

**Maine Historical Society**

Coll. 2809
Bernstein, Edward I.
Edward I. Bernstein Collection
1898-2014

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Access: Unrestricted

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Biographical Note:

Edward Israel Bernstein was a life-long resident of Portland who served on the City Council for 21 consecutive years (1968 – 1991) and also served as Mayor of Portland in 1973 and again in 1978 – 1979.

Edward (Generation 3) was the second child of Levi and Rose Bernstein who were residents of Portland. Edward was born 31 October 1923 and joined an older brother Norman Jack Bernstein. A sister, Helene Irene Bernstein (Cook), was born in 1929 and is the only living Bernstein sibling as of 2015. Father Levi (Generation 2) was a ship's chandler and owned and operated Bernstein and Jacobson on Commercial Street for 30 + years. Bernstein and Jacobson were in the salvage business and were credited as saving numerous people from drowning in Portland Harbor. Levi was the son of Berry Robert Bernstein (Generation 1) who immigrated to the United States from Russia in the late 1870's. He settled in Portland and received his naturalization/ citizenship papers in 1889.

The Bernstein children attended public schools in Portland with Edward graduating from Deering High School in 1942. Edward then joined the military where he served in the 86 Black Hawk Infantry Division, 482nd Company both in Europe and the Philippine Islands during World War II. Edward's Unit was instrumental in the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp in Germany in 1945.

Bernstein then attended college and Law School at Suffolk University in Boston. He returned to Portland and completed Law School at Portland University. Bernstein married Helen Muriel Cohen 13 September 1947 and they had two children. Madeleine (Bernstein) Segal is their only surviving daughter as of 2015 and is the donor of this collection.

During the 1950s and 1960s Bernstein ran a number of businesses in Portland including an early Taxi Cab venture with his brother Norman and also The Edward I. Bernstein Insurance Agency on Congress Street. President Dwight D. Eisenhower appointed Bernstein Portland Postmaster from 1960-1962, a position he really enjoyed. He was also a United States Census

Director in the Portland area appointed by Margaret Chase Smith, Maine's popular Republican United States Senator, in 1960.

Bernstein went on to enjoy a long and active career in Portland Politics, being elected or appointed to a number of positions including: Member of the Portland School Committee (1962-1968), Clerk of the Cumberland County Courts, Justice of the Peace and Bail Commissioner (1951-1971 continuously) and Register of Deeds for Cumberland County. He was active in the Maine Republican Party and served as Chairman for a period. Bernstein is credited for a number of important accomplishments during Portland's growth and rebuilding years in the 1970s and 1980s including the building of Portland Public Library, The Casco Bay Ferry Terminal, The Matthew Barron Center (on Brighten Avenue), the Portland Ice Arena, Police and Public Safety Headquarters Building on Middle Street, and the Parking Garage on Fore and Pearl Streets. He was also instrumental in securing the modern ferry service between Portland and Yarmouth, Nova Scotia called the Lion Ferry. In addition, Bernstein served as Trustee to Mercy Hospital, Director of the Jewish Home for the Aged, Director of Shaarey Tphiloh Synagogue, and was a member of both the Woodford Club and Portland Lions Club.

Scope and Content:

The collection includes family/personal documents and photographs, business related records and documents, newspaper clippings, photographs and political ephemera related to Bernstein's career in Portland government and politics. Noteworthy within the collection are letters to and from United States Senator Margaret Chase Smith from the 1960s and 1970s, a telegram from President Richard Nixon to Mayor Bernstein related to the 1973 energy crisis, and a photograph of Bernstein with George Mitchell.

Organization of the collection is in four broad categories: Family/Personal Documents and Photographs, Business Related Documents, Service Appointments and Local Portland Politics Documents and Information, and Photographs of Edward I. Bernstein in various political roles and at select political events/functions. Folders are arranged chronologically within each category whenever possible.

Various objects and memorabilia listed in this collection are housed in the Maine Historical Society Museum including keys to the city and various awards given Bernstein for his service to the community (see listing below).

The donor provided a number of items for digitization with the originals being returned to the family. These items are scanned and not listed as part of this collection; however they support Edward I. Bernstein's meritorious service to the Portland Community.

Provenance: Gift of Madeleine Bernstein Segal, daughter of Edward Bernstein

Inventory

Box 1: Family/Personal Documents and Photographs

- Folder 1:** Citizenship Papers for Berry Bernstein, April 1889
- Folder 2:** Birth Certificate for Edward Israel Bernstein, Born 31 Oct 1923, Issued 1983
- Folder 3:** Family and Personal Photographs
- Folder 4:** Edward I. Bernstein's World War II Service Documents and Photographs, 1942-45
- Folder 5:** Marriage Certificate for Edward I. Bernstein and Helen M. Cohen, 10 Sept 1947
- Folder 6:** Purchase of Plymouth Motor Car, 4 Aug 1951
- Folder 7:** Jewish Community Center's Outstanding Service Award to Charles Rosenbloom, 30 Dec 1952
- Folder 8:** Receipts for Goods and Services, 1953- 1956
- Folder 9:** Surety Legal Document Regarding the Estate of Levi Bernstein, Edward's Father, 18 Dec 1956
- Folder 10:** Life Insurance Policy for Edward I. Bernstein, 10 July 1956
- Folder 11:** Contract to Purchase House on Payson Street, Portland, 21 Dec 1956
- Folder 12:** Personal Credit Statement, 11 Dec 1958
- Folder 13:** Letter from Friend, Jack Parr (Entertainer), circa 1959
- Folder 14:** Medical Insurance Policy, 1 July 1959
- Folder 15:** Banking Documents/Ledger, Undated
- Folder 16:** Maine State Little League Baseball State Tournament Program, 1973
- Folder 17:** \$5,000 City of Portland Permanent improvement Bond of 1978
- Folder 18:** Handwritten Incomplete Will of Edward Bernstein, Undated and Unsigned
- Folder 19:** Purchase papers for Double Cemetery Lot at Mt. Sinai in Portland, 14 Nov 1990
- Folder 20:** Edward I. Bernstein's Death, 29 Aug 2000
- Folder 21:** Death of Norman Jack Bernstein (Edward's Brother), 15 Dec 2000
- Folder 22:** Madeleine (Bernstein) Segal Ran for Public Office, c. 2008
- Folder 23:** Family Photographs of Madeleine (Bernstein) Segal and Sons, 2014

Box 2: Business Related Documents

- Folder 1:** State of Maine Appointment as Justice of the Peace and Bail Commissioner, 1951 – 1971 Continuous
- Folder 2:** Letters To/From Edward I. Bernstein Regarding his Business/Political Positions, 1952-1980
- Folder 3:** Title Searches performed by Edward I. Bernstein in April 1954 and May 1958
- Folder 4:** District Supervisor Bureau of Census, 1960 Decennial Census
- Folder 5:** Letters To/From Edward I. Bernstein Re: Position as Postmaster for the City of Portland, 1960

Service Appointments and Local Portland Politics

- Folder 6:** Letters To/From United States Senator Margaret Chase Smith, 1960 and 1972
- Folder 7:** Telegram from President Richard M. Nixon, 8 Nov 1973
- Folder 8:** Lion Ferry AB, "Prince of Fundy" Line between Portland Maine and Yarmouth Nova Scotia, 20 April 1973
- Folder 9:** City of Portland City Council Awards, 1973, 1974, 1981

Folder 10: Newspaper Articles Highlighting Edward I. Bernstein's Roles in Portland Government, 1973-1975 and 1980

Folder 11: State of Maine "Register of Deeds" Appointment 16 Jan 1978 and 7 Dec 1978

Folder 12: Inauguration of Edward I. Bernstein as Mayor City of Portland, 11 Dec 1978

Folder 13: Honorary Awards and Certificates

Folder 14: Who's Who in City Hall, 13 Sept 1980

Folder 15: City Council Committees, 31 Dec 1980

Folder 16: Invitation to 2001 City Council Inauguration, 3 Dec 2001

Folder 17: Edward I. Bernstein Handwritten Notes, Undated

Box 3: Photographs of Political Appointments and Special Events

Folder 1: Edward I. Bernstein, Clerk of Courts, 1960's and 1970's

Folder 2: Photographs of Cornerstone Laying Ceremony, Jewish Home for the Aged, Portland, Maine 20 May 1962

Folder 3: Photograph of "State of Maine Room" Restoration Committee

Folder 4: Photographs of Groundbreaking for New Police and Public Safety Building, 14 July 1972

Folder 5: Photographs of Edward I. Bernstein with Friend Arthur Waterman, Dec 1972

Folder 6: Photographs of City Council Inauguration, Dec 1972

Folder 7: Photograph of City Council Island Trip, Aug 1977

Folder 8: Colored Photographs of Portland City Council, circa 1970s and 1980s

Folder 9: Photograph of Groundbreaking for Portland International Airport, circa 1980s

Folder 10: Photograph of Senator George Mitchell with his Friend Edward I. Bernstein, April 1984

Folder 11: Photograph of the Dedication of the Ice Arena in Portland, Dec 1984

Folder 12: Photographs and Invitation: Dedication and Open House for Harold G Loring House (aka Barron Center, Former Portland City Hospital), 15 August 1986

Folder 13: Photograph of Groundbreaking for Custom House Square, 29 August 1988

Folder 14: Photographs of Casco Bay Ferry Terminal Grand Opening,

Folder 15: Photographs, Unidentified and Undated

Folder 16: Photographs of Edward I. Bernstein in Various Political Roles

Oversized materials located in O.S. Box 3 (on top of vertical file cabinets)

-Certificate of Appointment to Acting postmaster at Portland Maine, 31 August 1960

-Certificate Presented to Hon. Edward I. Bernstein for Honorary Degree in Steakology from Bonanza International. Inc. 3 April 1973

Objects and memorabilia in Maine Historical Society Museum:

Key to the City: Portland Maine (Bottle Opener) in box

Resurgam. City of Portland Maine (Paperweight) in box

Portland Maine Gold Pin in Cross Jewelry box

Portland Maine Gold Key Charm in Cross Jewelry box

Notary Public Official Stamps, 24 March 1978