



120 Academy Street, Trenton, N.J. 08608

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Trenton Police, Fire, and Public Safety Collection

Circa 1892–2023 (bulk circa 1940-2000)

By Chris Loos

November 2023

Summary Information

Creator(s):

City of Trenton

Donor:

Unknown (found in collections); Betty Holland (donor); Edwin S. Fisher (donor)

Language of Materials:

English, with some items in Spanish

Extent:

Approximately 25 linear feet

Location of Repository:

Trentoniana Department, Trenton Free Public Library, 120 Academy St., Trenton, NJ
08608

Subjects:

Civil defense--New Jersey--1940-1970 / Communication--New Jersey--Trenton /
Criminals--New Jersey--Trenton / Disaster management--Handbooks, manuals, etc. / Fire
alarms--New Jersey / Fire departments--Fraternal organizations / Fire departments--New Jersey--
Trenton / Fire prevention--New Jersey--Trenton / Fires--New Jersey--Trenton / Fisher, Edwin S.
(1903-1994) / Gamewell Fire Alarm Telegraph Co (N.Y.) / Government facilities--New Jersey--

Trenton / Holland, Arthur John (1918-1989) / Police communication systems--New Jersey / Police--Complaints against--New Jersey / Police--Fraternal organizations / Police--New Jersey / Police--Salaries, etc.--New Jersey / Police training--New Jersey / Trenton (N.J.). Fire Department--History / Trenton (N.J.)--Fires and fire prevention / Trenton (N.J.)--Politics and government

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access:

No access restrictions.

Reference Number:

CITY—PFPS

Preferred Citation:

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Trenton Infrastructure and Public Works Collection, Trentoniana Department, Trenton Free Public Library, 120 Academy St., Trenton, NJ 08608

Scope/Content

This collection spans the history of Trenton's Department of Public Safety, comprising the city's police and fire departments, as well as its Electrical (Communications) Bureau and its Civil Defense initiatives. The majority of these documents date to the twentieth century, but a significant percentage of items stem from as early as circa 1892; scant items from after 2000 also appear. The following departments appear in the collection:

- The Trenton Police Department (TPD), including police blotters, correspondence, publicity and ephemera, and materials from police fraternal organizations;
- The Trenton Fire Department (TFD), containing fire alarm reports, correspondence, surveys and studies, ephemera, and other items from after the Department's official incorporation in 1892;

- The Electrical Bureau, later known as the Communications Bureau, containing schematics, correspondence, and ephemera pertaining to the city's initiatives to construct a telegraph system for the police and fire departments; and
- Civil Defense during and after World War Two, plus other items related to Trenton's disaster planning and management.

The Fire Department materials also include the papers of Edwin S. Fisher, a longtime fire department communications engineer, which have been organized as a distinct part of the collection.

Archivist's Note: Like with all collections within the Trenton City Records, these items have been compiled from various locations within Trentoniana and arranged ad hoc. Many of the documents likely came from the Arthur Holland Collection, having been removed from their original locations by prior librarians. This archivist has imposed the order below on these materials, and has arranged the items in each folder approximately chronologically. For this collection, a significant portion of items from the Edwin S. Fisher manuscript collection (464) had likewise been removed from their original locations among Fisher's papers and distributed elsewhere in the archive. Fisher's documents pertaining to the fire department have been inserted into this collection as a sub-series within Series II in the order they were arranged in 2021. Any items found in the collection that clearly once belonged to Fisher's papers have been returned to this sub-series and annotated as "returned to collection" (some duplicate copies exist both in this sub-series and with the rest of the collection). Fisher's personal records remain as Manuscript Collection 464. Furthermore, this collection covers only the professional fire department, after its incorporation by the city in 1892. All volunteer companies' records can be found in the Trenton Volunteer Fire Departments Collection (pending).

For additional material related to Trenton's fire departments, see Michael Ratcliffe, *Trenton Firefighting* (2021), as well as Trentoniana scrapbooks SB055 (clippings from an anonymous firefighter, 1922-1948) and SB305 (on local fires, circa 1884). For police departments, see also scrapbook SB245, containing clippings from Trenton detective William Dolton, 1895-1914.

Arrangement**Series I: Trenton Police Department (TPD)**

- Box 1, Folder 1: “New Jersey Law Enforcement Guidelines” (1995) and “Civil Rights Manual for Police Officers” (1966)
unfoldered: TPD Manual of Regulations (1978)
Folder 2: Police Rules, Regulations, and Manuals
Folder 3: Police Department retrospectives (1899 and 1911)
- Box 2, Folders 1-10: Board of Police Annual Reports, 1921-1934; 1944
- Box 3, unfoldered: *Survey of the Police Department, Trenton, New Jersey* (1974)
unfoldered: Trenton Police Division, Annual Report, 1979
Folder 1: Bureau of Juvenile Aid--Annual reports, 1945-66 (incomplete)
Folder 2: Additional police reports, charts, and maps
unfoldered: “Suggested [Police] Projects for the Period 1973 to 1977”
unfoldered: “Trenton Plan for Criminal Justice” (1973)
- Box 4, unfoldered: “Criminal Justice Plan, Trenton, New Jersey” (1976)
Folder 1: Police Department planning documents, 1999-2000
Folder 2: “Report on Personnel Strength of the Police Division” (ca. 1963)
Folder 3: Report and correspondence on “Drugs in Trenton”
Folder 4: Police training documents, circa 1940s?
Folder 5: Trenton Police Academy booklets and ephemera
Folder 6: Police recruitment and training--miscellaneous ephemera
Folder 7: Correspondence re: police/fire department residency requirement (1972-1973), layoffs (1975)
Folder 8: Additional TPD correspondence
Folder 9: Police salaries--petition (1942) and reports (1960s-70s)
Folder 10: Complaints about police officers; disciplinary hearings
Folder 11: Police reports, complaints, and security plans (see also police blotters; Box OS1)
Archivist’s Note: This folder includes a 1933 arrest record for Lloyd Sebree, an African American man detained for “vagrancy,” including his photograph

Folder 12: “Police Reservist” newspaper (1942)

Box 5, Folder 1: Police department ephemera (mostly city, some state/national)

Folder 2: TPD--Packets of “crime prevention” pamphlets and ephemera

Folder 3: TPD Bicentennial--Correspondence, ephemera, etc. (1991-92)

Folder 4: TPD--Various city government awards and commemorations

Folder 5: Police Athletic League booklets, correspondence, ephemera

Folder 6: Policemen’s Benevolent Association Local #11--“Anything May Happen” revue booklets, 1947-1986 (*incomplete*)

Folder 7: PBA Local #11--Additional publicity, ephemera, correspondence

Box 6, Folder 1: Superintendent of Police Telegraph reports, 1899-1909

Folder 2: Police communications publicity and ephemera

Folder 3: Lists of police telephone boxes

Folder 4: Police communications “Radio Division Procedure” (1936)

Box OS1: Trenton Police Academy shooting range rules; prisoners’ rights poster

Box A1: Trenton Police Department patches and buttons

Unboxed: Police blotters, unknown precinct, 1892-1893; Oct. 1893-June 1895

Unboxed: Police blotters, Second Precinct; Jan. 1900-June 1901; 1903; 1904; Nov. 1906-Dec. 1910; Dec. 1910-Dec. 1914

Unboxed: Indices to Complaints, First Precinct, 1963; 1964; 1965; 1966; 1967; 1968; 1970; 1972; Apr. 1973-Apr. 1974 (A-Mc); Apr. 1973-Apr. 1974 (N-Z)

Series II: Trenton Fire Department (TFD)

Box 6, Folder 5: TFD rules and regulations manuals

Folder 6: Annual reports, 1961-1969 (*missing 1963*)

Folder 7: Annual reports, 1970-1979

Box 7, Folder 1: Annual reports, 1980-1988 (*missing 1989*)

Folder 2: Annual reports, 1990-1999

Folder 3: Annual reports, 2000-2005/2006

Folder 4: Report of Armory/Civic Center Fire (1975)

Folder 5: Additional reports on fires and TFD equipment

Folder 6: Reports and correspondence on city firemen pay and hours
Box 8, Folder 1: External reports on firefighting in Trenton (1914; 1932; 1954;
1975)

Folder 2: New fire headquarters schematics and dedication ephemera

Folder 3: Meredith Havens Fire Museum assorted documents and
ephemera

Folder 4: “Iron Fireman” statue restoration (circa 2000-2004)

Folder 5: TFD Centennial commemorative booklet and postcards

Folder 6: TFD miscellaneous correspondence with city

Folder 7: TFD miscellaneous ephemera

Box 9, Folder 1: Fire department fraternal/benevolent associations--souvenir
booklets

Folder 2: Firemen’s Mutual Benevolent Association (FMBA) Local No. 6-
-Variety show booklets (1946; 1948-50; 56; 58)

Folder 3: FMBA correspondence and contract with city government

Folder 4: FMBA miscellaneous ephemera and correspondence

*Subseries A: Edwin S. Fisher Papers (see Collection 464 for a biography of Fisher and
his personal papers)*

Box 10, Folder 1: Contents of “Brown Folder 1” (*see included inventory*)

Folder 2: Contents of “Brown Folder 2,” Part I (*see included inventory*)

Folder 3: Contents of “Brown Folder 2,” Part II

Folder 4: “First Aid, Electrical”

Folder 5: “Municipal Signal Systems Survey” and other notes (*returned
to collection 11/2023*)

Box 11, Folder 1: “Instructions Governing Fire Alarm Procedure”

Folder 2: “Installation of Municipal Circuits 2/2” (*sic; 1/2 not in box*)

Folder 3: “‘Radio Procedure’ envelope and related notes”

Folder 4: “Blank Trenton Fire Department inspection logs”

Folder 5: Additional ledgers/notebooks (*returned to collection 11/2023*)

Folder 6: Additional employment/payroll/budget records (*returned to
collection 11/2023*)

Folder 7: Police/Fire signal manuals (*returned to collection 11/2023*)

Folder 8: Internal (TFD/city) correspondence (*returned to collection 11/2023*)

Folder 9: FMBA constitution, misc. meeting minutes (*returned to collection 11/2023*)

Folder 10: Correspondence (misc.)

Box 12, Folder 1: “Modern Fire Alarm Signaling (original folder)” (*see also Box OS1*)

Folder 2: “T.f.D Rosters/Apparatus”

Folder 3: “Blue ‘Manual Aid’ Binder”

Folder 4: “Black and Maroon Notebook” (*yearly alarm figures, 1920s*)

Folder 5: “Black Rules and Regulations Folder” (1947)

Folder 6: “Diagrams” (small; *see also Box OS1*)

unfoldered: Gamewell “signal systems” binder, circa 1960s

Box 13, Folder 1: “Fire Alarm stations and Black Folder”

Folder 2: “Various Notes and Lists (Uncategorized)” (*but newspaper clippings removed to Box 13, Folder 8*)

Folder 3: “Letters of [Electrical Bureau chief] Oliver M. Schafer”

Folder 4: “Other letters pre-1927”

Folder 5: “Loose Adverts”

Folder 6: “Catalogues”

unfoldered: Gamewell/Eagle Signal Corporation publicity binder

Folder 7: “Fire Prevention Materials”

Folder 8: “Livingston School Fire and Other News Stories”

Box 14, Folder 1: Miscellaneous Notes on TFD history and administration (*returned to collection 11/2023*)

Folder 2: Fire alarm annual reports, 1927-1939

Folder 3: Fire alarm annual reports, 1940-1959

Folder 4: Fire alarm annual reports, 1960-1969

Folder 5: Fire alarm annual reports, 1970-1979

Box OS1: Additional schematics (Folder 5); 1957 dispatchers’ schedule (6)

Boxes 15-35: Fire Alarm operator log sheets, 1930-1982 (*mostly complete; see rough “inventory” in Box 15, Folder 1*)

[See also: Map Case 1, the Trenton Volunteer Fire Departments Collection (forthcoming), and the Meredith Havens Fire Museum (which includes the Gamewell alarm system depicted in this collection’s schematics)]

Archivist’s Note: due to a numbering error, there is no Box 36

Series III: Electrical and Communications Bureaus

Box 37, Folder 1: Police/Fire box inspection reports, n.d.

Folder 2: Police/Fire signal cables--electrolysis testing

Folder 3: Signal cable construction--Correspondence, technical specs, proposals, publicity, ephemera, etc.

Folder 4: Traffic Signals--diagrams, reports, correspondence, lists of signals, financial documents (*see also Box OS2*)

Folder 5: Diagrams and notes on alarms for Donnelly Memorial Hospital (*see also Box OS2*)

Folder 6: Tele-Type Machines--Correspondence, diagrams, ephemera

Box 38, Folders 1-7: Fire Alarm & Police Telegraph inventories, 1913-1918

Folders 8-20: Electrical Bureau inventories (including fire alarm/police telegraph), 1919-1931

Folder 21: Electrical Bureau inventory, 1932 (summary sheet only)

Folder 22: Electrical Bureau logs of hours worked, 1923-1934

Folder 23: Electrical Bureau payroll, 1915-1930

Box 39, Folder 1: Electrical Bureau payroll, 1931-1935

Folder 2: Budget/financial correspondence, 1920s-1930s

Folder 3: Notes for Electrical Bureau budgets, 1920s-1930s

Folder 4: Electrical Bureau proposals, correspondence, financial documents re: PWA/CWA projects, 1930s

Folder 5: Ordinances/legislation related to Electrical Bureau

Folder 6: Police signal box inspection reports and specifications

Folder 7: Misc. Electrical Bureau diagrams, sketches, forms

Box 40, Folder 1: Communications Bureau budgets, 1967-1970

Folder 2: Budgets, 1971-1973

Folder 3: Budgets, 1974-1976

Folder 4: Budgets, 1977-1979

Folder 5: Sick leave/vacation/absentee reports, 1942-May 1943; Jan.-
Mar. 1965

Folder 6: Sick leave reports, Dec. 1971-1975

Folder 7: Sick leave reports, 1976-1978

Folder 8: Additional budget/financial correspondence, 1967-1969

Box 41, Folders 1-14: Communications Bureau budgets working papers, 1961-
1976 (*divided by Fiscal Year*)

Box 42, Folder 1: Communications Bureau budget expenditures and salary reports
(1968-1971)

Folder 2: Overtime reports, 1967 (partial); 1968-1969

Folder 3: Overtime reports, 1970

Folder 4: Overtime reports, 1971

Folder 5: Overtime reports, Aug. 1972-Dec. 1973

Folder 6: Overtime reports, 1974-1976

Folder 7: Overtime reports, 1976-1977

Box 43, Folder 1: Gamewell Fire Alarm Telegraph Co.--City
proposals/specifications, contract

Folder 2: Assorted Gamewell publicity/ephemera

Folder 3: Correspondence with Gamewell, 1921-1927; 1930-1939

Folder 4: Correspondence with Gamewell, 1940-1949

Folder 5: Correspondence with Gamewell, 1950-1955

Folder 6: Correspondence with Gamewell, 1956-1968; 1970s-1980s

Folder 7: Gamewell packing slips and invoices

Folder 8: City fire alarm telegraphs--notes and small diagrams (*see also*
Box OS2)

unfoldered: Gamewell publicity binder, n.d.

Box 44, Folder 1: Electrical Bureau, blank/draft bids and specs, 1902-1903

Folder 2: Blank/draft bids and specs, 1910; 1914; 1918-1919

Folder 3: Blank/draft bids and specs, 1920-1924

Folder 4: Blank/draft bids and specs, 1925-1930; 1942; n.d.

Folder 5: Bid submissions from other companies

Box OS1: Gamewell Co. schematics (Folders 2-5)

Box OS2: Schematics for Donnelly Hospital (Folder 1), Police box circuits (2),
Fire box circuits (3), and Police/Fire signaling (4)

Series IV: Civil Defense and Disaster Planning

Box 45, Folder 1: Civil Defense Committee minutes, 1941-1945 (*currently
AWOL!*)

Folder 2: Civil Defense Council meeting minutes, 1961

Folder 3: Civil Defense--Edwin Fisher's reports, surveys,
correspondence, ephemera (*from Edwin Fisher collection*)

Folder 4: Civil Defense reports and expense lists

Folder 5: Reports and correspondence re: fallout shelters

Folder 6: Other Civil Defense correspondence and memoranda

Folder 7: Ephemera and publicity (city/county/state/national)

Folder 8: Updates to 1961 national Civil Defense plan

unfoldered: Trenton Emergency Operations Plan (1968)

Folder 9: Civil Defense and Disaster Control revised Standard Operating
Procedures (SOPs) (1979-1980)

Folder 10: Public Safety misc. correspondence and ephemera

Box 46, unfoldered: Trenton Civil Defense and Disaster Control SOPs, 1974

Folder 1: "Basic Emergency Operating Plan" (1995), Part I

Folder 2: "Basic Emergency Operating Plan" (1995), Part II

Box A1: Civil Defense patches and armbands, circa 1960s?