



John G. Clark Papers

1874-1987 1941-1970

4 boxes (5.25 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 499

Collection overview

With a lifelong interest in politics, John G. Clark of Easthampton, Massachusetts worked on a number of campaigns before running for office himself. He ran for state senator in 1958, but lost in the Democratic primary. Two years later he ran again, this time for state representative of the 3rd Hampshire District, and won. Clark served in the State House of Representative for eight years until he was appointed clerk of the district court in Northampton and chose not to run for reelection.

While this collection is small, it is packed with campaign materials, letters, position statements, speeches, and press releases that together offer a good sense of the political climate in Massachusetts during the 1960s, especially issues of local concern for Hampshire County. Letters from four young neighbors written while serving in Vietnam provide a personal account of the war.

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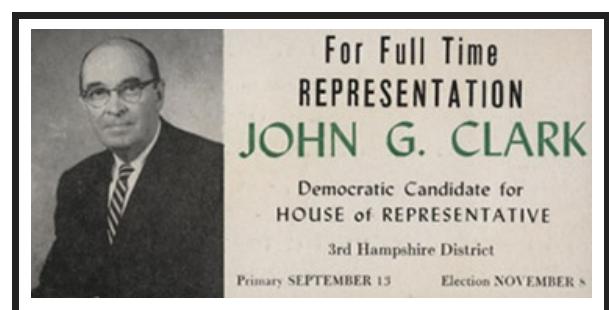
[Massachusetts \(West\)](#)

[Politics and governance](#)

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Background on John G. Clark

John G. Clark's colorful life began on February 26, 1902 in Northampton, Massachusetts. His wife, Ruth Miller Clark was born in 1902 in Easthampton; like her husband, she was raised in Western Massachusetts. John and Ruth married just as the Great Depression commenced; their only child- a son- John P. Clark was born in 1930. During the early Depression years, Clark worked in his insurance business and attended law school at night, but this small family- like so many others- faced economic hardships, which led to John losing his business.



World War II saw the Clark's through many changes; the most significant being the purchase of the dairy farm at 79 Holyoke Street in 1940. While running the farm, both John and Ruth spent some time working at the Springfield Armory during the war, which served as their contribution to the war effort. Their main focus,

however, was always the dairy farm; Ruth kept all of the financial records along with every inventory needed. Together, John and Ruth worked seamlessly to run the farm while raising their son.

Their only child, John P. Clark (fondly referred to as "Jack Jr.") was the recipient of all their love and support. Great attention was paid to his education, evidenced by the report cards, letters, speeches, and school programs that they preserved. As a young boy, Jack Jr. attended Easthampton elementary school and Easthampton High School before finishing out his secondary education at Williston Academy between 1947 and 1949. He went on to serve in the Korean War as part of the United States Air Force, and spent time on different bases in Texas and California in addition to serving overseas in Okinawa, Japan. Throughout 1954-55 Jack Jr. remained in close contact with his parents; a large amount of correspondence relating the goings-on in the affair force and at home in Easthampton has been preserved.

While Jack Jr. served in the Air Force, life in Easthampton underwent changes. The dairy farm needed to be closed down after the herd became infected with disease. After this, John worked as a milkman for H.P. Hood & Sons Milk Company; series three of this collection houses a photograph of a group of milkmen. Series two features some letters from this company; one in particular that congratulates Mr. Clark on being the "top wholesale salesman on Egg Nogg sales" in his branch. Meanwhile, Ruth went back to office work at the Springfield Armory. Though they were busy, John and Ruth always had Jack on their minds while he remained overseas.

John's political career began in 1960 when he ran for, and was elected to the Massachusetts State House of Representatives, representing the third Hampshire County District. He ran on the platform of providing full representation for his constituents; meaning that he would make himself available to the public and assist them in any way in which he was able. He continued this idea throughout his three terms. One of the ways he provided this -- full representation -- included having office hours from nine in the morning to twelve in the afternoon on three Saturdays a month; each Saturday was spent in one of the three towns where he had office located. His dedication also shown through in his correspondence with a few local young men serving in Vietnam in 1966. The letters offered words of encouragement in between relating some of the goings-on back home. Series one also contains a separate folder holding a huge amount of correspondence between Clark and his constituents. People wrote and asked for his help, or brought a town issue to his attention. Either John or Ruth would try to respond to each constituent. During his three terms, Ruth worked tirelessly as his secretary; answering and returning calls, typing his correspondence and keeping his records in order. Together, these two people formed one of the hardest-working teams.

During his time in office, John formed a close friendship with Lorenzo Jeffers, the chief of the Wampanoag Tribe. When John first went to the legislature, he heard a speech by a member of this tribe and that moment sparked his interest in helping the tribe in any way possible; he worked ardently for the tribe to gain the land necessary to build the Gay Head Museum in Gay Head, MA on Martha's Vineyard. John was even inducted into the Wampanoag Tribe as a honorary chief. Clark remained friends with Jeffers, even after his last term in office.

John choose not to run for reelection in 1968, and instead moved on to serve as the clerk of the Hampshire County district court. He enjoyed his time in that position because of his keen interest in the law. Unfortunately, in December of 1968, Clark suffered a stroke which ended his job at the court; he was never able to return to work. During his rehabilitation he documented the stroke and his recovery through letters and journal-esque pieces, which can be found in series two of this collection. He refused to remain on the sidelines, and used this writing time to regain use of his hands.

John G. Clark passed away in May 1972 at age 70. He left behind a legacy of full representation for his constituents, and is remembered as being a representative whom the people knew they could always count on.

Scope of collection

The collection is divided into three series: Political, Personal and Biographical, and Photographs. The political information ranges from ca. 1960 to 1968 and contains correspondence, campaign materials, newspaper clippings and articles and bills, along with material relating to the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies. The personal and biographical content ranges from ca. 1942 to 1982. The material includes letters and documents from a couple of Clark's employers such as H.P. Hood and Sons Milk Company and The Springfield Armory. All the material relating to John P. Clark's education, which includes; report cards, reading lists, speeches, graduation bulletins and all of the correspondence and rules for the Invitation to College radio contest Jack Jr. took part in. All of the correspondence during Jack's time in the air force between him and his parents from the years 1953 to 1955, along with postcards, foreign currency, certificates, memorandums, inventories and travel records are located within this series. The financial records, animal inventories and blue relating to the dairy farm, as well as the family's deed to purchase their house and the rest of their financial records can be found in series two. Many of the extended family members' obituaries, and Jack Jr.'s account of his family history are located here as well. The photographs in the third series are varied. They include snapshots, taken ca. 1953 to 1955, of different military bases as well as shorts of Okinawa, Japan. Photos of the dairy farm, the family home, as well as random family snapshots can be found within this series.

Series descriptions

Series 1. Political Career

1958-1972

Series one contains information pertaining to John G. Clark's eight-year career as Massachusetts State representative. The bulk of this series consists of correspondence between Clark and other politicians and public officials, as well as between he and his constituents. Notable letters include those written by Silvio Conte and James Lawton. Clark appeared to assist Lawton during his run for State Attorney General. In addition to several folders of correspondence, there is a folder of Clark's campaign materials, which includes fliers, postcards and bumper stickers. The letters to and from Vietnam soldiers are also located within this series. The letters, ranging from March 1966 to December 1966, are from local boys who were looking for any news from back home in Easthampton. There are also letters and newspaper clippings reflecting Clark's relationship with Wampanoag Chief Lorenzo Jeffers. Within that same folder is Clark's circulatory letter iterating how he came to be involved in the issues concerning the Wampanoag tribe. One folder contains the booklets and pamphlets from the Massachusetts General Court from the years 1961 to 1968. The booklets list the different committees within the general court and the respective senators and representatives who were part of them, while the membership pamphlets simply list the senators and representatives for each county in Massachusetts. Some of this material reflects historic moments of the 1960s; pamphlets, newspapers and invitations during the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies are located in this series. There are also several folders that hold large amounts of newspaper clippings from the years ca. 1960 to 1968. All of the clippings portray either Clark's involvement in his districts or the goings-on within the state.

Series 2. Biographical and Personal

1874-1987
(bulk 1936-1987)

Series two contains all of the material related to Clark's personal life outside of the political sphere. In 1942, Jack Jr. was in the hospital for an undisclosed reason for a couple of weeks; during this period John was unable to join Ruth at the hospital with Jack Jr. as he needed to stay on the farm. In this series, there is a folder containing the letters exchanged between John and Ruth, and John and Jack Jr. during that time apart. All of the blueprints for their family home and the dairy farm are contained in box two. Additionally, there is a folder containing receipts for cattle, as well as a separate folder which holds records of all the livestock and tools used on the farm. All of the financial records for the farm, house and any additional family expenses have also been preserved within this series. As John held a variety of jobs before being elected as state representative, this series also houses letters, handbooks and other papers from the Springfield Armory and H.P. Hood & Sons Milk Company. John P. Clark's (Jack Jr.) education material from grade school through college. There are letters, report cards, speeches, reading lists, along with notices regarding extra-curricular activities from the following schools: Easthampton High School, Williston Academy, American International College, and Clark University. Jack Jr. was also involved in the academic contest called the Invitation to College Contest in 1947, which was broadcast over the radio. The letters Jack received regarding the contest, as well as booklets containing the contest's instructions are saved and are in box two of this collection. A significant portion of this series is the correspondence between Jack Jr. and his parents while he was in the U.S. Air force during the Korean War. There are approximately 50 folders containing correspondence from February 1952 to June 1955. Six of these letters are sound recordings, or "talking letters"? in which John and Ruth could listen to Jack speak to them via these tapes. Other folders contain correspondence and letters from various family members and friends. Jack Jr. also started a handwritten account of his family history entitled "The Clark Chronicles"? which can be found with other material related to the Clark family history.

Series 3. Photographs

1895, 1941-1970

The third and final series houses all of this collection's photographs. The bulk of this series is snapshots of various air force bases across the U.S. and Okinawa, Japan. There are also four folders that hold pictures of the Clark family through the years, including one of John G. Clark's father, James taken during his track and field days. Many of these photographs are of the family home at 79 Holyoke Street and the dairy farm; some of the livestock found their way into the pictures. A few of the photos are of John while he was in office- the most notable being of Clark dressed up for the St. Patrick's Day Parade as he was a member of that committee. However, the photo that stands out is of a group of Hood milk men and the trucks, all lined up on a road before heading out for the day's deliveries.

Inventory

Series 1. Political Career**1958-1972**

American Polonia Reporter	1966	Box 1: 1
Awards and certificates	1958-1971	Box 1: 2
<i>Bay Stater</i>	1963 June	Box 1: 3
Bills passed	1961-1968	Box 1: 4
<i>Boston Sunday Herald</i> : political cartoons	1962	Box 1: 5
Business and membership cards	1961-1972	Box 1: 6
Campaign materials	1960	Box 1: 7
Campaign poster	ca. 1960	Box 4
Cardinal Cushing statement	undated	Box 1: 8
Ceremonies attended	1963	Box 1: 9
Certificates: honorary citizen (Quincy, Mass.)	1965	Box 4
Certificates: state representative	1961-1967	Box 3
Committee materials	1953	Box 1: 10
Correspondence	1961-1970	Box 1: 11
<i>Contents:</i> Includes circulary letters, letters to the editor.		
Correspondence: constituents	1960-1969	Box 1: 12
Correspondence: politicians, public officials	1961-1969	Box 1: 13
Correspondence: Ruth Clark	1965-1981	Box 1: 14
Correspondence: Vietnam soldiers	1966	Box 1: 15
Inauguration: President Johnson	1965	Box 1: 16
Invitations	1961-1968	Box 1: 17
Jeffers, Lorenzo	1963-1972	Box 1: 18
Kennedy presidency	1961	Box 1: 19
Kennedy presidency: All New England States Dinner	1963 Oct	Box 1: 20
Kennedy memorials	1963	Box 1: 21
Lions Club	1958	Box 1: 22
Massachusetts election candidates	1962	Box 1: 23
Massachusetts General Court	1961-1968	Box 1: 24
Massachusetts Legislature Association: window decal	ca. 1969	Box 1: 25
Miscellaneous, political	1961-1964	Box 1: 26
National Civic Review	1965	Box 1: 27
Newspaper articles: <i>Daily Hampshire Gazette</i>	1959-1966	Box 1: 28
Newspaper articles: <i>Holyoke Telegram</i>	1965	Box 1: 29
Newspaper clippings: election results	1960-1964	Box 1: 30
Newspaper clippings: historic headlines	1960	Box 1: 31
Newspaper clippings: historic headlines	1964	Box 1: 32
Newspaper clippings	1960-1961	Box 1: 33
Newspaper clippings	1962	Box 1: 34
Newspaper clippings	1963-1964	Box 1: 35
Newspaper clippings	1965-1968	Box 1: 36
Newspaper clippings	1972	Box 1: 37
Newspaper clippings	undated	Box 1: 38
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Series 2. Biographical and Personal**1874, 1936-1987**

Air Force: Air Force Aid Society	1954	Box 1: 41
Air Force: Air Reserve records center	1958-1959	Box 1: 42
Air Force: American Express checking	1953	Box 1: 43
Air Force: currency, Japanese ration card	ca. 1945	Box 1: 44
Air Force: currency, Japanese military	1945	Box 1: 45
Air Force: Japanese 10 yen note	ca. 1945	Box 1: 46
<i>Contents:</i> U.S. propaganda counterfeit.		
Air Force: emergency record data	1954 Oct	Box 1: 47

Air Force: Expedition of an American Squadron to China Seas and Japan	1953	Box 1: 48
Air Force: Hellington, Texas base	1954-1955	Box 1: 49
Air Force: honorable discharge certificate	1959 July	Box 1: 50
Air Force: Texas base, negatives	1949	Box 1: 51
Air Force: Texas base, theater pamphlets	1954	Box 1: 52
Air Force: insurance application	1954 Jan	Box 1: 53
Air Force: letter, Department of the Air Force	1953 June	Box 1: 54
Air Force: letter, West Point Military Academy	1959 Jan	Box 1: 55
Air Force: meal car and liberty pass	1954-1955	Box 1: 56
Air Force: medical papers	1953 Sept	Box 1: 57
Air Force: memorandums	1953	Box 1: 58
Air Force: newspaper clippings	1952-1954	Box 1: 59
Air Force: Okinawa, Japan	ca. 1952	Box 1: 60
Air Force: personal property inventory	1952	Box 1: 61
Air Force: pins, patches	ca. 1954	Box 3
Air Force: postcards	ca. 1952	Box 1: 62
Air Force: radiograms	1952	Box 1: 63
Air Force: recreation	ca. 1952	Box 1: 64
Air Force: reports and orders	1953	Box 1: 65
Air Force: Rice Owls football fliers, roster	1954	Box 1: 66
Air Force: roster	ca. 1952	Box 1: 68
Air Force: Samson Base, Geneva, N.Y.	1951 Aug	Box 1: 68
Air Force: San Francisco, Buena Vista Cafe	ca. 1952	Box 1: 69
Air Force: San Francisco headquarters	1953 Dec	Box 1: 70
Air Force: sewing kit	ca. 1954	Box 3
Air Force: Talking letters	ca. 1952	Box 3
Air Force: travel	1954	Box 1: 71
Air Force: travel orders and leave requests	1954 June	Box 1: 72
Air Force: U.S. Armed Forces Institute, Japan	1952 Aug	Box 1: 73
Air Force: Western Union Telegraph Co.	1954	Box 1: 74
American International College Newspaper	undated	Box 1: 75
American International College Vetrans Association	1957	Box 1: 76
Awards: Invitation to College	ca. 1948	Box 3
Birth certificate: Clark, John G.	1941, 1961	Box 1: 77
Board of Appeal: motor vehicle	1977	Box 1: 78
CARE program for Japan	undated	Box 1: 79
Circular letters: Clark, John P.	1983	Box 1: 80
Clark family history: "Clark Chronicles	1987	Box 1: 81
Clark family history: Eulogy for Ruth Clark	1985	Box 1: 82
Clark family history: "The Great Depression"	1987	Box 1: 83
<i>Contents:</i> John P. Clark memoir.		
Clark family history: graduation and teacher's certificate	1959	Box 1: 84
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1942	Box 1: 85
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1953 Dec	Box 1: 86
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1954 Mar	Box 1: 87
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1954 Apr-May	Box 1: 88
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1954 June	Box 1: 89
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1954 Nov	Box 1: 90
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1954 Dec	Box 1: 91
Clark, John G.: Correspondence: Clark, John P. (Jack)	1955 Jan	Box 1: 92
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Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 Mar	Box 2: 7
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 Apr	Box 2: 8
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 May	Box 2: 9
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents.	1952 June	Box 2: 10
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 July	Box 2: 11
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 Aug	Box 2: 12
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 Sept	Box 2: 13
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 Oct	Box 2: 14
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 Nov	Box 2: 15
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1952 Dec	Box 2: 16
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Jan	Box 2: 17
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Feb	Box 2: 18
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Mar	Box 2: 19
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Apr	Box 2: 20
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 May	Box 2: 21
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 June	Box 2: 22
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 July	Box 2: 23
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Aug	Box 2: 24
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Sept	Box 2: 25
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Oct	Box 2: 26
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Nov	Box 2: 27
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1953 Dec	Box 2: 28
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1954 Aug	Box 2: 29
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1954 Sept	Box 2: 30
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1954 Oct	Box 2: 31
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1954 Nov	Box 2: 32
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1954 Dec	Box 2: 33
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1955 Jan	Box 2: 34
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1955 Feb	Box 2: 35
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1955 Mar	Box 2: 36
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1955 Apr	Box 2: 37
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1955 May	Box 2: 38
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: parents	1955 June, 1958	Box 2: 39
Clark, John P.: Correspondence: various	1952-1969	Box 2: 40
Correspondence: Clark, Ruth	1942, 1953- 1978	Box 2: 41
Correspondence: dairy farm	1940-1953	Box 2: 42
Correspondence: envelopes	1947-1968	Box 2: 43
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Dairy farm: cow inventory	undated	Box 2: 47
Dairy farm: deed to purchase farm and receipt	1940	Box 2: 48
Dairy farm: expense record	1946-1956	Box 2: 49
Dairy farm: inventory	undated	Box 2: 50
Dairy farm: Farmers' Production Credit Association of Western Massachusetts	1943-1949	Box 2: 51
Dairy farm: livestock receipts, reports	1946-1949	Box 2: 52
Dairy farm: U.S. Department of Agriculture	1946	Box 2: 53
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Finance: dairy farm product receipts	1945-1946	Box 2: 62
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Occasion cards: Clark, Ruth	1047-1972	Box 2: 88
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Rules and Reform Initiative: newspaper articles	1983-1984	Box 2: 90
Rules and Reform Initiative: population and petition	1983-1984	Box 2: 91
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Springfield Armory: letters	1944	Box 2: 100
Springfield Armory: office memoranda	1940-1945	Box 2: 101
Springfield Armory: report of field personnel action	1943-1945	Box 2: 102
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Williston Academy: letters	1947-1949	Box 2: 108
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Series 3. Photographs

1895, 1941-1970

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Clark, John P.: childhood	ca. 1941	Box 2: 118
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Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Acquired from Adrienne Clark, 2003; addition in 2010.

Processing Information

Processed by Amy Hindle, 2012.

Language:

English

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Cite as: John G. Clark Papers (MS 499). Special Collections and University Archives, W.E.B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Search terms

Subjects

- Clark, John P.
- Clark, Ruth Miller
- Easthampton (Mass.)--History
- Massachusetts--History.
- Massachusetts--Politics and government--1951-
- Vietnam War, 1961-1975

Contributors

- Clark, John G. **[main entry]**
- Clark, John G.

Genres and formats

- Correspondence
- Photographs

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