

## Chicago Elections Project: ReadMe File

### Project Description:

The Chicago Elections Project is a digital history collaboration working to expand access and provide interpretation on the electoral and political history of the city. The Chicago Elections Project is a large-scale digitization and visualization project that will allow the public, journalists, and researchers to understand the political history of the city in new ways. It will enable the telling of stories about the neighborhood and city-wide electoral contests that shaped public policy in Chicago and Illinois over more than a century.

For more information, visit the Chicago Elections Project website: <http://www.chicagoelectionsproject.com>

The data in the Chicago Elections Project was created by the Chicago Board of Elections in the course of administering the city's elections. The collection presented here seeks to make the digitized archival materials and data visualizations accessible for further and future public research. These materials include images of the city's ledgers which contain tabulated election results (.jpg files); the project's excel spreadsheets that transcribe election results from the city's ledgers (.xlsx files); images of the Chicago Board of Elections' ward and precinct maps (.jpg files); and digital map materials created from these images (shapefile bundles). The files are organized first by year and then election type; see the ReadMe file for a detailed outline and description of files included in the data collection.

Since 1923, there have been 50 wards in the City of Chicago. Each ward consists of a variety of precincts. From 1889 to 1923, there were 35 wards. Municipal elections featuring the contest for mayor are generally held every four years in April of years preceding Presidential elections, eg 1923, 1927, 1931 etc. These are preceded by February primaries. Even numbered years feature federal Congressional elections and State Senate and State House elections in November, eg 1990, 1992, etc. These are preceded by primaries in the spring.

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## Description of Data Files:

### **1931**

**Mayoral General:** Files containing data for the 1931 Chicago mayoral general election held April 5, 1931 when former Cook County Board of Commissioners President Anton Cermak defeated incumbent Mayor William Hale Thompson. Files include an excel spreadsheet (.xlsx) containing tabulated election results transcribed from the city's ledgers, 52 jpg images of the city's ledgers which tabulate election results by ward, and 50 jpg images of ward and precinct maps.

**ElectionsResults\_Spreadsheet:** Excel spreadsheet (.xlsx file) containing tabulated election results of the 1931 mayoral general election transcribed from the city's ledgers.

**Ledgers:** 52 images (.jpg files) of tabulated elections results for the 1931 Mayoral general election. Results are recorded by candidate per precinct for each of the 50 wards. 50 ledger images of election results by candidate per precinct in each of the 50 wards, 1 ledger image of total election results by candidate per ward, and 1 image of write-ins recorded by ward.

**Map Images:** 50 images (.jpg files) of precinct maps created by the Chicago Board of Elections throughout 1927-1931 and used in the 1931 Mayoral general election. The 50 images detail precincts in each of the wards 1-50.

### **1936**

**Federal General:** Files containing data for Chicago votes for the 1936 American presidential election and Congressional representatives held on November 3, 1936. Democratic President Franklin D. Roosevelt won reelection, defeating Republican candidate Alf Landon. Files detail votes for President as well as congressional representatives by congressional district. Files include an excel spreadsheet (.xlsx) containing tabulated election results transcribed from the city's ledgers, 64 jpg images depicting the city's ledgers which tabulate election results by congressional district, 50 jpg images of ward and precinct maps, and a shapefile bundle (8 files) detailing ward and precinct boundaries for Wards 1-50 constructed from the Chicago Board of Elections precinct map images.

**ElectionResults\_Spreadsheet:** Excel spreadsheet (.xlsx file) containing tabulated election results of the 1936 federal general election transcribed from the city's ledgers.

**Ledgers:** 64 images (.jpg files) of tabulated elections results for the 1936 Presidential and Congressional elections. Results are recorded by candidate per Congressional district, and organized first by district, then ward, and then precinct. File names record Congressional district and wards included in that district as reflected by ledger contents. While many ledgers record election results for both President and Vice President and Representative in Congress, some ledgers record Representatives in Congress only. These are noted by a file name ending in \_Congress.

**Map Images:** 50 images (.jpg files) of precinct maps created by the Chicago Board of Elections throughout 1932-1935 and used in the 1936 federal and congressional election. The 50 images detail precincts in each of the wards 1-50.

**Map Shapefile:** Shapefile bundle (8 files: 1 each .cpg, .dbf, .prg, .sbn, .sbx, .shp.xml, .shx file) for use in ArcGIS software detailing ward and precinct boundaries for Wards 1-50 constructed from the Chicago Board of Elections 1932-1935 ward and precinct map images.

## **1947**

**Mayoral General:** Files containing data for the 1947 Chicago mayoral general election held April 1, 1947 when, in an open election, Democratic candidate Martin H. Kennelly defeated Republican candidate Russell Root. It was a record-breaking election for voter turnout. Files include an excel spreadsheet (.xlsx) containing tabulated election results transcribed from the city's ledgers, 50 jpg images of the city's ledgers which tabulate election results by ward, and 51 jpg images of ward and precinct maps.

**ElectionResults Spreadsheet:** Excel spreadsheet (.xlsx file) containing tabulated election results of the 1947 Mayoral general election transcribed from the city's ledgers.

**Ledgers:** 50 images (.jpg files) of tabulated elections results for the 1947 Mayoral general election. 50 ledger images of election results by candidate per precinct in each of the 50 wards.

**Map Images:** 51 images (.jpg files) of precinct maps created by the Chicago Board of Elections throughout 1935-1944 and used in the 1947 Mayoral general election. 50 images detail precincts in each of the wards 1-50. 1 image is a map detailing all wards. The map of Ward 50 is not included in the Chicago Board of Elections' archived book of 1943 Ward Maps; the 1935 map of Ward 50 is included as a proxy.

## **1955**

**Mayoral General:** Files containing data for the 1955 Chicago mayoral general election held February 22, 1955 when Democrat Richard J. Daley was elected for his first term as mayor over Republican candidate Robert E. Merriam. Files include an excel spreadsheet (.xlsx) containing tabulated election results transcribed from the city's ledgers, 51 jpg images of the city's ledgers which tabulate election results by ward, and 50 jpg images of ward and precinct maps.

**ElectionResults Spreadsheet:** Excel spreadsheet (.xlsx file) containing tabulated election results of the 1955 Mayoral general election transcribed from the city's ledgers.

**Ledgers:** 51 images (.jpg files) of tabulated elections results for the 1955 Mayoral general election. 50 ledger images of election results by candidate per precinct in each of the 50 wards and 1 ledger image of total election results by candidate per ward.

**Map Images:** 50 images (.jpg files) of precinct maps created by the Chicago Board of Elections throughout 1947-1953 and used in the 1955 Mayoral general election. The 50 images detail precincts in each of the wards 1-50.

## **1983**

**Map Images:** 51 images (.jpg files) of ward and precinct maps created by the Chicago Board of Elections on December 16, 1981 and, at times, amended throughout 1981, 1982, and/or 1983, used in the 1983 Mayoral primary and general elections. 50 jpg images detail precincts in each of the wards 1-50 and 1 image details the boundaries of all wards.

**Map Shapefile:** Shapefile bundle (8 files: 1 each .cpg, .dbf, .prg, .sbn, .sbx, .shp.xml, .shx file) for use in ArcGIS software detailing ward and precinct boundaries for Wards 1-50 constructed from the Chicago Board of Elections 1981-1983 ward and precinct map images.

**Mayoral General:** Files containing data for the 1983 Chicago mayoral general election held April 12, 1983 when Democrat Harold Washington was elected as Illinois' first African American mayor over Republican candidate Bernard Epton and Independent candidate Ed Warren. Files include an excel spreadsheet (.xlsx) containing tabulated

election results transcribed from the city's ledgers and 99 jpg images of the city's ledgers which tabulate election results by ward. Images of ward and precinct maps and the Shapefile bundle are included in the overall 1983 folder, as these boundaries were used in both the mayoral primary and general election.

**ElectionResults Spreadsheet:** Excel spreadsheet (.xlsx file)

containing tabulated election results of the 1983 Mayoral general election transcribed from the city's ledgers

**Ledgers:** 99 images (.jpg files) of tabulated elections results for the 1983 Mayoral general election. 97 ledger images of election results by candidate per precinct in each of the 50 wards and 2 ledger images of total election results by candidate per ward.

**Mayoral Primary:** Files containing data for the 1983 Chicago mayoral primary election held February 22, 1983. The Democratic primary was a three-way race between incumbent Mayor Jane Byrne, congressman Harold Washington, and Cook County State's Attorney Richard M. Daley (son of the former mayor Richard J. Daley). Washington won the Democratic nomination while former State Representative Bernard Epton won the Republican nomination after rival candidates saw their names removed from the ballot due to issues with their petitions. Files include an excel spreadsheet (.xlsx) containing tabulated election results transcribed from the city's ledgers and 83 jpg images of the city's ledgers which tabulate election results by ward. Images of ward and precinct maps and the Shapefile bundle are included in the overall 1983 folder, as these boundaries were used in both the mayoral primary and general election.

**ElectionResults Spreadsheet:** Excel spreadsheet (.xlsx file)

containing tabulated election results of the 1983 Mayoral primary election transcribed from the city's ledgers.

**Ledgers:** 83 images (.jpg files) of tabulated elections results for the 1983 Mayoral primary election. Results are recorded by candidate per district for each of the 50 wards.