

**The Ruth Priest Gray Scrap Book Collection
1936-1981**

**Purchased in 2005 from eBay
for the
Cambridge Historical Commission
by
Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director**

.5 linear feet
Prepared by:
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The Ruth Priest Gray Scrap Book Collection 1936-1981

Description

This collection of scrap books was purchased in 2005 from the online auction house, eBay, by Charles M. Sullivan, Executive Director of the Cambridge Historical Commission.

The original consignment included six scrap books, five prepared by Ruth Priest Gray and one by Cora R. Gray. Two of these scrap books, one on Boston by Ruth Gray and one on historic houses of New England by Cora Gray, were not taken into the collection, since their subject matter falls outside the purview of the Cambridge Historical Commission. These two books are, however, preserved with the collection.

The four scrap books on Cambridge prepared by Ruth P. Gray span a forty-five year time period, are made up predominantly of newspaper clippings, with a scattering of magazine articles and fliers, and give a sweeping picture of the environment and life of Cambridge in the latter half of the Twentieth Century. The earliest volume, Scrap Book I, had hard covers and was bound with a cord. Scrap Books II and III were made of the simplest spiral bound notebooks with blue lined white paper. The pages of Scrap Book IV were loose and held in a file folder. The covers of these scrap books have been removed to allow for processing and preservation, but are preserved with the collection.

The clippings and other materials are affixed to the scrap book pages by water based glue and are far too fragile to be made available for use by the general public. However, all four scrap books have been reconstituted, their photocopied pages exactly replicate the original volumes, and are accessible for general use.

Mrs. Gray was interested in a wide variety of Cambridge subject matter, too diverse to be named in detail, but included obituaries, retirements, fires, personalities, organizations, local color, community services, historical items, and celebrations. But above all she recorded the environment of the City of Cambridge: the construction of new buildings, parks, water supply, and street scenes. Topics notably absent here include politics, engagements and weddings.

Mrs. Gray was a life long resident of Cambridge and one of a sturdy breed of educated New England ladies with strong convictions, and with equally strong energy and commitment to serve her community. A biographical sketch of Ruth Gray is included in Series V -- Ruth Priest Gray, Personal Information.

Scope and Content

Series I -- Scrap Book Number I 1936-1966 (33 pages)

This scrap book introduces Ruth P. Gray with a brief biographical inscription and contains the earliest of the materials gathered by her. The emphasis here is on Cambridge history, with several articles on George Washington, one on the historic Porter's Hotel, and pictures of the early days of Harvard Square. There are also materials on the Heritage Trail, the history of Christ Church, and an original front page of the souvenir issue of the Boston Sunday Post's 1936 coverage of the Harvard Tercentenary.

Series II – Scrap Book Number II 1959-1965 (71 pages)

During these years Cambridge apparently experienced a building boom and this scrap book is heavily weighted toward new building in Cambridge. These include schools (Friends and Peabody), apartment buildings, motels, housing for the elderly (JF Kennedy housing), hospital expansion (Mt. Auburn Hospital), the Middlesex County Courthouse, Harvard University's School of Education, Peabody Terrace, Holyoke Center Health Services and Radcliffe College's Hilles Library. Ms. Gray was also interested in fires (the John P. Squire meat packing building) and the history of the Cambridge Common.

Series III – Scrap Book Number III 1966-1971 (53 pages)

In addition to a number of small articles, obituaries and fires (Odd Fellows Hall), this scrap book continues Ruth Gray's paramount interest in the Cambridge building boom. It follows up on a few stories begun in Scrap Book II, e.g., the Riverview Apartments, Mt. Auburn Hospital expansion, Harvard's Peabody Terrace and Education School. Also introduced here are new materials on the Tobin School, the Harvard Coop's expansion in Harvard Square, the underpass in Harvard Yard, Walden Square Urban Renewal, the Alewife Brook Park, and low income Rindge Apartments. Of particular interest is a photograph of Ms. Gray on page #32.

Series IV -- Scrap Book Number IV 1971-1981 (100 pages)

At 100 pages, this is the largest of the four scrap books and contains the most varied materials, of which only the highlights can be mentioned here. A number of biographical pieces on prominent figures include Nobel Prize winning economist Wassily W. Leontief and his wife, Estelle; Eli Goldstein, a business and civic leader; and Dr. David Dow, the Cambridge Medical Examiner. Transitional events are also recorded, such as the closing of the Riverside Press and the Window Shop; the centennial celebration of First Church Congregational; and the renovation and renaming of the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. Celebrations and dedications are also covered, as the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976; the Colonel Henry Knox Expedition; and the dedications of the Fort Washington Park and the Cambridge Center for Adult Education's Dexter Pratt House. Also of interest is a six part series on the Cambridge water supply system.

Series V – Ruth Priest Gray, Personal Information

Found in this series are two clippings of group pictures that include Mrs. Gray, a short biographical piece and a poem defining the role, which Mrs. Gray emulated, of elderly New England ladies of conviction and commitment to community.

Folder List

Box I

Series I Scrap Book Number I 1936-1967

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 1. Folder Number 1 Scrap Book Cover and Inscription | Undated |
| 2. Folder Number 2 Scrap Book Cord Binder | |
| 3. Folder Number 3 Pages 2-7 | Undated, 1946,1950 |
| 4. Folder Number 4 Pages 8-13 | 1958, 1947,1963 |
| 5. Folder Number 5 Pages 14-20 | 1963,1965, Undated |
| 6. Folder Number 6 Pages 21-24 | 1966, Undated |
| 7. Folder Number 7 Pages 25-29 | 1936, 1965, Undated |
| 8. Folder Number 8 Pages 30-33 | 1962,1967 |
| 9. Folder Number 9 Unused Pages and Back Cover | |

Series II Scrap Book Number II 1959-1965

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|---|---------------|
| 10. Folder Number 1 Pages Front Cover – 6 | 1959, Undated |
| 11. Folder Number 2 Pages 7-12 | 1959, 1960 |
| 12. Folder Number 3 Pages 13-18 | 1959, 1960 |
| 13. Folder Number 4 Pages 19-24 | 1960, 1961 |
| 14. Folder Number 5 Pages 25-30 | 1961 |
| 15. Folder Number 6 Pages 31-36 | 1961, 1962 |
| 16. Folder Number 7 Pages 37-42 | 1962, 1963 |
| 17. Folder Number 8 Pages 43-48 | 1963 |
| 18. Folder Number 9 Pages 49-55 | 1963, 1964 |
| 19. Folder Number 10 Pages 56-61 | 1964 |
| 20. Folder Number 11 Pages 62-67 | 1964, 1965 |
| 21. Folder Number 12 Pages 68-71 and Back Cover | 1965 |

Series III Scrap Book Number III 1966-1971

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 22. Folder Number 1 Pages Front Cover and 1 | Undated |
| 23. Folder Number 2 Pages 2-7 | 1966 |
| 24. Folder Number 3 Pages 8-13 | 1966 |
| 25. Folder Number 4 Pages 14-19 | 1966, 1967 |
| 26. Folder Number 5 Pages 20-26 | 1968 |
| 27. Folder Number 6 Pages 27-34 | 1968, 1967 |
| 28. Folder Number 7 Pages 35-41 | 1969-1970 |
| 29. Folder Number 8 Pages 42-48 | 1964,1969,1970 |
| 30. Folder Number 9 Pages 49-53 | 1970, 1971 |
| 31. Folder Number 10 Pages Back Cover | |

Series IV Scrap Book Number IV 1971-1981

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 32. Folder Number 1 Pages 1-6 | 1971 |
| 33. Folder Number 2 Pages 7-12 | 1971,1972 |
| 34. Folder Number 3 Pages 13-20 | 1972,1973 |
| 35. Folder Number 4 Pages 21-29 | 1973 |
| 36. Folder Number 5 Pages 30-34 | 1973 |
| 37. Folder Number 6 Pages 35-42 | 1973 |

Series IV (continued)

38. Folder Number 7 Pages 43-48	1974
39. Folder Number 8 Pages 49-55	1974, 1973
40. Folder Number 9 Pages 56-61	1975
41. Folder Number 10 Pages 62-70	1975, 1976, 1974
42. Folder Number 11 Pages 71-77	1976, 1977
43. Folder Number 12 Pages 78-84	1976, 1977
44. Folder Number 13 Pages 85-91	1978
45. Folder Number 14 Pages 92-96	1974, 1979, 1975
46. Folder Number 15 Pages 97-100	1981, 1979

Series V -- Ruth Priest Gray, Personal Information

47. Ruth Priest Gray, Personal Information	1961, 1968, undated, 2008
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Box II

This box contains the four original scrapbooks that have been processed and the two scrap books that have not been processed.

Note: The two scrapbooks which have not been processed are
 Clippings of Boston, 1967-1981, by Ruth Priest Gray
 Pictures of New England Historic Houses, 1930 and undated, by Cora R.
 Gray.

Return to CHC Collections home:

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