

# Philadelphia Ward History

## Introduction

This resource documents the creation of the Historical Urban Ecological (HUE) data set Philadelphia ward boundary shapefiles and feature classes. All sources pertaining to the delineation and numbering of each ward system (the unique configuration of ward boundaries over a defined period), encompassing cartographic materials, city ordinances, newspaper reports, and ward boundaries described in the historical literature, have been included. Exclusions are noted where applicable. This document also describes ambiguities found between sources and a discussion of how these ambiguities were resolved in our published data. Table 1 provides a general ward history, 1825-1931.

| Date Range | # of Wards | Type of Change        |
|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1825-1846  | 15         | Redivision            |
| 1847-1854  | 17         | Redivision            |
| 1855-1860  | 24         | Redivision/Annexation |
| 1861-1863  | 25         | Redivision            |
| 1864       | 26         | Redivision            |
| 1865       | 26         | Redivision            |
| 1866       | 27         | Redivision            |
| 1867-1870  | 28         | Redivision            |
| 1871-1874  | 29         | Redivision            |
| 1875-1887  | 31         | Redivision            |
| 1888       | 33         | Redivision            |
| 1889       | 34         | Redivision            |
| 1890-1891  | 35         | Redivision            |
| 1892-1895  | 37         | Redivision            |
| 1896-1897  | 38         | Redivision            |
| 1898       | 40         | Redivision/Annexation |
| 1899-1900  | 41         | Redivision            |
| 1901-1904  | 42         | Redivision            |
| 1905       | 43         | Redivision            |
| 1906       | 45         | Redivision            |
| 1907-1913  | 47         | Redivision            |
| 1914-1931  | 48         | Redivision            |

*Table 1:* General ward history of Philadelphia, 1825-1931.

## Sources

The main source used in the creation of the Boston Wards is John Edward Daly's and Allen Weinberg's 1966 book, *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*. It contains maps depicting each of the 22 ward redivisions between 1825 and 1931.

This primary history has been checked against ward maps that were periodically released during this time period. These include maps located at the University of Chicago Map Collection and the Library of Congress as well as maps available online through the David Rumsey Map Collection and ProQuest Sanborn Maps Geo Edition.

Philadelphia expanded significantly in 1854 when the surrounding townships in Philadelphia County were annexed to the city. These areas are included in the ward history at this time. Throughout the study period Philadelphia expanded slightly through landfill. Landfill occurred gradually, taking decades to complete. As a result landfill does not trigger a new ward system. The shoreline most generally applicable to the period, taken at one point during the system's use, is reflected in the shapefile/feature class. Maps collected from the archives listed above were used to determine the extent and timing of landfill during the study period.

Street centerlines delimited many ward boundaries. We have checked the HUE ward boundaries for topological consistency against the CPE's HUE Street Centerlines for Philadelphia. These streets were created from georeferenced historical maps, modern orthographic imagery, and Census TIGER Line files from 2007. Many ward lines were set against these streets. Street names have changed many times throughout Philadelphia's history. We made great use of the Philadelphia Historic Streets Index, created by the City of Philadelphia Department of Records (<http://www.phillyhistory.org/historicstreets/>), to resolve ambiguities between historical and modern names. Georeferenced historical maps, contemporary orthoimagery, and GIS data were used in cases where abstract lines and natural features constituted ward boundaries.

The monthly and annual tabular data reported by various municipal departments that accompany and complement the HUE GIS resources reveal the effective (rather than legislated) timing of changes to ward and city boundaries. These reports are often quite clear, with references to "old" and "new" wards, or the expansion of tables to include new ward numbers. The HUE ward system dates pertain to the official implementation of the wards as reporting units, making many of them unsuitable for use in determining the passage of the ordinances and acts from which they were created due to administrative lags.

## **Ward Systems**

### **1825-1846**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 15

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 60.

### **1847-1854**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 17

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 61.

### **1855-1860**

Change: Redivision/Annexation

Number of Wards: 24

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 64-65.

### **1861-1863**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 25

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 66.

### **1864**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 26

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 67.

### **1865**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 26

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 68.

### **1866**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 27

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 69.

### **1867-1870**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 28

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 70.

### **1871-1874**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 29

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 71.

### **1875-1887**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 31

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 72.

### **1888**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 33

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 73.

## **1889**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 34

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 74.

## **1890-1891**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 35

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 75.

## **1892-1895**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 37

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 76.

## **1896-1897**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 38

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 77.

## **1898**

Change: Redivision/Annexation

Number of Wards: 40

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 78.

### Note:

- League Island, the site of the Philadelphia Navy Yard at the far southern tip of Philadelphia appears to be excluded from the ward system until 1898 based on the Daly/Weinberg Genealogy. No other sources could be found that explicitly describe the status of this island in the administrative or cartographic record.

### **1899-1900**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 41

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 79.

### **1901-1904**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 42

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 80.

### **1905**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 43

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 81.

### **1906**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 45

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 82.

### **1907-1913**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 47

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 83.

### **1914-1931**

Change: Redivision

Number of Wards: 48

Primary Source: Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966: pg. 54; 84.

## **Citations**

Daly, John Edward and Allen Weinberg. *Genealogy of Philadelphia County Subdivisions*, Second Edition. Philadelphia: City of Philadelphia, Department of Records, 1966.