

**Ainsley C. Armstrong Collection
1896 - 1934**

**Special Collections of the Lloyd Sealy Library
John Jay College of Criminal Justice
899 Tenth Avenue
New York, NY 10019**

Collection arranged by Ellen Sexton, August 1997.

Introduction

The records in this collection originate from the years 1896-1934, with the bulk of them from the the 1920s and 30s. They were purchased for the Lloyd Sealy Library by Chief Librarian Dr. Larry Sullivan from a Boston dealer, Kenneth Shure, in the summer of 1986. When they were accessioned, the records were housed in four file boxes, labeled 1, 2, 3 and 5, and accompanied by a scrapbook of newspaper clippings from 1872-1879 (housed as a separate series, as there is no apparent connection between it and the Armstrong papers). The records have been re-housed in acid-free containers, and take up about 2 cubic feet.

The records are open to researchers under the conditions of the Special Collections access policy. Records may be copied for use by researchers for scholarly or personal use. The Library reserves the right to restrict photocopying, photographing or other copy methods if such copying is considered detrimental to the physical condition of the records.

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Ainsley C. Armstrong - biographical note.

Ainsley C. Armstrong joined the Boston Police Department on July 9, 1891, and spent the next 41 years there, retiring at the age of 65 on August 17th, 1932. He rose through the ranks to become Deputy Superintendent, achieving this title the year before he retired. He had spent just over 41 years with the Boston Police Department. For most of his career, he worked in the Bureau of Criminal Investigation. He died on June 21, 1939 at the age of 71. His funeral was held in the Brighton Congregational Church, on June 23, 1939.

Known dates:

July 9, 1891	Ainsley C. Armstrong appointed to the Force. *
May 31, 1926	Captain Armstrong promoted to Chief Inspector.
October 17, 1931	Chief Inspector Armstrong promoted to Deputy Superintendent.
August 17, 1932	Deputy Superintendent Armstrong retires at age 65.
June 21, 1939	Ainsley C. Armstrong dies, age 71.
June 23, 1939	Funeral at the Brighton Congregational Church.

* In 1891, 18 men were appointed on the Force. 1 as Chief Inspector, 2 as captains, 1 as lieutenant, 2 as sergeants, and 12 as patrolmen.

Sources:

Annual report. (1916, 1926, 1931, 1932). Boston, MA: Board of Police.

Deaths: A.C. Armstrong, retired. (1939, June 23). Boston Evening Transcript, p.8.

Papers from the collection.

Scope and contents

This collection consists mostly of paper based materials. A few photographs are present, and some large keys. The bulk of the collection consists of printed material, newspaper cuttings, typewritten memos, some correspondence, and typed and handwritten papers. Some of the typed papers are the originals, but many are duplicate copies on very thin paper. The keys consist of one medium sized and four large keys. Two of the larger keys have the letter A formed at the top. All of the keys are housed in box #1.

The condition of the material overall is generally fairly good, with the exception of the newspaper clippings. These have been photocopied. The original clippings have been retained, and are now housed separately in box number 4. The photocopies have been filed according to the original arrangement in the collection of the newspaper clippings.

The collection is arranged according to the subject divisions used in the file boxes in which the collection was housed when accessioned. Three of the file boxes contained small cards with a handwritten list of the subject divisions used. The other file box contained no such list, and the material in it had not been subdivided using file separators. This material from file box number 3 was arranged by me.

The records consist of material gathered by Armstrong during the course of his career. There is no information here regarding his private life. The range of material is from 1896 to 1934, with the bulk of the material from 1910 to 1934. There is material relating to specific cases that Armstrong worked on. Of interest are examples of fraud from the turn of the century, and also documents relating to extradition procedures and the recovery of fugitives, including an undated newspaper article discussing Inspector Armstrong's trip to Europe to bring back a murder suspect to Boston. Other materials reflecting the working life of a police officer include the typed official statements made by suspects to Armstrong, re various crimes (1916-1924), and the transcript of a murderer's trial from the early twenties.

Much of the material from the twenties and thirties covers affairs beyond the immediate jurisdiction of a police officer. Armstrong collected many contemporary articles from newspapers and journals which discuss capital punishment, juvenile offenders, the causes of crime, juries, prisons and prison reform. Some of the articles on prison reform discuss the support of the Massachusetts Commissioner Bates for a wage for prison labor. Despite his wide ranging interests in criminal justice, Armstrong was not an advocate of criminal justice education for police officers. One newspaper article quotes him as saying that on-the-job experience is the best training for a detective.

In the last years of his career, Armstrong evidently was concerned with the future direction of the Boston police department. There are articles and correspondence discussing new technologies for use in the identification of suspects by witnesses, and in interrogations. He corresponded with two different companies regarding the viability of using moving picture and sound recording equipment in police work. There are descriptions and photographs of a "show-up room" and witness box in use by the St. Louis Police Department. Apparently, the "show-up

room" was more or less a stage which could be lit in different ways to evoke midday, evening, morning etc. The suspect would be positioned on stage in the appropriate lighting conditions and be identified, or not, by witnesses. Unfortunately, I haven't located any papers in the collection confirming whether or not the Boston police department ever invested in any of this technology. Other papers discuss the use of other technologies, including radio, in use in other police departments at that time (1930-1932).

This collection contains no information on the 1919 Boston police strike, Charles Ponzi and his pyramid fraud scheme, or the Sacco-Vanzetti case. There is also no information regarding Armstrong's personal life.

The collection as a whole presents some interesting insights into the working life and professional concerns of a police officer during the first three decades of the twentieth century.

Series descriptions

Series	Folder numbers
1. Divisions' lists. Three cards listing subject files in boxes 1, 2 and 5. (Material was not present in file box # 1 for three of the headings listed on the card found in file box 1 - <i>Bertillon, Suspicious persons</i> , and <i>Vagabonds</i> . No materials were found for the heading <i>Evidence</i> in file box #2).	1, 15, 32
2. Arrests, 1900-1930 Typed arrest statistics, including juvenile arrests, for 1909-1930. Three opinions for court cases (1909-1913) of alleged illegal arrests, one with passages underlined in pencil.	1
3. Fugitives, 1901-1929 Documents and articles relating to extradition cases and procedures, between states and between countries. Includes a list of code words, and newspaper cuttings. One undated newspaper article describes a trip by Inspector Armstrong to France to retrieve a fugitive.	3, 3.1, 3.1N
4. Law, 1903-1929 Copies of statutes, a typed sheet of legal definitions, articles on forgery, colonial law, and attempt to commit a crime, a memo on adultery law, typed sheet of inspirational text entitled "the social worker", case report of false imprisonment, list of fraud/pretence cases and text of two cases from law reporters, and newspaper cuttings.	4, 4.1, 4.1N
5. Policemen, 1906-1932 Typed sheets of police examination questions for captain and lieutenant (1917-1924). Typed sheet listing names, including Armstrong's, listing dates of appointment, promotion and retirement. Typed sheet of arrests made in 1927 and 1928 by the Boston police department. Typed memo from the Bureau of Criminal Investigation, and papers relating search warrants, revolvers, law, intoxicated police officers and assaults upon police officers.	5, 5.1, 5.1N, 5.2
6. Assorted papers, 1917-1932. Consists of materials found loose in file box #2. Published articles and/or speeches in booklet form, some autographed and dedicated to Armstrong. The articles are about crime, its causes and prevention, police work and gangsters. Includes an article on a 1929 crime prevention campaign. Includes three articles by Dr. Carleton Simon. Typed copy of a letter from Armstrong to George W. Wickersham, chairman of the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement, which appears to be a general essay on law enforcement. One page typed report to the Chief Inspector from a patrolman regarding a case dismissed by a judge as it had been brought before the wrong court.	6. 6.1, 6.1N

7. **Forgeries, 1897-1930.** **7, 7.1, 7.1N**
 Newspaper article reporting counterfeit lithograph theater passes, with an actual pass, from 1897. Handwritten page listing women's names, with dates and amounts of money, totaling up to 58 checks, 6 banks and \$952,50, stamped 1918-1924. Newspaper cuttings and other published articles about forged checks dated 1925.
8. **Newspaper cuttings, 1927-1929.** **8, 8N, 9, 9N**
 Consist of newspaper cuttings found loose in file box #2.
9. **Capital punishment, 1900-1930.** **10, 10N**
 Material consists of a booklet entitled "Capital punishment: some reasons why House Bill no. 381 ought to pass" published by the Anti-death penalty League of Massachusetts in 1900, and some newspaper articles.
10. **Deaths by violence, 1902-1931?** **11, 11.1, 11.1N, 11.2, 11.2N**
- 10.1 **Deaths by violence.** **11, 11.1, 11.1N**
 Newspaper articles, including one from 1902 about a murder, with an accompanying circular for a wanted man
- 10.2 **Deaths by violence - automobile deaths.** **11.2, 11.2N**
 Consists of materials relating to automobile deaths including newspaper articles, typescript pages enumerating automobile accidents in Boston and charges brought connection with them for the years 1912-1924, and two published reports from the Bureau of the Census, Washington DC, entitled "mortality from automobile accidents" (1930-1931).
11. **Juveniles, 1923-1931.** **12, 12.1, 12.1N**
 Includes a typed report describing the arrest for breaking and entering and larceny of a 16 year old boy, accompanied by a list of his previous arrests, undated newspaper articles subtitled "Captain Armstrong sees little change in age of offenders" and some newspaper articles with handwritten notes attached to them.
12. **Prisons, 1921-1934.** **13, 13.1, 13.1N**
 Publications and newspaper articles on prisons. Includes newspaper articles on the Maine prison riots, the Walla Walla prison riots and Norfolk prison, and allegations of corruption in the Boston police department. Published articles include on describing the ninth International Prison congress held in London in 1925, to which Commissioner Bates went. Typed papers include statistics for arrests for drunkenness 1900-1925 (accompanied by a newspaper article relating a reduction in prison populations to Prohibition), a paper entitled "extracts from a letter written by a man serving sentence in the Massachusetts state prison" accompanied by three photographs of a cell, a corridor and an electric chair (undated), and a typed sheet from the Baltimore, MD police describing a man and wife wanted for fraud accompanied by a newspaper article describing how the same man (Bert M. Morgan) ran a profitable mail order and advertising

business from the Maryland penitentiary.

13. **Dying statements**, 1925-1933. **14**
Consists of typewritten pages and a letter (probably from Armstrong) discussing the legal aspects of dying statements/declarations, and an issue of the Police Journal from 1926 open at an article on the same subject.
14. **Interrogations**, 1911-1931. **16, 17, 18, 18N, 19, 20, 20N**
This series consists of all of the materials from file box #3, which have been divided into the following sub-series:
- 14.1 **Commonwealth v. Dascalkalakis** 1920-1923? **16**
Printed and bound trial transcript, including partial transcript of an interrogation of the suspect by Armstrong. Defendant was on trial for murder. Also two printed briefs from the Massachusetts Supreme Court for the same case. Defendant was found guilty and sentenced to death.
- 14.2 **Statements** 1916-1924. **17**
Typed copies of statements made by suspects to Captain Armstrong in regard to 5 cases. Two cases were about forgery, one for automobile thefts by a gang.
- 14.3 **Confessions**, 1911-1931. **18, 18N**
Typed pages and newspaper articles concerning the "third degree" and confessions. Extract from the Massachusetts Reports re admissibility of a confession. Typed pages headed "Commonwealth vz. Joseph Goldberg et al. Published article from the Police Journal 1926 entitled "the efficacy of the present judicial system as a method for the determination of innocence or guilt".
- 14.4 **"Show-up room" and witness box, St. Louis Police Department.** 1931 **19**
Photographs and copies of correspondence with the St. Louis Chief of Police about using a one way mirror and a lighted stage for identification of suspects by witnesses. Also a report from the Chicago office describing the same technology.
- 14.5 **Interrogations and technology** 1930-1932. **20, 20N**
Correspondence with the Pinkerton Detective Agency, the Philadelphia police department and the Philadelphia Director of Public Safety regarding the use of "sound moving pictures" for the interrogation of suspects. Correspondence with the RCA Photophone Inc. and Electrical Research Products Inc. regarding sound and picture recording devices. Other correspondence and typed papers refer to the use of various technologies including radio in a number of police departments.
- 15 **Quincy A. Shaw investigation** 1911 **21, 21N**
Consists of some materials found loose in file box relating to an investigation of the conduct of

trustees of the estate of Quincy A. Shaw (worth about \$20,000,000). Consists mainly of the Boston Finance Commission report, a newspaper clipping, some typed sheets of laws relating to trustees, a list of witnesses to go before a grand jury and an assignment sheet naming Armstrong as the investigating officer.

16 **Assorted papers** 1909-1928 **22, 22N**

Consists of loose material found in box number 5 outside the divisions. Includes a report by Armstrong about a Boston police officer accused of extortion, a newspaper cutting entitled "the third degree..." and some papers labelled "Doctor Cumston", "taxicab bill" and "telegram".

17 **Fake complaints** 1901-1920 **23, 23.1, 23.1N**

A handwritten report of a blackmail investigation, a letter about an alleged hold-up and robbery, a typed statement made by a woman regarding an alleged jewelry theft, and some newspaper articles.

18 **Human interest** 1896-1930? **24, 25, 26, 27, 27.1, 27.1N**

18.1 **Correspondence and articles** 1919?-1926 **24**

Includes one newspaper article on jury duty by Armstrong and one anecdotal article about him entitled "Boston detectives lost...", a letter requesting police assistance in locating a woman who failed to keep an appointment, a letter concerning a particularly spectacular attempt to conceal a murder and a letter to a newspaper from Armstrong submitting an anecdote.

18.2 **Fraud, forgery, murder etc.** 1899-1917 **25**

Includes a typescript entitled "re Dominion Bank and claimants for reward", typed papers entitled "Notes relative to Mrs. Abbie M. Chalmers' forgery", and papers re perpetrator of check fraud.

18.3 **Advertisements, begging letters, etc.** 1899-1910 **26**

(All of this material had been kept together with a paperclip). Includes advertisements for the sale of dry goods and lucky stones, a pyramid scheme (1900), and a letter seeking to persuade the recipient to buy land.

18.4 **Assorted papers** 1896-1925 **27, 27.1, 27.1N**

Typed sheets containing aphorisms and poetry excerpts, a manuscript listing the "betting rules for horse racing", newspaper articles mainly containing anecdotes and on article from 1896 on spiritualism.

19 **Mental** 1915?-1925 **28, 28.1, 28.1N**

Includes published articles on the causes of crime, female delinquents, and "the defective delinquent", the first issue of the Department of Correction Quarterly, some newspaper articles, a

Box list

Box 1

Contains the materials originally housed in file box #1.

- Folder # 1 Card listing original divisions of file box 1.
 - Folder 1.1 Photograph of a group of men, entitled "Drawn jury October 1898".
 - Folder #2 Arrests. 1909-1930
 - Folder #3 Fugitives. 1901-1929
 - Folder #3.1 Fugitives - newspaper clippings. 1902-1934
 - Folder #4 Law. 1903-1929
 - Folder #4.1 Law - newspaper clippings. 1925-1933
 - Folder #5 Policemen. 1906-1932
 - Folder 5.1 Policemen - newspaper clippings. 1923-1931
 - Folder 5.2 Policemen - examination papers. 1919-1924
- Five keys wrapped in green bubble wrap.

Box 2

Contains the materials originally housed in file box #2.

- Folder #6 Assorted papers. 1917-1932
- Folder #6.1 Assorted papers - newspaper clippings. 1929-1931
- Folder #7 Forgeries. 1897-1925
- Folder #7.1 Forgeries - newspaper clippings. 1897-1930
- Folder #8 Newspaper cuttings. 1927-1929
- Folder #9 Newspaper cuttings. 1926
- Folder #10 Capital punishment. 1900-1930
- Folder #11 Deaths by violence. 1902-?
- Folder #11.1 Deaths by violence - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1928
- Folder #11.2 Deaths by violence - automobile deaths. 1923-1931
- Folder #12 Juveniles. 1923-1932
- Folder #12.1 Juveniles - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1931
- Folder #13 Prisons. 1921-1929
- Folder #13.1 Prisons - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1934
- Folder #14 Dying statements. 1915-1933.
- Folder #15 Card listing original divisions of file box 2.

Box 3

Contains the materials originally housed in file box #3.

- Folder #16 Commonwealth v. Paul Dascalakis. 1920-1923?
- Folder #17 Statements. 1916-1924
- Folder #18 Confessions. 1911-1931
- Folder #19 "Show-up room" and witness box of the St. Louis Police Department. 1931
- Folder #20 Interrogations and technology. 1930-1931

Box 4 - original newspaper cuttings

Contains the original newspaper cuttings found in all four original file boxes.

- Folder #3.1N Fugitives - original newspaper clippings. 1902-1934
- Folder #4.1N Law - original newspaper clippings. 1925-1933
- Folder 5.1N Policemen - original newspaper clippings. 1923-1931
- Folder #6.1N Assorted papers - original newspaper clippings. 1929-1931
- Folder #8N Original newspaper cuttings. 1927-1929
- Folder #9N Original newspaper cuttings. 1926
- Folder #7.1N Forgeries - original newspaper clippings. 1897-1930
- Folder #10N Capital punishment - original newspaper cuttings. 1924-1930
- Folder #11.1N Deaths by violence - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1928
- Folder #11.2N Deaths by violence - automobile deaths - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1929
- Folder #12.1N Juveniles - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1931
- Folder #13.1N Prisons - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1934
- Folder #18N Confessions - original newspaper cuttings. 1925-1931
- Folder #20N Interrogations and technology - original newspaper cuttings. 1931
- Folder #21N Quincy A. Shaw investigation - original newspaper cutting. 1911
- Folder #22N Assorted papers - original newspaper cutting. 1928
- Folder #23.1N Fake complaints - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1926
- Folder #27.1N Human interest - assorted papers - original newspaper cuttings. 1896-1925
- Folder #28.1N Mental - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1925
- Folder #29.1N Parole - original newspaper cuttings. 1925-1931
- Folder #30N Jury - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1928
- Folder #31.1N Liquor - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1932

Box 5

Contains the materials originally housed in file box #5.

- Folder #21 Quincy A. Shaw investigation. 1911
- Folder #22 Assorted papers. 1909-1928
- Folder #23 Fake complaints. 1901-1920
- Folder #23.1 Fake complaints - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1926
- Folder #24 Human interest - correspondence and articles. 1919-1926?
- Folder #25 Human interest - fraud, forgery, murder etc. 1899-1917
- Folder #26 Human interest - advertisements, begging letters etc. 1899-1910
- Folder #27 Human interest - assorted papers. 1919-1930?
- Folder #27.1 Human interest - assorted papers - newspaper cuttings. 1896-1925
- Folder #28 Mental. 1915?-1924
- Folder #28.1 Mental - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1925
- Folder #29 Parole. 1924-1932?
- Folder #29.1 Parole - newspaper cuttings. 1925-1931
- Folder #30 Jury. 1923-1928
- Folder #31 Liquor. 1900-1930
- Folder #31.1 Liquor - newspaper cuttings. 19235-19321
- Folder #32 Card listing original divisions of file box 5.

Folder list

All folders indicated with N contain original newspaper clippings.

- Folder # 1 Card listing original divisions of box 1.
Photograph of a group of men, entitled "Drawn jury October 1898".
- Folder #2 Arrests. 1909-1930
- Folder #3 Fugitives. 1901-1929
- Folder #3.1 Fugitives - newspaper clippings. 1902-1934
- Folder #3.1N Fugitives - original newspaper clippings. 1902-1934
- Folder #4 Law. 1903-1929
- Folder #4.1 Law - newspaper clippings. 1925-1933
- Folder #4.1N Law - original newspaper clippings. 1925-1933
- Folder #5 Policemen. 1906-1932
- Folder 5.1 Policemen - newspaper clippings. 1923-1931
- Folder 5.1N Policemen - original newspaper clippings. 1923-1931
- Folder 5.2 Policemen - examination papers. 1919-1924
- Folder #6 Assorted papers. 1917-1932
- Folder #6.1 Assorted papers - newspaper clippings. 1929-1931
- Folder #6.1N Assorted papers - original newspaper clippings. 1929-1931
- Folder #7 Forgeries. 1897-1925
- Folder #7.1 Forgeries - newspaper clippings. 1897-1930
- Folder #7.1N Forgeries - original newspaper clippings. 1897-1930
- Folder #8 Newspaper cuttings. 1927-1929
- Folder #8N Original newspaper cuttings. 1927-1929
- Folder #9 Newspaper cuttings. 1926
- Folder #9N Original newspaper cuttings. 1926
- Folder #10 Capital punishment. 1900-1930
- Folder #10N Capital punishment - original newspaper cuttings. 1924-1930
- Folder #11 Deaths by violence. 1902-?
- Folder #11.1 Deaths by violence - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1928
- Folder #11.1N Deaths by violence - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1928
- Folder #11.2 Deaths by violence - automobile deaths. 1923-1931
- Folder #11.2N Deaths by violence - automobile deaths - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1929
- Folder #12 Juveniles. 1923-1932
- Folder #12.1 Juveniles - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1931
- Folder #12.1N Juveniles - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1931
- Folder #13 Prisons. 1921-1929
- Folder #13.1 Prisons - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1934
- Folder #13.1N Prisons - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1934
- Folder #14 Dying statements. 1915-1933.

Folder #15 Card listing original divisions of Box 2.
 Folder #16 Commonwealth v. Paul Dascalakis. 1920-1923?
 Folder #17 Statements. 1916-1924
 Folder #18 Confessions. 1911-1931
 Folder #18N Confessions - original newspaper cuttings. 1925-1931
 Folder #19 "Show-up room" and witness box of the St. Louis Police Department. 1931
 Folder #20 Interrogations and technology. 1930-1931
 Folder #20N Interrogations and technology - original newspaper cuttings. 1931
 Folder #21 Quincy A. Shaw investigation. 1911
 Folder #21N Quincy A. Shaw investigation - original newspaper cutting. 1911
 Folder #22 Assorted papers. 1909-1928
 Folder #22N Assorted papers - original newspaper cutting. 1928
 Folder #23 Fake complaints. 1901-1920
 Folder #23.1 Fake complaints - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1926
 Folder #23.1N Fake complaints - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1926
 Folder #24 Human interest - correspondence and articles. 1919-1926?
 Folder #25 Human interest - fraud, forgery, murder etc. 1899-1917
 Folder #26 Human interest - advertisements, begging letters etc. 1899-1910
 Folder #27 Human interest - assorted papers. 1919-1930?
 Folder #27.1 Human interest - assorted papers - newspaper cuttings. 1896-1925
 Folder #27.1N Human interest - assorted papers - original newspaper cuttings. 1896-1925
 Folder #28 Mental. 1915?-1924
 Folder #28.1 Mental - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1925
 Folder #28.1N Mental - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1925
 Folder #29 Parole. 1924-1932?
 Folder #29.1 Parole - newspaper cuttings. 1925-1931
 Folder #29.1N Parole - original newspaper cuttings. 1925-1931
 Folder #30 Jury. 1923-1928
 Folder #30N Jury - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1928
 Folder #31 Liquor. 1900-1932
 Folder #31.1 Liquor - newspaper cuttings. 1923-1932
 Folder #31.1N Liquor - original newspaper cuttings. 1923-1932
 Folder #32 Card listing original divisions of file box 5.