



Ferdinand Levy.  
Register.

**REGISTER'S OFFICE**  
**HALL OF RECORDS**  
**(CITY OF NEW YORK.)**

July 1<sup>st</sup> 1895.

Hon William L. Strong  
Mayor.

Dear sir,

In answer to the communication of January 30<sup>th</sup> in re to the sureties of bondsmen for Auctioneers, I would state that this Office will lend every aid in the matter, but I would suggest that when a surety offers himself, that he should be compelled to produce the deed of the Property offered; this will enable this Office to make proper search and with expedition.

Assuring you of my hearty

co-operation in all matters which  
appertain to the local government  
I remain

Yours very respectfully,  
Richard D. Long,  
Register.



**REGISTER'S OFFICE**  
**HALL OF RECORDS**  
**(CITY OF NEW YORK.)**

Ferdinand Levy.  
Register.

Apr 9<sup>th</sup> 1895.

Hon William L Strong  
Mayor

Dear Sir,

Herewith please find  
enclosed completed searches  
in the matter of Samuel Fincke  
auctioneer's bond.

Yours respectfully,  
Ferdinand Levy



REGISTER'S OFFICE,

HALL OF RECORDS, Dec. 20<sup>th</sup> 1895.

Hon. *William L. Strong,*  
*Mayor*

Dear Sir:-

In submitting my estimate to The Board of Estimate and Apportionment, I asked for an appropriation "for Salaries, \$130,000". and for "Preservation of Public Records, \$19,300." the same amounts as have been appropriated to this office for the past four years. The amount asked for salaries, \$130,000. is only \$14,000. more than was allowed for the year 1887, the first year in which this became a salaried office. This increase may be readily explained by referring to the increased amount of business, and to the introduction of "the Block System" in 1891.

Commissioner of Accounts Terry, in his report, has recommended a reduction of \$50,000. in the estimate for salaries, and \$10,000. for "Preservation of Records". I have no hesitation in stating that, from my own experience in the office and from the experience of those who have been employed under my predecessors, it would be absolutely impossible to perform the work of this important office were such amounts determined upon in the Final Estimate. An examination of some of the reductions recommended will at once show that the conclusions of Mr. Terry are based on false premises. The most important work of the office is performed by those employed "behind the desk" where all papers are received for record. In this branch of the office, there were employed under "the fee system" nine (9) men. There are at present employed performing similar work



eleven (11) men. It is proposed to abolish six (6) of these clerkships and transact the business with five (5) men or four (4) less than were employed under the fee system. The two additional clerks are the Daily Index Clerk and an Index Clerk to assist in keeping up "the Daily Indices" which have increased by "the Block System" to twenty-nine (29) as compared with two (2) under the old system.

In the Chattel Mortgage Bureau, the increase in the number of instruments filed from 32,986 in 1886 to nearly 60,000 in the present year would justify an increase in that office.

In the Satisfaction Bureau, the increased amount of business, and the additional work imposed upon the Satisfaction Clerk by the introduction of "the Block System" makes necessary an increase in that branch of the office.

The positions of Chief Block Index Clerk, Verification Clerk, additional Index Clerks, etc., which it is proposed to abolish were all created by the introduction of "the Block System" so that no comparison can be made with similar duties under the old system. By the Statute known as "The Block Indexing Act" The Register is required to have every instrument received for record <sup>entered</sup> in the proper "Block Index" within ninety days of its receipt. He is also required to keep an Alphabetical Index somewhat similar to the old Index. It will be at once apparent that the doubling of the work would seem to require an additional force, and the fact that in 1889 before the introduction of the new system there were eight (8) Index Clerks required would seem to contradict the statement of Mr. Terry, that the same number would be sufficient at present. Without the services of a Draughtsman, the Register would be unable to transcribe in the record, maps and diagrams which are frequently made parts of instruments left for record.

The services of the General Clerk are necessary to assist in making certified copies. No comparison can be made in the work, as under the fee system most of this work was done by copyists who received extra fees.

The lack of proper facilities for properly taking care of



the records of this office makes necessary the employment of all the custodians. The increasing business of the office compels us to remove the books to other places from time to time, so that without the aid of the Custodians it is almost impossible to find the books. Prior to 1890, the third floor was not used, while now there are over 2,000 Libers there, most of which are Mortgage Libers. This requires the employment of additional Custodians in bringing Libers to the first floor for examination by the Satisfaction Clerk.

I need only refer to the report of Corporation Counsel Scott and President Jerolman in reference to the necessity for a new building to prove that the office is wholly inadequate and unfitted for the amount of public business transacted in consequence of which extra precautions must be exercised in protecting these valuable records. When it is considered that there are nearly 9,000 books in the office, the number of Custodians and Messengers whose duty it is to look after these books, is none too large.

Almost daily the Register is required by subpoena to produce some of these records in Court, and he must have a sufficient number of Custodians and Messengers to perform this work.

The recommendation that one Searcher would be sufficient is of itself absurd to one familiar with the wants of the office. The position of Searcher is one that cannot be filled at short notice, and in the event of the illness of the one Searcher allowed, the Register would be unable to fill any requisitions for a search. The fees paid for searches do not represent the amount of work performed, for the reason that applications are frequently made for information which can be furnished only by the Searchers.

From the Mayor's office and from other municipal departments we often receive requests for information in regard to the ownership of property. These requisitions are always referred to the Searchers, and as no fees are exacted, our books show nothing as to the amount of work of this character performed.



The proposed reduction of \$5,000. in the amount for recording clerks and clerks on discharges of mortgages would render it impossible to record papers and return them within a reasonable time. Up to December 1st., the amount paid for recording was \$22,102.80, or an average of over \$2,000. per month. If to this be added the copying of satisfaction pieces, it will readily be seen that \$26,400. the proposed amount, would be wholly inadequate. Our books show that the number of papers recorded this year will be over 40,000. the number which it is "estimated" by Mr. Terry will be recorded next year.

Since the annexation of the new territory from Westchester County, over 1,200. papers have been received for record which would indicate an increase of 3,000 next year, without making any allowance for the increase in papers recorded which always occurs from year to year.

In the Bureau for the Preservation of Records, the proposition to have the work done by folio is impracticable. No two books to be recopied are alike and while some of the clerks would perhaps be benefited, others would be placed at a disadvantage. This work is done under a special Act (Chapter 57, Laws of 1883) and cannot be begun until after a Justice of the Supreme Court has certified to the necessity for recopying the old records.

In the estimate submitted the compensation is the same as fixed when the work was first undertaken and as certified to by the Justices of the Supreme Court as "just and reasonable".

In conclusion, I have only to state that the examination of the office by the Commissioners of Accounts was conducted during the months of August and September, the two months in which the smallest amount of business is transacted during the year. Their conclusions are based upon a superficial investigation by clerks from their office, while the estimate submitted by me is based upon my practical experience during the past three years, and my knowledge of the necessities and requirements of this important office.

With a building properly adapted to the needs of a Hall of

Records, many improvements might be made; but hampered as we are by the lack of proper facilities and the imperative necessity for having the work carefully and properly performed, it will be absolutely impossible to properly transact the business of the office with a smaller appropriation than the amount submitted in my estimate for the year 1896.

*Very respectfully*

*Richard King*

*Register*





William Sohmer,  
Register.



February 26., 1897.

Hon. William L. Strong,  
Mayor, New York City.

Dear Sir:-

Being unable to attend to-day's hearing on the proposed act for the erection of a new Hall of Records, I take the liberty to give brief expression to my views in writing.

The condition of the Register's office and the imminent danger to which the public records kept therein are constantly exposed, are matters that have been so forcibly brought to the attention of the general public by the " Association for Securing the Erection of a new Register's Office," that they have left no room for doubt as to the pressing necessity of a new public building. The aforesaid Association at its first public meeting summed up the whole situation in the following resolution:-

"The facts prove that the Register's office in this City, by reason of its age, faulty construction, inadequate space, inflammable nature, and poor sanitary condition is totally unfit and unsafe as the repository of such valuable records and a standing disgrace to the City of New York, and the risks daily assumed in the retention of this

building for the purposes named are a menace to the community."

I believe that nothing could be added to this concise and strong presentment which would make plainer the paramount duty of the Legislature to pass this measure with the utmost despatch.

Yours very truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Wm. L. Johnson". The signature is written in dark ink and features a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the bottom.