

Hugh A. Cregg Papers, 1912?-1960

General Information

Repository:	Lawrence History Center
Creator:	Hugh Anthony Cregg
Accession Number:	1998.010, 2014.031
Quantity:	18 scrapbooks, 1 document box, 1 half document box, one nonstandard flat box, and 3 framed photographs
Processed By:	Jennifer Williams and Sarah Helm
Access:	All case files have been permanently restricted for legal and confidentiality reasons.

Provenance

This collection was created by Hugh A. Cregg and his family between approximately 1912 and 1960. It was donated to the Lawrence History Center by one of Cregg's relatives, Natalie Ballard, in 1998 and 2014.

Biographical Note

Hugh Anthony Cregg was born in Lawrence, Massachusetts on November 25, 1887 to Edward and Rose (McAllister) Cregg. He grew up in Lawrence with his nine brothers and sisters, attending the Lawrence Public Schools. He was considered an excellent athlete at Lawrence High School, which he attended until being accepted to Phillips Exeter Academy. While at the Academy he excelled in several different sports, including football and baseball. After graduation he moved on to the University of Vermont, where he participated in several school plays and joined the Delta Sigma fraternity. He also joined several of the University's sports teams and worked in local hotels.

Before graduation, Cregg transferred to Boston University Law School where he pursued an LL.B. He graduated with honors in 1912 and was quickly admitted to the Massachusetts Bar Association. Cregg was offered a partnership in the general practice owned by his older brother, Mathew A. Cregg, located in the Bay State Building (301 Essex Street) in Lawrence. He accepted the offer and swiftly rose to prominence as a dedicated and talented lawyer.

On August 8, 1918 Cregg enlisted in the military and attended the Central Officers Training School at Camp Taylor, Kentucky and Camp Devens, Massachusetts where he obtained the rank of Sergeant. He was discharged on November 29th of the same year. Cregg married Winifred Ann Gerrin in Salem, New Hampshire on March 1, 1919. They would have three children together: Hugh Cregg, Jr., Donald Cregg, and Maureen Cregg. In the early 1920s the family moved from Lawrence to Methuen, where Cregg served as the Chairman of the Board of Selectman from 1923 to 1926. He also successfully ran for the office of State Senator, a position he held from 1925 to 1928.

In 1930 Cregg was elected to the position of Essex County District Attorney, a position he would hold for seven consecutive four-year terms. During his tenure in this position he was involved in the

prosecution of several cases that obtained national attention, such as the murder trials of Jessie B. Costello in 1933, Louis Berrett and Clement Molway in 1934, as well as Frank and Charles W. McNeill, Jr. in 1951. During these years he also maintained his private practice in Lawrence and then Methuen, eventually becoming the senior partner. Throughout his career he participated in multiple types of trials, including both civil and criminal cases.

Cregg was considered an excellent trial lawyer. He was well known for his ability to expertly cross-examine defendants and witnesses, making astute observations and asking shrewd questions. Cregg was also recognized for his staunch opposition to gambling, desire to clean up internal graft, dedication to preventing juvenile crime, and being an excellent local speaker.

Aside from his work as a lawyer and district attorney, Cregg also became involved in the banking industry. He served as one of the directors of the Methuen National Bank from 1952 to 1957, and was instrumental in its consolidation with the Andover and Merrimack National Bank. After the new Merrimack Valley National Bank was formed, he served as a director from 1957 until 1960. He also participated in the creation of the Methuen Co-operative Bank in 1923 and served as one of its directors until 1960.

Throughout his adulthood Cregg participated in multiple clubs and organizations. His personal affiliations included the Lawrence Elks Lodge #65 (B.P.O.E.), the Improved Order of Red Men, the Rotary Club, the Merrimack Valley Country Club, and the Holy Name Society. Cregg's professional affiliations included the National Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, the Massachusetts Association of Trial Lawyers, and the Bar Associations of the United States, Essex County, and Lawrence. He was well known for his social activities in the Merrimack Valley and was a popular figure among local residents.

Hugh Cregg died of a heart attack in his home at 72 Tudor Street, Methuen, Mass. on May 8, 1960. He was buried in St. Mary's Cemetery in Lawrence, Mass.

Scope and Content Note

This collection contains materials focusing on the personal and professional life of Hugh Anthony Cregg between approximately 1912 and 1960. There are eighteen scrapbooks which give a detailed picture of Cregg's life between approximately 1922 and 1958. They contain such materials as newspaper articles, event programs, correspondence, advertisements, political and courtroom cartoons, pamphlets, bumper stickers, Christmas cards, notes, and endorsements. The subjects within these materials include Cregg's campaigns for (re)election to the office of Essex County District Attorney, major court cases and issues he addressed during his tenure in that position, his opinions on local issues (such as juvenile crime and gambling), Cregg's personal hobbies, his marriage to Winifred Gerrin, the deaths of his parents, and his speaking engagements.

There are also professional records in this collection that date between approximately 1924 and 1958. Many of these materials focus on the Jessie B. Costello murder trial, including letters from the public to Hugh Cregg, newspaper clippings, photographs, and magazine articles. There are also posters, correspondence, and notes centering on Cregg's bids for (re)election to the offices of State Senator and

District Attorney, as well as docket books detailing the court cases handled through the Essex County District Attorney's Office. Internal District Attorney office correspondence and memoranda focus on employee benefits, setting the dates for criminal sessions, Cregg's investigations into gambling and other cases, as well as newly proposed laws. Finally, there are also meeting minutes for the Essex County Commissioners, executive orders, proclamations, laws, and court decisions which focus on decisions that had an effect on county employees and court cases prosecuted by Cregg.

The collection also contains many of Cregg's personal records dating between 1912 and 1960. These materials include certificates, poems, posters, pamphlets, and correspondence. They focus on several different topics, including Cregg's acceptance into the Massachusetts and New Hampshire Bar Associations, his participation in World War I, sports, Cregg's political activities, testimonials praising his work as a lawyer, and his death in 1960. Finally, there are three images of Cregg, his family, and North Lawrence dating from approximately 1876 to 1938.

Arrangement

- Series I. Scrapbooks, 1922?-1958?
 - Subseries I. Scrapbooks, 1922?-1938?
 - Subseries II. Scrapbooks, 1933-1953
 - Subseries III. Scrapbooks, 1950-1958
- Series II. Professional Records, 1924-1958?
 - Subseries I. Jessie B. Costello Murder Trial Records, 1933
 - Subseries II. Campaigns and Elections Records, 1924-1958
 - Subseries III. Docket Books, 1958
 - Subseries IV. Correspondence, 1935?-1958?
 - Subseries V. Meeting minutes of the County Commissioners, 1939-1944
 - Subseries VI. Laws, Proclamations, Orders, and Decisions, 1925-1951
- Series III. Personal Records, 1912-1960
- Series IV. Images, 1876-1938?

Series I: Scrapbooks, 1922? – 1958?

Subseries I. Scrapbooks, 1922?-1938?

8 Scrapbooks

This subseries is composed of eight scrapbooks dated between approximately 1922 and 1938. Most of the materials within the scrapbooks are newspaper articles, but there are also photographs, letters, event programs, magazine clippings, political and courtroom cartoons, stationary, election returns, advertisements, pamphlets, and bumper stickers. These materials cover Cregg's personal and professional lives. Personal subjects include: Cregg's marriage to Winifred Gerrin; the deaths of several family members, including Cregg's parents; Cregg's opinions on education, gambling, juvenile crime, and violent movies; and his hobbies outside of work, such as maintaining an apple orchard.

Professional subjects in the scrapbooks include: Cregg's campaigns to become a selectman in Methuen, Massachusetts State Senator, and then Essex County District Attorney; local sports

activities; Cregg's public speaking engagements; prohibition; Cregg's activities as District Attorney (such as the Russell Noble murder trial, Jessie B. Costello murder trial, Clement F. Molway and Louis Berrett murder trial, Alderman J. W. McCarthy trial, tax abatement investigations in North Andover, and Salem Trust Company investigations); and Cregg's ability to prosecute crimes quickly and effectively.

Scrapbook Inventory

1. 1922? - 1926
2. July 1930 - September 1930
3. July 1930 - November 1930
4. January 1931 - September 1938?
5. October 1931 - August 1933
6. July 1933 - August 1933
7. July 1933 - September 1933
8. July 1934 - September 1934

Note: Most photographs have been removed for preservation purposes and photocopies have been left in the scrapbooks.

Subseries II. Scrapbooks, 1933-1953 **5 Scrapbooks**

This subseries contains five scrapbooks dating between 1933 and 1953. The majority of the materials within the scrapbooks are newspaper articles, but there are also pamphlets, political and courtroom cartoons, photographs, correspondence, political announcements and advertisements, vote tallies, ward lists, Christmas cards, event programs, campaign addresses, handwritten notes, and endorsements.

The subjects within the scrapbooks focus on Cregg's career, and include: his participation in various court cases and investigations (such as the Jessie B. Costello murder trial, Frances Cochrane murder investigation, gambling investigations, Peter Akulonis murder trial, and the Charles W. McNeil murder trial); tributes, commendations, and other praise Cregg received for his work as the Essex County District Attorney; his campaigns for reelection to the office of District Attorney; and his public speaking engagements.

Scrapbook Inventory

1. July 1933 - September 1942
2. July 1938 - September 1951
3. August 1938 - May 1950
4. July 1951 - October 1951
5. November 1950 - August 1953

Note: Most photographs have been removed for preservation purposes and photocopies

have been left in the scrapbooks.

Subseries III. Scrapbooks, 1950-1958?

5 Scrapbooks

This subseries contains five scrapbooks dating between approximately 1950 and 1958. The majority of the materials within the scrapbooks are newspaper articles, but there are also pamphlets, political advertisements, prayer books, mass programs, photographs, and correspondence. The subjects in these materials: Cregg's activities as the Essex County District Attorney (such as the Charles W. McNeil murder trial, gambling investigations, Elizabeth Theberge arson trial, John Imperial murder case, Bessie Burke Memorial Hospital investigation, and Lorraine Clark murder trial); praise for Cregg's work as a District Attorney and trial lawyer; his opinion on juvenile crimes and sexual predators; his campaigns for reelection to the office of Essex County District Attorney; and Cregg's religious beliefs.

Scrapbook Inventory

1. July 1950 - November 1954
2. June 1954 - September 1954
3. June 1954 - September 1955
4. November 1954 - November 1958
5. May 1956 - March 1957

Note: Most photographs have been removed for preservation purposes and photocopies have been left in the scrapbooks.

Series II. Professional Records, 1924-1958?

Note: All case files and related documents have been permanently restricted for legal and confidentiality reasons.

Subseries I. Jessie B. Costello Murder Trial Records, 1933

Box 1

This subseries is composed of records relating to the Jessie B. Costello Trial, which took place in 1933. Records include letters from the public to District Attorney Hugh Cregg, newspaper clippings, magazine articles, and one photograph. The letters provide information on the opinions of citizens around the country regarding the Costello case. They include suggestions to Cregg regarding how to prosecute the case and important evidence to consider, their opinions on Jessie B. Costello's personality, their conclusions regarding whether or not Costello was guilty, and praise/criticism of his ability to prosecute the case.

The newspaper clippings include information regarding the death of William Costello, testimony from experts and witnesses, the testimony of Jessie B. Costello, the evidence presented, jury members, Costello's behavior during the trial, the prosecution methods of District Attorney Hugh Cregg, and Costello's actions after being acquitted. The majority of these clippings

contain photographs of important people in the trial, including Jessie B. Costello and Hugh Cregg.

The subseries also includes an article from the August 26, 1933 edition of *The New Yorker*, entitled *The Costellos Clean the Boiler*. Written by Edmund Pearson, it discusses a dramatic interpretation of Mr. Costello's death, the history of the Costello family in Peabody, Mass., details of the trial, the evidence presented by Mr. Cregg, and the supposed perjury committed by many of the witnesses. Finally, the subseries contains one oversized photograph of Jessie B. Costello smiling while exiting a car to enter the courthouse during her trial.

Note: Original photographs have been removed for preservation purposes. Photocopies have been left in the files.

Subseries II. Campaigns and Elections Records, 1924-1958?

Boxes 1 & 3

This subseries consists of correspondence, notes, posters, and certificates related to Hugh Cregg's campaigns and elections to the offices of Massachusetts State Senator and District Attorney. The correspondence focuses on Cregg's campaigns for District Attorney, and includes stock letters from Hugh Cregg to voters, letters from Cregg's campaign workers, and letters from Hugh Cregg to the Lawrence Evening Tribune. Dating from 1930 to 1958, these four letters focus on Cregg's qualifications for the office of District Attorney, requests for payments from Hugh Cregg for services rendered by campaign workers, and criticisms of the Lawrence Evening Tribune for writing false and "malicious" information about Cregg during his 1958 reelection campaign.

There are also four pages of typed and handwritten notes detailing his sports, academic, and professional history. They discuss his success as a football and baseball player, his years at the University of Vermont and Boston University Law School, his participation in local and state government, his long and successful career as a lawyer and District Attorney, as well as his personal beliefs and morals. These records date to approximately 1958. The subseries also contains eight certificates verifying Cregg's election to the offices of District Attorney and State Senator. They include official state seals, signatures by state and local government officers, and the details of Cregg's appointments. These materials date from 1924 to 1951.

Finally, the subseries includes a draft of a poster stating that "Salem's Leading Lawyers" endorsed the reelection of Cregg to the Office of District Attorney, as well as an oversized poster declaring that Cregg should be re-elected due to his long and prestigious record. These items are undated.

Subseries III. Docket Books, 1958

Box 1

This subseries contains disbound docket books with typed information regarding the court cases overseen by Judges Felix Forte and Horace T. Cahill at the Salem and Newburyport courthouses in 1958. The cases are organized by type and date, and include appeals, driving while intoxicated, new indictments, and illegal drug use/distribution cases. The information on

each case includes the name of the offender, the place where they were arrested, the case number, the exact charge, steps taken by the District Attorney's office, and in some cases the outcome of the trial. There are also indexes of appeals cases organized by the defendant's name. The subseries also contains a list of the jurors seated at the Salem Courthouse in January of 1958. The records in this subseries all date to 1958.

Subseries IV. Correspondence, 1935?-1958?

Boxes 1 & 2

This subseries is composed of letters and memoranda written to and by Hugh Cregg in his position as District Attorney for Essex County between approximately 1935 and 1958. The bulk of the materials date between 1937 and 1945. The subjects within these items include the appointment of Assistant District Attorneys, scheduling criminal sessions and jury waivers, the appointment of judges to court sessions, illegal gambling, state employee salaries and benefits, proposed legislation affecting the office of the District Attorney, the use of mimeographs, thank you letters for Cregg's participation in criminal proceedings, and requests for Cregg to look into civil and criminal matters.

Subseries V. Meeting Minutes of the County Commissioners, 1939-1944

Box 2

This subseries contains select meeting minutes for the Essex County Commissioners between 1939 and 1944. The minutes focus on decisions made by the County Commissioners that had an effect on county employees. The subjects of these decisions include: the use of union stamps on documents created by departments; determining whether or not all employees are citizens of the United States; submitting vacation schedules; determining salary increases and employee classifications; purchasing new supplies for departments; employee benefits; and budgets.

Subseries VI. Laws, Proclamations, Orders, Briefs, and Decisions, 1925-1951

Box 2

This subseries is composed of legislation, court decisions, Governor proclamations, briefs regarding decisions made during court cases, and Executive Orders which impacted Cregg's work as a lawyer and District Attorney. They date between 1925 and 1951. The subjects of these documents include: military veterans and their organizations; personal injuries received by state and county employees while at work; the opinion of Mr. Cregg regarding the decisions made by the presiding judge during witness cross-examination in the case entitled *Commonwealth v. Isadore Osman*; the use of documents and handwriting as evidence in court cases; amendments to the state constitution; and procedures to follow during an enemy attack in the 1950s.

Series III. Personal Records, 1912-1960

Boxes 2 & 3

This subseries contains materials relating to Hugh Cregg's personal life and death. They date between 1912 and 1960. There are two certificates stating that Cregg was admitted to practice law: one for the state of Massachusetts which is dated to 1912; and another for the state of New Hampshire which is dated to 1917. There are also undated poems removed from books, newspaper clippings from 1916 that focus on baseball and other sports, as well as a large poster with different paintings depicting scenes

in coastal Maine. Records from Cregg's participation in World War I, dating to 1918, include two certificates acknowledging his promotions to higher military ranks while serving at Camp Devens in Massachusetts as well as a pamphlet entitled *War Camp Community Service: Keep on Singing*. The latter document contains the lyrics to patriotic songs.

Other documents include: a 1917 memorial from the School Masters Club of Lawrence dedicated to Edward F. Cregg; an undated award for outstanding detective work given to Hugh Gregg by the Mutual Broadcasting System and Wynn Wright Associates; pamphlets from a 1935 testimonial gathering at the State Armory in Lawrence to praise Cregg's work as a lawyer and district attorney; pamphlets and letters relating to his participation in the Republican Party during the 1940s and 1950s; and a book entitled *Sporting Pictures of England* by Guy Paget.

Finally, there are several documents relating to Cregg's death in 1960. These materials include correspondence and resolutions created by the Methuen Co-operative Bank and Merrimack Valley National Bank stating their appreciation for Cregg's leadership in their institutions as well as his other social, political, and professional activities; resolutions and correspondence from the United States Savings and Loan League acknowledging the services provided by Cregg to the banking industry; a letter from Cregg's son, Donald Cregg, to the Methuen police department thanking them for their "impressive turn out" at his father's funeral; a certificate stating that Cregg was accepted as a member of the Union of the Precious Blood by the Sisters Adorers of the Precious Blood; and a copy of the May 14, 1960 edition of the religious newspaper entitled *The Pilot*. These records all date to 1960.

Note: All books have been removed to the Lawrence History Center Library for preservation purposes.

Series IV. Images, 1876?-1938?

Framed Photograph Room

This series is composed of three framed images. The first is a print of an 1876 drawing of North Lawrence. It depicts the mills, Merrimack River, houses, businesses, and streets. There is also a formal family photograph of Hugh Cregg with his parents and siblings taken in the late 19th or early 20th century. Cregg is a young boy in the photograph and the entire family is wearing formal clothing. Finally, there is a painted portrait of Hugh Cregg that appears to be modeled after a photograph taken around 1938. In the photograph Cregg is wearing a formal suit and has styled hair.