder 1: Jack Early school notebooks
- Folder 2: Jack Early school papers, English exam
- Folder 3: Jack Early school papers, undated

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 4: Jack Early school papers, Color Theory report, 1911

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Elizabeth and Philip Early School Papers, and school papers with ambiguous/unknown authors, 1907-1914

This series contains Elizabeth and Philip Early's school papers as well as school papers that do not have an identified author; context suggests that they were produced by a member of the Early family. Many of these papers are labeled "E.E." which could refer to Eleanor, Elizabeth, or Edna. Some of the papers in folder 10 have names and were likely created by classmates and friends.

Box 6

- Folder 4: Philip Early School papers, North 5, 1907-1908
- Folder 5: Elizabeth Early School papers, 1910-1914
- Folder 6: Elizabeth Early school papers, Grade 7
- Folder 7: Elizabeth Early school papers, undated
- Folder 8: Philip Early school papers, undated
- Folder 9: School papers, unidentified creator, some marked "E.E."
- Folder 10: School papers, unidentified creators

Edna and Catherine Early School Papers, 1909-1917

Catherine Early attended the Alice Phillips School, Wellesley. Included in these papers are schoolwork, as well as a report card and a student Stamp Savings Card sponsored by Wellesley National Bank.

Box 7

- Folder 1: Catherine Early School papers, 1909-1915, Grades K-5
- Folder 2: Catherine Early school papers, September 1915 to June 1916
- Folder 3: Catherine Early school papers, marked Grade 6
- Folder 4: Catherine Early, Grade 7 report card, and Stamp Savings Book
- Folder 5: Catherine Early school papers, Grade 7, undated
- Folder 6: Catherine Early school papers, undated
- Folder 7: Catherine Early (possible), school papers
- Folder 8: Edna Early school papers, 1911
- Folder 9: Edna Early school papers, 1912-1915
- Folder 10: Edna Early school papers, marked North III-VI, undated
- Folder 11: Edna Early school papers, undated
- Folder 12: School papers not created by Early family (possibly friends)

III. Photographs, 1886-1919

This series includes photographs of the Early family in the 1910s; most are annotated on the recto. Included is Jack Early's American Expeditionary Forces official identification card, as well as a few photographs of him in uniform. There are also photos of the family's friends who sent pictures of themselves with letters to the Earlys. The oldest photograph is a photocopy of a photo taken of James Andrew Early when he was 21 years old. Miscellaneous photographs are included here. There is also a postcard book of

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Langres, France. Oversize boxes contain a photograph of Jack Early as a Wellesley selectman, and a photo of Eleanor from the 1920s.

Box 8

- Folder 1: Photographs, Early Family, 1886-1919
- Folder 2: Photographs of Jack Early friends/correspondents, c. 1918
- Folder 3: Unidentified group photos
- Folder 4: Photographs, landscapes and seascapes
- Folder 5: Prints from European museums, and Langres postcard book

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 5: Portrait photo of Jack Early as Wellesley Selectman, c.1920;
portrait photo of Eleanor Early, c.1920

IV. Legal Documents (Military), 1918-1919

This series contains legal documents that pertain to Jack Early's army service during World War I. Most of the forms are legal-size documents and have been placed in the oversize boxes.

Box 8

- Folder 6: Receipts for Prisoner Forms, 1918

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 6: Charge sheets for U.S. Provost Court
- Folder 7: Army of the United States Commitment Field Form No. 3

V. Financial Documents, 1912-1918

The older receipts in this series belong to James Andrew Early and relate mostly to purchases made for automobile repairs. Later receipts belonging to Jack Early date from the war years and include insurance documents.

Box 8

- Folder 7: James A. Early financial documents and receipts, 1912-1915
- Folder 8: Jack Early wartime receipts and insurance policies, 1917-1918

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 8: Account statement from Lee, Higginson Co.

VI. Reports and Speeches, 1916-1920

The town papers relate to the proposition of building a branch library in the Lower Falls of Wellesley. Also included are transcripts of two lectures presented by the Infantry Officers Reserve Corps and one transcript from the Cavalry Officers Reserve Corps lecture. Additionally, there are U.S. Army Operations strategies and reports from 1918-

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1919 and a statement from Edward L. Logan, Commander of the American Legion, to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1920.

Box 8

- Folder 9: Wellesley Library branch proposal reports, 1916 [James]
- Folder 10: *Officers' Reserve Corps Lecture* (set of 3), 1917 [Jack]
- Folder 11: U.S. Army Operations Strategies and Reports, 1918-1919
- Folder 12: American Legion statement to House of Representatives, 1920

VII. Printed Materials: Jack Early, 1914-1921

Included in this series are course catalogs from Harvard and Boston Universities, political circulars and pamphlets, U.S. Army pamphlets, military tactical worksheets, bound reports and programs, and a pictorial book about the Rhine River. There is a copy of the *Final Report of Gen. John J. Pershing* from 1920, which includes numerous maps and campaign and battle reviews. Of local interest there is a Maugus Club Calendar of events for 1915-1916, and items related to the role and election of Wellesley Selectmen.

Box 9

- Folder 1: Course Catalogs: Harvard and Boston Universities, 1914, 1916
- Folder 2: Social and political pamphlets, 1914-c.1921
- Folder 3: Circulars and pamphlets, 1915, 1917, and undated
- Folder 4: Pamphlets relating to the U.S. Army, World War I, 1916-1917
- Folder 5: Pamphlets, U.S. Army and war operations, 1917
- Folder 6: Accounts of Military Tactical workshops, c.1917
- Folder 7: Pamphlets, articles related to U.S. Army, 1917-1919
- Folder 8: Newspaper clippings
- Folder 9: Reports, 1920 and undated. Includes Pershing Final Report
- Folder 10: Program. *Casino de Paris*, c.1917-1920
- Folder 11: *The Rhine: Thirty Picturesque Views*. Book, c.1919

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 9: Current Events newspaper; Translation of a German document
- Folder 10: Military protocol, c.1918
- Folder 11: Military memoranda and strategic documents, 1918
- Folder 12: Award certificates, military, 1919 (2)

VIII. Printed Materials: Eleanor Early, c.1910-1969

This series contains three published books written by Eleanor Early; two copies of *Adirondack Tales* (1939, one with original dust jacket, one without dust jacket); one copy of *New England Cookbook* (1954); and one copy of *Washington Holiday* (1955). In addition, the series contains Eleanor Early's obituary from August 27, 1969; the newspaper source for the obituary is unknown.

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Box 10

- Folder 1: *Adirondack Tales*. First edition, 1939
- Folder 2: *Adirondack Tales*. First edition, 1939, inscribed
- Folder 3: *New England Cookbook*. First Printing, 1954
- Folder 4: *Washington Holiday*. Second Printing, 1955
- Folder 5: Obituary, Eleanor Early, August 27, 1969. Unknown newspaper
- Folder 6: Articles and publicity

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 13: Advertisements, articles, and reviews of her books; miscellaneous oversize school papers, undated; newspaper articles and advertisements, 1919-1929

Flat File 2, Drawer 2

- Folder 1: Advertisements, articles, full newspaper pages, 1919-1929

IX. Maps and Lists, c. 1910-1919

This series includes maps and lists mostly pertinent to Jack Early's military service and interests.; a 1915 U.S. Geological Survey of New England; Tables of Organization by the U.S. Army (1917); and the Schedule of Instruction for the first and second provisional training regiments, army inventories, and an unidentified map. Larger maps are located in oversize boxes and flat file drawers.

Box 11

- Folder 1: U.S. Geological Survey map of New England, 1915
- Folder 2: U.S. Army, *Tables of Organization*, 1917
- Folder 3: *Schedule of Instruction*, Reserve Officer's training, 1917
- Folder 4: World War I Army handwritten inventories
- Folder 5: Map of Imécourt area of France [photocopy]

Archives Oversize Box 12

- Folder 14: Road Spaces and War Strength of Units U.S. Army (2 copies); Battle map to accompany order of the 84th Infantry Brigade; Map of Saillant du Bois des Chiens; Elizabeth Early *Humboldt Geographical Note Book*, 1902

Flat File 2, Drawer 2

- Folder 2: Additional maps and materials, including U.S. maps of Gettysburg and Antietam; World War I battle maps; topographical maps of France, Belgium and Germany featuring Raucourt, Mettendorf, Mezières, and Vendresse; U.S. Geological Survey Reconnaissance Map; maps of Commercey, Hillesheim, and Bar-le-Duc.

X. James A. Early Grocery Store Business Ledger Books, c. 1892-1915

This series contains nine business ledger books from James A. Early's grocery business, which was located in Newton Lower Falls. Receipts and other information in the ledger books contain letterhead which states, "James A. Early, dealer in Fine Family Groceries,

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Flour and Grain. Agent for the Cunard Steamship Co. Newton Lower Falls, Mass.” These ledger books track the shopping accounts of many Wellesley and Wellesley area residents, and are arranged alphabetically by name, with an index in the front, followed by records and accounts associated with each name. Often receipts and other documents are interleaved with the records pages.

Box 12

- Item 1: Ledger Book; c.1894
- Item 2: Ledger Book; 1899
- Item 3: Ledger Book; 1904

Box 13

- Item 1: Ledger Book; c. 1903
- Item 2: Ledger Book; 1892-1899
- Item 3: Ledger Book; 1901

Box 14

- Item 1: Ledger Book; 1905-1911
- Item 2: Ledger Book; 1893-1894
- Item 3: Ledger Book; 1909-1915