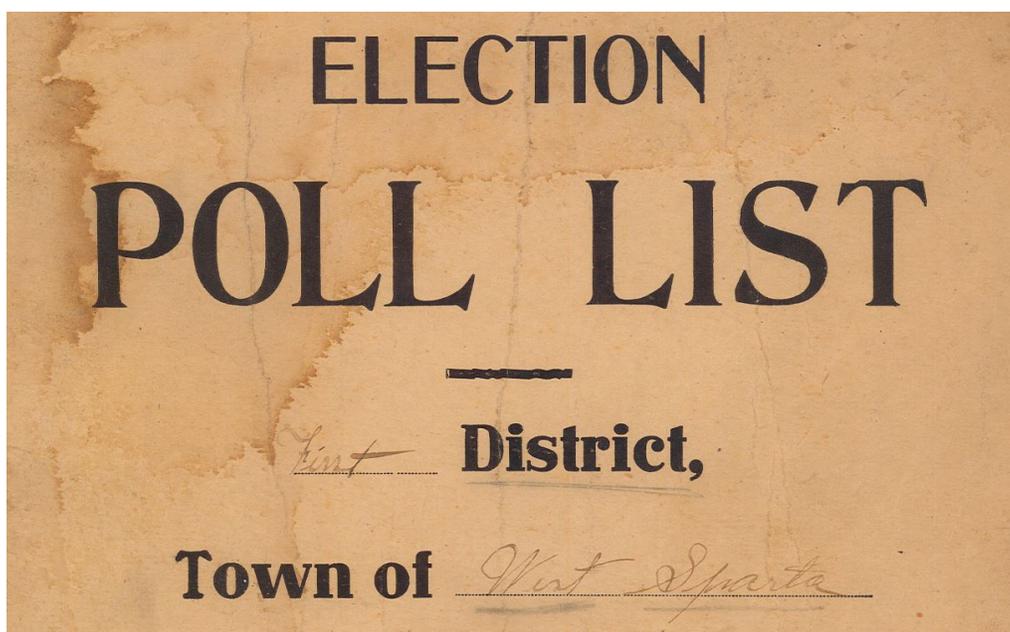


West Sparta Election and School Tax Collection

A Finding Aid



Livingston County Historian's Office

5 Murray Hill Dr.

Mt. Morris, NY 14510

March 2020, rev. Oct. 2022

Prepared by Holly C. Watson, Deputy Livingston County Historian

I. Collection Summary

Title	West Sparta Election and School Tax Collection
Collection No.	C189
Extent	.75 linear feet, 64 items
Date Range	1894-1947 (Bulk 1898-1913)
Abstract	<p>This collection mainly comprises election records for West Sparta Election District 1, Livingston County, New York, including registers of electors, tally sheets, poll books and lists, and statements of result. The materials represent primary and general elections held at the town. The collection also includes a number of school tax rolls for various school districts in West Sparta during the 1940s.</p>
Languages	English.
Access and Restrictions	<p>Use of the documents in the collection is for serious research and by request and permission of the Livingston County Historian's Office. Any use of the material in publications must be cited as follows, "Courtesy of Livingston County Historian's Office, New York."</p> <p>To arrange to conduct research with the documents in the collection, contact the Livingston County Historian by mail at: 5 Murray Hill Drive, Mount Morris, NY, by phone at (585) 243-7955, or by e-mail at Historian@livingstoncountyny.gov.</p>
Copyright	There are no items subject to copyright.

II. Background Information and Arrangement Notes

In 1911, Livingston County appointed its first election commissioners, one democrat and one republican. These commissioners were responsible for voter registrations and for providing towns and villages with ballots, poll books, and all other materials needed for the polls. Prior to that time, towns conducted elections, though standardized poll and registration books were issued according to state law. Town clerks were still responsible for hiring and paying inspectors for the elections.

In 2009, the Livingston County Board of Elections, following the federal mandate under the “Help America Vote” act, took over all hiring and compensation for election inspectors.

West Sparta, with one election district encompassing the entire town, held its polls for many years in A. R. Chasey’s hop house, once located at the intersection of Red School Road and Kysorville-Byersville Road. Today the West Sparta Fire Department is sited on the location. In 1926, the West Sparta Town Hall was built and elections have been held there ever since.

This collection was donated in January 2019 by Marjorie Cansdale of West Sparta, who is a member of the West Sparta Historical Society and former town supervisor of West Sparta. These records were once stored in former West Sparta Town Clerk Helen Dennison’s barn, which accounts for their poor condition. West Sparta Town Historian David Palmer then took possession of them and in about 2009 he turned the records over to the West Sparta Historical Society. They were later deaccessioned and donated to the Livingston County Historian’s Office.

The condition of the records is generally quite poor. Many booklets have extensive water damage, staining, spotting, evidence of mold, and damage by insects and rodents. Many still harbor dirt and organic matter and the entire collection smelled extremely musty upon receipt. This is undoubtedly due to storage in very undesirable conditions in a barn for a significant amount of time. By March 2020, the strong moldy odor had been significantly reduced with the application of cold temperatures and constant air flow over the booklets. If possible, a sampling of the cleanest items will be kept and the rest, if conditions remain too poor, will be scanned and the originals disposed of.

Examination of the records revealed a number of duplicate booklets; while often in a different hand, the information appeared to be the same when the two were compared. In such cases, a determination to discard one copy was made based on condition, legibility, or completeness. The poorer of the two was disposed of. If two booklets were from the same election event but were different enough in completeness – in other words, providing a more comprehensive perspective in any way – both were retained. Twenty one items were marked for disposal as their loss would not affect the amount of information within the collection.

III. Contents List

Poll books and lists, 1895-1913 (26 items)

Registers of electors, 1894-c.1918 (6 items)

Statements of result and canvass, 1911-1913 (9 items)

Tally sheets, 1911-1913 (6 items)

Text of proposition, 1935

School tax rolls, Districts #3, #7, #8, #9, and #12, 1944-1947 (17 items)

IV. Related Materials