



MINUTE & BY-LAW BOOK SCANNING PROJECT: DESCRIPTION & DETAILED LISTING

In early 2024, the Harrow Early Immigrant Research Society (HEIRS) began scanning the handwritten minutes and by-law books for all of the municipalities that pre-dated the current Town of Essex. Our goal was to preserve the handwritten records of municipal government dating back to the mid-1800s and make them readily available.

We recognize that cursive writing can be difficult to read, even for those who received instruction in cursive writing as children. Technology can now help us bridge the gap and we were very fortunate to have help from Art Rhyno, a staff librarian at the University of Windsor's Leddy Library who has extensive experience with digitizing newspapers, including *The Essex Free Press* and *Harrow News*. By scanning the original artifacts and using handwriting recognition software to decipher the script, we have produced PDF versions of the records that are now searchable.

There are still some gaps in the project – years of records that have not been scanned – but in just over a year, we have scanned **24,673 pages** of handwritten content. The oldest minutes are dated 1859, the most recent 1964.

In addition to digitizing the print-based minute and by-law books, we received assistance in digitizing the microfilmed minutes for Colchester Township, Colchester South Township, and Colchester North Township, along with four sets of assessment records. This added an additional **3,438 pages** to the page count, for a total page count of **28,111**.

We wish to acknowledge Art Rhyno for his ongoing assistance to HEIRS on digitization and computer issues.

We also wish to acknowledge the Clerk's Department at the Town of Essex—especially Shelley Brown and Diane Emery—for their ongoing support.

The following dates are key to understanding the historical context of town records:

1859	Colchester Township, established in 1792, with records back to 1859.
1880	Division of Colchester Township into North and South.
1884	Essex Centre was incorporated as a village.
1890	Essex was incorporated as a town and dropped the word "Centre."
1899	Harrow becomes a police village.
1930	Harrow is incorporated as a town.
1999	Amalgamation of Essex, Harrow, Colchester North & Colchester South.

Minutes

Community	Date Range	Notes
Colchester Township	1859 to 1865	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1859 to 1865	Scanned from bound book. Damaged with many missing pages.
	1866 to 1875	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1866 to 1875	Scanned from bound book.
	1875 to 1882	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1875 to 1881	Scanned from bound book. NOTE: Colchester South Township records begin on page 378. Colchester South retained the township record books upon division in 1880.
Colchester North	1880 to 1885	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1880 to 1885	Scanned from bound book.
	1885 to 1900	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1885 to 1900	Scanned from bound book.
	1900 to 1910	Scanned from bound book.
	1910 to 1921	Scanned from bound book.
	1922 to 1932	Scanned from bound book.
	1932 to 1939	Scanned from bound book.
	1939 to 1952	Scanned from bound book.
	1953 to 1964	Scanned from bound book.
Colchester South	1882 to 1891	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1882 to 1891	Scanned from bound book.
	1891 to 1901	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1891 to 1901	Scanned from bound book.
	1902 to 1910	Scanned from bound book. Badly damaged at the back of the book.
	1911 to ??	Remaining handwritten minutes have not been scanned yet.
Essex Centre	1884 to 1889	Scanned from bound book.
Essex Town	1889 to 1894	Scanned from bound book.
	1894 to 1900	Scanned from bound book.
	1901 to 1907	Scanned from bound book.
	1908 to 1915	Scanned from bound book.
	1915 to 1918	Scanned from bound book.
Essex Town	1919 to 1921	Scanned from bound book.
	1922 to 1924	Scanned from bound book.
	1924 to 1928	Scanned from bound book.
	1928 to 1932	Scanned from bound book.
	1932 to 1937	Scanned from bound book.
	1937 to 1947	Scanned from bound book.
Harrow	1899 to 1930	Scanned from bound book.
	1930 to 1949	Scanned from bound book.
	1950 to 1959	Scanned from bound book.

By-Laws

Community	By-Law Range	Notes
Colchester Township	--	None scanned.
Colchester North	BL 1 to 141	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 142 to 300	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 301 to 511	Not scanned.
	BL 512 to 613	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 614 to 745	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 746 to 899	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 900 to 1096	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 1097 to 1275	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 1276 to 1289	Missing from the written record.
	BL 1290 to 1362	Scanned from bound book.
Colchester South	--	None scanned.
Essex Centre	BL 1 to 175.5	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 1 to 150	Scanned from bound book.
Essex Town	BL 151 to 249	Scanned from Clerk's binder.
	BL 250 to 390	Scanned from Clerk's binder.
	BL 391 to 500	Scanned from Clerk's binder.
	BL501 to 610	Scanned from Clerk's binder.
	BL 611 to 749	Scanned from Clerk's binder.
	BL 669 to 914	Scanned from bound book.
	BL 861 to 1024	Scanned from Clerk's binder.
	BL 915 to 972	Scanned from bound book.
Harrow	--	None scanned.

Assessment / Collector Rolls

Community	Date	Notes
Colchester North Assessment Roll	1887	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
	1891	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
Colchester South Assessment Roll	1881	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.
Colchester South Collector Roll	1883	Scanned from HEIRS microfilm.