



## Watson Freeman 1860 Census Collection

1859-1863

2 boxes (1 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS281

### Collection overview

U.S. Marshal of Massachusetts in charge of collecting the census for his judicial district in 1860. Includes petitions, letters of introduction and applications to him from prospective enumerators, list of assistants and their signed oaths, census returns, related correspondence, and certificates of receipt from the marshal's office. Also contains letters from Joseph C.G. Kennedy to Freeman, an instruction book for assistants, the marshal's oath, and a receipt for a set of returns from the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

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### Scope of collection

The Eighth Census of the United States employed 64 marshals of the judicial districts of the country (plus a few special agents in the unorganized territories), who, in turn, hired 4,417 enumerators to count the population and to gather additional specified information.

This collection comprises the 1860 Census-related papers of the U.S. Marshal of Massachusetts, Watson Freeman. It includes petitions, letters of introduction and applications to him from prospective enumerators, or assistants, and those who wrote on their behalf. It includes, as well, a list of the chosen assistants and their signed oaths, and their census returns, related correspondence, and certificates of receipt from the marshal's office. Finally, the collection includes letters, 1860-63, from Joseph C.G. Kennedy, the Superintendent of the U.S. Census, to Watson Freeman pertaining to census matters; a signed copy of the marshal's oath; a booklet of the instructions to assistants; and an acknowledgement of receipt of a set of the Eighth Census returns for Massachusetts at the office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

The marshals and their assistants, who were paid a total of \$1,329,749.07 of the \$1,969,376.99 appropriated and expended for the 8th census, counted the U.S. population at 31,443,321. They used six separate questionnaires, asking 142 items, which included not only the population figures, but also social and economic questions about health, mortality, pauperism, literacy, income, occupation, agriculture, business, banking, insurance, transportation, libraries, newspapers, crime, and religion.

The census of 1850 had been taken under a law drawn with more care and deliberation than any before it. That census was a notable advance toward sophisticated census taking over previous ones. The 1860 census was very similar to it, with a few additions and extensions, the most important ones being the inclusion of occupational information for women, as well as men, over 15 years old; figures for personal, as well as real, estate; and the number of slave houses on the schedule for slave inhabitants.

The 1860 census itself, was, of course, the last to count slaves. The Civil War developed soon after completion of the enumeration. Interestingly, it didn't detain or cause the loss of any returns; it caused only the interruption of communication between the Superintendent and some of the marshals pertaining to details in the returns (of the kind represented in this collection).

Earlier census reports had been printed by private contractors; this one was the first put out by the newly established Government Printing Office. The amount of information the 1860 assistants gathered, however, was too ambitious for the tabulation methods available. The results were slow in coming out; in fact, the 1870 census had been taken before all the 1860 statistics had been published.

The 1870 census was the last one carried out by U.S. marshals such as Watson Freeman. Specialized professionals took over the task in 1880, the same year three Massachusetts women petitioned to serve as census takers, opening the door for 200 women to hold assistant's jobs that year.

The bulk of the material is arranged by county. For each county there are 3 subseries, as it were: letters of introduction and of application for assistant's positions; assistants' oaths; and returns, related correspondence and certificates of receipt. Box 1 includes, as well, Kennedy letters to Freeman, the instruction book, marshal's oath, list of assistants, and receipt for returns from Secretary of the Commonwealth.

## Inventory

Letters, Joseph C. G. Kennedy, Supt. of U.S. Census, to Watson Freeman, Marshal of Massachusetts	1860-1863	Box 1: 1
Marshal's oath	1860	Box 1: 2
Instructions booklet, 8th U.S. Census	1860	Box 1: 3
List of assistants to Marshal Freeman	n.d.	Box 1: 4
Acknowledgment of receipt of set of 8th census returns, Office of Secretary of Commonwealth of Massachusetts	1860	Box 1: 5
Berkshire County: letters of introduction and of application for assistant position	1859-1860	Box 1: 6
Berkshire County: assistants' oaths	1860	Box 1: 7
Berkshire County: returns, related correspondence, and certificates of receipt	1860	Box 1: 8
Bristol County: letters of introduction and of application for assistant position	1859-1860	Box 1: 9
Bristol County: assistants' oaths	1860	Box 1: 10
Bristol County: returns, related correspondence, and certificates of receipt	1860-1861	Box 1: 11
Middlesex County: letters of introduction and of application for assistant position	1859-1860	Box 1: 12
Middlesex County: assistants' oaths and letters of receipt	1860	Box 1: 13
Middlesex County: letters from assistant Sherman Converse to Watson Freeman	June 1860	Box 1: 14
Middlesex County: returns, related correspondence and certificates of receipt	1860	Box 1: 15
Norfolk County: letters of introduction and of application for assistant position	1860	Box 1: 16
Norfolk County: assistants' oaths	1860	Box 1: 17
Norfolk County: returns, related correspondence, and certificates of receipt	1860	Box 1: 18
Plymouth County: letters of introduction and of application for assistant position	1859-1860	Box 2: 19
Plymouth County: assistants' oaths	1860	Box 2: 20
Plymouth County: returns, related correspondence and certificates of receipt	1860	Box 2: 21
Suffolk County: letters of introduction and of application for assistant position	1860	Box 2: 22
Suffolk County: assistants' oaths	1860	Box 2: 23
Suffolk County: returns, related correspondence, and certificates of receipt	1860	Box 2: 24
Worcester County: letters of introduction and application for assistant position	1859-1860	Box 2: 25
Worcester County: assistants' oaths	1860	Box 2: 26
Worcester County: returns, related correspondence, and certificates of receipt	1860	Box 2: 27

## Administrative information

### Access

The collection is open for research.

## Provenance

Acquired from: Charles Apfelbaum, 1990.

## Processing Information

Processed by Linda Seidman, 1990.

## Language:

English

## Acknowledgments

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## Search terms

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### Subjects

- Applications for positions.
- Employee selection--Massachusetts--History--Sources.
- Employment references--Massachusetts.
- Freeman, Watson--Correspondence.
- Kennedy, J. C. G. (Joseph Camp Griffith), 1813-1887--Correspondence.
- United States--Census, 8th, 1860.
- United States. Census Office--Officials and employees --Massachusetts--History--Sources.
- United States. Census Office. 8th census, 1860.

### Contributors

- Freeman, Watson, collector **[main entry]**

### Genres and formats

- Census records.
- Job applications.

### Link to similar SCUA collections

[Massachusetts](#)

[Other](#)