

Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Records 1870-2004

Collection Summary:

Title: Metropolitan Nashville Police Department Records

Summary: A collection of the administrative records of the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, including arrest records, correspondence, and reports, photographs, and negatives. Dates range from 1870-2004. Bulk dates: 1930-1970.

Physical Description: 37 boxes; 20.5 linear feet plus 33 oversized, unboxed books.

Language: English

Stack Location: Section 13, shelves 17, 19, 20-24. Some materials stored in Archives II.

Repository: Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County, 615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

Historical Note:

The earliest form of the Nashville Police Department was initially established in 1806, when the Tennessee legislature enacted a law incorporating the Town of Nashville, with John Deatheridge as High Constable. In 1850, the High Constable was replaced by the City Marshal, and eventually the Chief of Police replaced the City Marshal. Beginning with a watchman system, Nashville's police later transitioned to a metropolitan police force after the Civil War.

After the city-county consolidation in 1963, Nashville's police became the Metropolitan Nashville Police Department, with Hubert O. Kemp serving as the first Metro Police Chief from 1963-1972. Currently, the MNPd provides law enforcement services over a 526.1 square mile area, encompassing both high-density urban locations and rural areas of Nashville and Davidson County.

Scope and Contents of the Collection:

The Metropolitan Nashville Police Department records contain the predominantly administrative records for the department. This collection includes reports, payroll books, arrest blotters and cards, and correspondence documenting the day-to-day activities and history of Nashville's police from 1870 until 2004. Most records date between 1930 and 1970, and some records - chiefly those pertaining to juveniles - are closed to research.

Index Terms:

Subjects:

Law Enforcement.

Nashville and Davidson County (Tenn.)
Nashville Metropolitan Area (Tenn.)
Nashville (Tenn.). Police Dept.
Police--Tennessee-Nashville--History.

Related Collections:

Chief H.O. Kemp Papers, 1963-1971
Chief Hugh Mott Papers, 1972-1973
Chief Joe Casey Papers, 1973-1975
Sheriff's Office Collection, 1964-2002

Arrangement:

This collection is arranged alphabetically into five series: Administrative Records, Correspondence, Images, Ladies Auxiliary, and Reports.

The *Administrative Records* series contains materials relating to the day-to-day activities of the Nashville Police Department. A large portion of this series includes arrest blotters dating from 1870 to 1938, and arrest cards for individuals dating between 1935 and 1945. This series also includes time books and payroll books for department staff, the MNPDP manual, and operating policies and procedures. Other items of note include a list of African-American police officers from 1966, and a list of officers killed in the line of duty between 1885 and 2004.

The *Correspondence* series largely contains letters written to and from the Chief of Detectives between 1949 and 1954. Most of this correspondence relates either to missing or wanted people, or lost or stolen property.

The *Images* series includes historical photographs and negatives taken by the Nashville Police Department. Most images are undated, and approximately 145 negatives have been digitized by Metro Archives.

The *Ladies Auxiliary* series contains correspondence, financial reports, and meeting minutes for an organization formed by the wives and mothers of Nashville police officers. Dates range from 1929-1957.

The *Reports* series includes a large run of annual reports of the Police Department from 1874 to 1939, with some gaps. Also included are reports relating to program studies, improvement plans, departmental award recommendations, and the design of the Criminal Justice Center.

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Restrictions:

Restrictions on Access: In-library use only. All juvenile records are closed to research.

Restrictions on Use and Reproduction: The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County owns the intellectual rights to these materials. Materials may be used for research purposes only and cannot be used in a publication or reproduced.

Administrative Information:

Copyright: The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County retains intellectual property rights to this collection. Some restrictions may apply.

Provenance: Metropolitan Nashville Police Department

Processing Information: Processed by Kelley Sirko, January 2022.

Accruals: Further accruals may be expected.