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Collection Summary

Repository: Manchester City Archives. Office of the City Clerk. City of Manchester, NH.

Creator: Welfare Department. City of Manchester, NH.

Title: Commissioner of Charities

Collection Number: 0415.002

Accession Number: 2000.11

Dates: 1919 – 1945

Volume: 3 linear feet; 1 oversized box

Languages: Collection materials are in English.

Related Collections: [Overseers of the Poor Collection, 1846-1919 \(0415.001\)](#)

Access: Access to collection is open to the public. Please contact the archives for an appointment to view materials. Cite the collection number, box and volume numbers when making an appointment. Some items are in extreme states of fragility; when possible, duplicates will be produced instead of the original.

Digital Note: Materials are not accessible online at this time.

Conservation Notes: Not applicable.

Finding Aid Prepared by: Mike Intranuovo, 2016.

Table of Contents

- I. Historical Note ... Page 2**
- II. Collection Description ... Page 3**
- III. Series Descriptions and Inventory ... Page 4 – 6**

Historical Note

The Welfare Department works to improve the quality of life for disadvantaged residents of Manchester, by providing emergency assistance to individuals and families who lack adequate resources. The office was originally known as the Overseers of the Poor from as early as 1846 until approximately 1918, then the Commissioner of Charities from 1919 until 1961, and the Commissioner of Welfare starting in 1962. Although an official office may not have always existed in Manchester's earlier years, an overseer of the poor can be found in the city's annual reports as early as 1846, when it was assigned to a single selectman; in 1848, a group of government officials comprised the Overseers of the Poor.

The Overseers of the Poor was comprised of an elected board. The board represented each ward in the city, and the Mayor was chair. The board was charged with the welfare of Manchester's poorer residents; it also administered the City Poor Farm and Almshouse. The House of Corrections was located on the City Farm.

Collection Description

This collection is comprised of the records of the Commissioner of Charities and its corresponding department. The Commissioner of Charities collection is the continuation of the Overseers of the Poor Collection (0415.001), as its records documents the functions of the office which would eventually go on to become the Welfare Department. These functions included caring for the city's poorer residents, especially during the workers' strike at the Amoskeag Manufacturing Company in 1922, the Great Depression, and during World War II.

The collection consists of three record series created by the Commissioner of Charities and/or of its corresponding city department. Series include Expense Ledgers, Disbursement Ledgers, and Miscellaneous Items.

Series Descriptions & Inventory

Series 1: Expense Ledgers, 1919-1928

Expense ledgers document individuals receiving aid from the Commissioner of Charities. Personal information such as marital status, number of children and their ages, and residential address is included. Employment status was listed for any children over age 12. If a family member was employed, the salary and place of occupation was also listed.

Ledgers also include the record creator's comments relative to an individual's eligibility to receive benefits from the Commissioner of Charities.

Ledgers are bound in volumes and are arranged chronologically.

Item Description	Box Number	Folder Number
Volume 1, 1919-1920	01	--
Volume 2, 1921	01	--
Volume 3, 1922	01	--
Volume 4, 1923	02	--
Volume 5, 1924-1925	02	--
Volume 6, 1925-1928	02	--

Series 2: Disbursement Ledgers, 1928-1933

Disbursement (or daily) ledgers were used to document disbursements to individuals receiving aid from the Commissioner of Charities. Under each date, the ledgers list an individual's name, the monetary amount of provisions provided to him/her, monetary amount of fuel provided to him/her, and any miscellaneous items provided to him/her.

Volume 2 is an oversized volume bound in a metal rod binding. Each page contains information on a sole individual, and lists similar information found in the other volumes. The internal arrangement within this volume seems to be based on case number. No index is available.

Ledgers are bound in volumes from 1928 – 1933, and consist of loose sheets of paper from 1944-1945. They are arranged chronologically.

Item Description	Box Number	Folder Number
Volume 1, January 1928 – July 1929	03	--
Volume 2, 1929 - 1933	04	--
Volume 2A, August 1929 – December 1930	03	--
Volume 2B, January 1931 – 1932	03	--
Volume 3, January 1932 – June 1932	03	--
Volume 4, June 1932 – January 1933	03	--
Volume 5, 1944 – 1945	04	--

Series 3: Miscellaneous Items, n.d.

Item Description	Box Number	Folder Number
Index of Individuals, n.d.	03	--
Food Stamp Vouchers, n.d.	03	--