



■ History of City government to become a nonfiction book for the first time.

The history of Los Angeles city government dates back to April 4, 1850, when it became an incorporated city. Over the course of those 155 years, the running of City government was held in five different official City buildings beginning in 1853. Unofficial story has it that the first three years the Common Council (as it was originally called) met in various homes of the local inhabitants, which numbered about 1600 within its jurisdictions.

The complete recorded history of Los Angeles City government can be found in the Los Angeles City Archives within the City Clerk's Records Management Division at Piper Technical Center. As City archivist and then records management officer, I felt it was important for citizens, researchers, scholars and governmental employees to know about the dynamic government history of the nation's second largest city. Thus was born the two-volume work entitled The Evolution of Los Angeles City Government: An Institutional Memory, 1850-2000. This work will be published later this year. The following is a capsule overview of the project. An ambitious seven-year project to narrate the history of Los Angeles City government is moving close to completion with 24 chapters, prologue, epilogue and appendices comprising the two-volume work. No comprehensive governmental history of the nation's second largest city has previously been written, leaving a gap in the historical record of United States urban development. This massive study is intended to serve that need. It also provides specific reasons for creation of the great variety of councils

and commissions, departments and divisions, that came into being over a time span of 150 years, and profiles of the leaders who made them succeed or fail.

Sponsored by the Los Angeles City Historical Society, the history examines all aspects of the City, such as its structure, constitution, administration, finances, courts, public safety, health, education, recreation, parks, libraries, harbors and airports, and water supply. Additionally, it examines planning enterprises dealing with development, transportation, housing and human services. Unique aspects are inclusion of chapters on population changes, ethnicity, intergovernmental relations and global influences on City government.

It is the work of more than 30 authors, all prominent interpreters of their areas, and eight associate editors. The authors include established historians, political scientists, educators and governmental administrators who were experts in the topics assigned to them. A prologue and epilogue were written, respectively, by Dr. Doyce B.Nunis Jr., longtime editor of the Southern California Historical Quarterly, and Dr. Raphael Sonenshein, distinguished California State University, Fullerton political scientist and executive director of the City of Los Angeles Appointed Charter Reform Commission. This publication will contribute to a far better understanding of the development of the City and provide the necessary knowledge and perspective for determining its future. It should, therefore, appeal to a wide variety of groups and individuals throughout Southern California. Because of the book's unique structure, its utility for comparison to other metropolitan areas, and the current growing national interest in Los Angeles, it will be a valuable tool for scholars and governmental officials nationwide and be a library fixture.

