

NEW YORK CITY MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES
31 CHAMBERS ST., NEW YORK, NY 10007

Guide to the records of Mayor Seth Low, 1902-1903

Collection REC 0009

Original processing by unknown archivist, date unknown. Finding aid revised by staff archivist Rachel Greer, 2015; updated by staff archivist Alexandra Hilton, 2017 and 2018.

Summary

Record Group: RG 001.SLW: Office of the Mayor, Seth Low

Title of the Collection: Office of the Mayor, Seth Low records

Creator(s): Low, Seth, 1850-1916; New York (N.Y.). Office of the Mayor

Date: 1902-1903

Abstract: Seth Low (1850-1916) served as the Mayor of New York from 1902-1903. This collection consists of a selection of materials produced by his mayoral administration.

Collection #: REC 0009

Extent: 7.5 cubic feet

Language: English

Physical location: Portions of this collection are stored offsite and must be requested in advance. Requests to view offsite material should be sent to research@records.nyc.gov at least two weeks prior to your research date to allow for their transfer to 31 Chambers St.

Repository: New York City Municipal Archives, Department of Records and Information Services, 31 Chambers St., New York, NY 10007

Access and Use: Collection is open for research. Patrons are required to use microfilm for those series for which it is available. Advance notice is required for using original material. Please contact research@records.nyc.gov to arrange access.

Existence and location of copies: This collection has been partially microfilmed (Series II: Subject files). A digitized copy of the microfilm is available to view remotely or onsite through our [online gallery](#).

Preferred citation: Identification of item, date; Office of the Mayor, Seth Low records, 1902-1903; REC 0009; Series name; box number; folder number; Municipal Archives, City of New York

Processing note: This collection was processed by unknown persons at an unknown date. Staff archivist Rachel Greer revised and standardized the finding aid in 2015. Updated by staff archivist Alexandra Hilton in 2017 and 2018.

Biographical/Historical Information

Seth Low (1850-1916) served as the Mayor of New York from 1902-1903, on a fusion ticket of the Republican and Citizens Union parties. Prior to his tenure as Mayor, Low was the president of Columbia University and the former Mayor of Brooklyn as well as an activist in progressive politics. In comparison to his predecessor, Robert Van Wyck, Low was seen as a reformer in city politics. Low's mayoralty is most noted for introducing the civil service system into city government, streamlining the city's bureaucracies, improving the school system, and fighting graft in the police department. He ran for office in 1903, but was defeated, though he stayed active in politics, especially involving organized labor. Low died on September 17, 1916 at home in Upstate New York.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of a selection of materials produced by the mayoral administration of Seth Low. The collection is not comprehensive, but does include material related to the daily work of his mayoral administration. The material includes correspondence both from citizens and businesses throughout the city, as well as correspondence received from City Departments, Commissions, and Agencies. In addition, official documentation such as bills and legislation as well as a small amount of ephemera comprise the Subject Files series. Please see the scope and content notes for each series for further information.

Arrangement

The Seth Low records are divided into four series, and are arranged alphabetically within each series:

[Series I: Departmental Correspondence Received](#)

[Series II: Subject Files](#)

[Series III: General Correspondence Received](#)

[Series IV: Scrapbook](#)

Key Terms

Names

City Fusion Party (New York, N.Y.)
Low, Seth, 1850-1916
New York (N.Y.). Office of the Mayor

Places

New York (N.Y.)
New York (N.Y.) -- Politics and government -- 1898-1951

Subjects

Educational change
Mayors -- New York (State) -- New York
Municipal government -- New York (State) -- New York
Police misconduct

Occupations

Government employees
Legislators
Mayors

Material Types

Annual reports

Business correspondence
Municipal ordinances
Personal correspondence
Proclamations

Container List

Series I: Departmental Correspondence

Date(s): 1902-1903

Size (Extent): 3.5 cubic feet in 7 boxes

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence received by the Office of the Mayor, primarily from other City agencies and Departments.

Arrangement: This series is arranged alphabetically by agency or department name.

Access: This series is not microfilmed.

Location: 31 Chambers St., Shelf 1536-1542

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	1	Account Book	1903
1	2	Account Book	1903
1	3	Commissioners of Account	1902 January
1	4	Commissioners of Account	1902 August
1	5	Commissioners of Account	1902 September
1	6	Commissioners of Account	1903
1	7	Board of Aldermen	1902-1903
1	8	Aqueduct Commissioners Office	1902-1903
1	9	Armory Commissioners, Board of	1902
1	10	Art Commission	1902-1903
1	11	Board of Assessors	1902
1	12	Borough Presidents	1902-1903
1	13	Department of Bridges	1902-1903
1	14	Department of Buildings	1902
2	15	City Chamberlain	1902-1903
2	16	City Clerk	1902
2	17	City College	1902-1903
2	18	City Marshall	1902-1903
2	19	City Record	1902-1903
2	20	Comptroller	1903
2	21	Department of Correction	1902-1903
2	22	Courts	1902-1903
2	23	District Attorneys	1902-1903
2	24	Department of Docks and Ferries	1902-1903
2	25	Board of Education	1902
2	26	Board of Education (1)	1903
2	27	Board of Education (2)	1903
2	28	Board of Elections	1902-1903
3	29	Board of Estimate	1902-1903

Box	Folder	Title	Date
3	30	Board of Plumbers Examining	1902-1903
3	31	Department of Finance	1902-1903
3	32	Department of Finance	1903
3	33	Fire Department	1902
3	34	Fire Department	1903
3	35	Department of Health	1902
3	36	Department of Health	1903
3	37	Commissioner of Jurors	1902
3	38	Law Department	1902
3	39	Law Department	1903
3	40	Bureau of Licenses	1902-1903
4	41	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers	1903
4	42	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers (Contribution Letters)	1903
4	43	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers (Contribution Letters)	1903
4	44	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers (Contribution Letters)	1903
4	45	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers (Receipts Book)	1903
4	46	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers Receipts	1903
4	47	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers (Statements and Reports)	1903
4	48	Mayors Committee for Relief of Sufferers (Treasurers Reports)	1903
5	49	Mayor's Office	1902
5	50	Mayor's Office (1)	1903
5	51	Mayor's Office (2)	1903
5	52	Mayor's Office (3)	1903
5	53	Mayor's Office (4)	1903
5	54	Municipal Civil Service Commission	1902
5	55	Municipal Civil Service Commission	1903
5	56	Municipal Explosives Commission	1902-1903
6	57	Department of Parks	1902
6	58	Department of Parks	1903
6	59	Police Department	1902-1903
6	60	Police Department	1902 February
6	61	Police Department	1902-1903
6	62	Police Department	1902-1903
6	63	Police Department	1902 April
6	64	Police Department	1902-1903
6	65	Department of Public Charities	1902
6	66	Board of Public Improvements	1902
7	67	Public Library	1902-1903
7	68	Commissioner of Public Works	1903
7	69	Board of Rapid Transit	1902
7	70	Commissioner of King County Records	1902

Box	Folder	Title	Date
7	71	Sheriff's Office	1902
7	72	Commissioner of Sinking Fund	1902
7	73	Commissioner of Sinking Fund	1903
7	74	Street Cleaning	1903
7	75	Department of Taxes and Assessments	1902-1903
7	76	Tenement House Department	1902-1903
7	77	Department of Water Supply	1902
7	78	Department of Water Supply, Gas, and Electricity	1903

Series II: Subject Files

Date(s): 1902-1903

Size (Extent): 1 cubic foot in 2 boxes

Scope and Content: This series contains correspondence, ephemera, official documentation of laws, and other material related to the daily functioning of the Office of the Mayor.

Arrangement: This series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

Access: This series is available on microfilm. See roll 1 (master negative no. 08372).

Location: 31 Chambers St., Shelf 1544-1545

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	1	Atlantic Avenue Improvement Bill	1902-1903
1	2	Bronx Garbage Incinerator: Protests against 144th St. and Whitlock Avenue Location	1903
1	3	Butchers' Abattoir Bill (Bill #598)	1903
1	4	City Advertising	1902
1	5	City Ordinances: Ornamental Projection Beyond Building Lines	1903
1	6	Complaint against City Marshal Lee	1902
1	7	Declaration of God's Will	1903
1	8	Education, Board of: Charges against Secretary Palmer	1902
1	9	Firemen's Two Platoon Bill	1903
1	10	Firemen's Two Platoon Bill	1903
1	11	Morgan Library Bill: Brooklyn Library Incorporation	1902
1	12	Navy Desertions: Notifications about NYC Residents	1902-1903
1	13	Public Auctions: Lists and Catalogs	1903
1	14	Receptions: Count Matsukata of Japan	1902
1	15	Receptions: Prince Henry of Prussia	1902
1	16	Salaries, City Employees	1902-1903
1	17	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children: Applications to Exhibit Children for Performances	1902-1903
2	18	Department of Street Cleaning	1902-1903
2	19	Thirty-ninth Street Ferry: City Acquisition Bill	1903
2	20	Board of Trade: Opinions on Legislation	1903
2	21	Wallabout Market Liquor Sale Prevention Bill	1903

Series III: General Correspondence Received

Date(s): 1902-1903

Size (Extent): 0.5 cubic feet in 1 box

Scope and Content: This series consists of correspondence received by the Mayor's office from citizens, businesses, organizations, and those outside of City government.

Arrangement: This series is arranged alphabetically either by personal name or by business or agency name.

Access: This series is not microfilmed.

Location: 31 Chambers St., Shelf 1543

Box	Folder	Title	Date
1	1	A	1902-1903
1	2	B	1902-1903
1	3	C	1902-1903
1	4	D	1902-1903
1	5	E, F, G	1902-1903
1	6	H, I, J, K	1902-1903
1	7	L	1902-1903
1	8	M	1902-1903
1	9	N	1902-1903
1	10	O, P, Q	1902-1903
1	11	R	1902-1903
1	12	S	1902-1903
1	13	T	1902-1903
1	14	U, V, W	1902-1903
1	15	Whitman, Charles S.	1903
1	16	Y, Z	1902-1903

Series IV: Scrapbook

Date(s): 1902

Size (Extent): 1 volume (0.25 cubic feet)

Access: This item is too fragile to handle in the original form; consultation with archivist and conservator is required before patron use. An access copy of the material does not exist.

Location: Off-site, Shelf 159323

Volume	Title	Date
1	Seth Low Scrapbook	1902