



New York State Archives

**Documents relating to the records survey of 1950 and
subsequent disposition B1452**

New York State Archives
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
archref@nysed.gov
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

Table of Contents

Overview of the Records	3
Administrative History	3
Scope and Contents	4
Use of Records	4
Administrative Information	5
Access Terms	5

Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	In 1950, a survey was conducted of inactive records filed with the Department of Audit and Control with only a 5 per cent sample preserved. Historical records from the sample were inadvertently taken for disposal to Quebec, Canada; about one-third of which were recovered. This series consists of inventory reports; correspondence; articles and other materials documenting this survey and the resulting disposition of those records. Most material pertains to records recovery activities.
Creator:	New York (State). Department of Audit and Control
Title:	Documents relating to the records survey of 1950 and subsequent disposition
Quantity:	0.5 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1950-195
Bulk Date:	(bulk 1954
Series:	B1452

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative History

In 1950 a survey was conducted of inactive records filed with the Department of Audit and Control. As a result, 5 per cent was culled as a sample to be preserved (separated from other records about 200 times as voluminous). From 1951 to 1954 the records were disposed of under provisions of state law. Historical records in the sample were inadvertently taken for disposal as part of one of these dispositions. The president of the Onondaga Historical Association, Richard Wright, notified state historian Albert B. Corey when records from the sample came to his attention in Syracuse. They were traced to Mont Rolland Paper Company in Quebec, Canada. Corey organized a search team, and about one-third of all the records set aside for preservation were recovered. The incident sparked dialogue about creating an official state records office to safeguard historical records.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Content Note

The series consists of materials documenting a survey done in the early 1950s of "noncurrent papers" filed with the Department of Audit and Control, and the resulting disposition of that body of records through both intended and unintended destruction. The bulk of the material pertains to recovery activities surrounding a sample of the most historically valuable records of the State Comptroller, relating to fiscal and financial matters, which was inadvertently disposed of along with records marked for destruction.

Records on the initial survey include an original inventory report of the non-current records of the Department of Audit and Control (May 1950); early draft and final lists of records to be retained and inventories of records and equipment, sometimes including descriptions of records; correspondence on records packed for transfer and actual transfer to the New York State Library; lists of records to be destroyed; rough notes for the original inventory at various locations (Stratton Building, Beaver Street Warehouse); preliminary inventory series schedules (4/24/50); and a list of comptroller's records packed for transfer (1952) from the Stratton Building.

Records relating to the accident include an article on the "Rescue of Fugitive New York State Records" by state historian Albert B. Corey; newspaper clippings on records erroneously destroyed (1954) and efforts of the Onondaga Historical Association (Syracuse) to sort records recovered from the paper mill (1955); varied correspondence regarding the destroyed records, and some background material (including recommendations dating from 1945) advocating an official historical records program (with repository and staff); information on recovery efforts of the Division of Archives and History at the paper mill, including records retrieval procedures; correspondence among citizens, state officials, concerned historical societies, and legislators about the incident and future action to prevent recurrence;

correspondence with researchers or historians inquiring about lost or recovered records; and a series of letters between Albert Corey and Richard N. Wright on the "criminal carelessness" of the accident, including summary examples of material recovered at Syracuse and information on the selection process for preservation of historical documents.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

Administrative Information

Custodial History

A dispute between the Division of the Budget and the State Education Department over disposition of records of the State Comptroller led to their inadvertent disposal in 1954 by a waste contractor to the Mont Rolland Paper Company in Quebec, Canada. Approximately one-third of the records were subsequently recovered and deposited with the New York State Library and the Onondaga Historical Society. The remainder were lost.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Access Terms

- Quebec (Province)
- Surveys (inventories)
- Historical documents--New York (State)
- Archiving state government records
- Archival surveys
- New York (State)
- Public records--Access control
- Lists (document genres)
- Clippings (information artifacts)
- Inventories
- Syracuse (N.Y.)
- Records management
- Wright, Richard N.
- Corey, Albert B.
- Onondaga Historical Association
- New York (State). Comptroller's Office