

# Robert A. Horton Papers

## Collection Summary

**Title:** Robert A. Horton Papers

**Summary:** A collection of professional papers belonging to Robert A. Horton.

Date range: 1939-1984. Bulk dates: 1954-1982.

**Physical Description:** 44 boxes; 18.14 linear feet

**Language:** English

**Stack Location:** TBD

**Repository:** Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County,  
615 Church Street, Nashville, TN 37219

## Historical/Biographical Note:

Born in Kingsport, Tennessee on July 20, 1923, Robert A. Horton was an instrumental figure in the consolidation and transition of the City of Nashville and Davidson County into one metropolitan government. He attended Tusculum College, where he completed an undergraduate degree in political science in 1948, and later earned master's degrees in political science and public administration at Vanderbilt University. Later, in 1963, Horton earned a law degree at YMCA Night Law School.

Horton worked for the Tennessee Taxpayer's Association until July of 1954, when he was hired as Director of the Research Division of the City-County Planning Commission. As Director, Horton helped to write the Metro charters of 1958 and 1962. After the consolidation of Metropolitan Government in 1963, Robert Horton was officially known as the fiscal adviser to Mayor Beverly Briley, though at one time he held five different job titles. He also acted as Director of the Administrative Analysis Division, as well as principal liaison between the Mayor's Office and the Metropolitan Departments of Education, Health, Hospitals, Welfare, Finance, and Human Relations. In addition, Horton served on the Executive Committee of the Mid-Cumberland Council of Governments, Project Director for the Environmental Planning and Management Project, and Secretary-Treasurer of the Urban Observatory of Metropolitan Nashville-University Centers. Working behind the scenes of Metro Government, Horton worked with various organizations, including the National Association of Counties (NACO), the United States Conference of Mayors, and advisory bloc grants groups.

Robert Horton became known as a "governmental jack-of-all-trades," and by the time he retired in 1984, he had greatly influenced Metro Government in terms of city-county consolidation, environmental issues, health issues, and urban

development and renewal. He served under both Mayor Beverly Briley and Mayor Richard Fulton, and played an instrumental role in the transition between the two mayors. After his retirement, Horton remained in Nashville until his death in 1998.

**Scope and Contents of the Collection:**

This collection contains the professional papers of Robert A. Horton, with dates ranging largely between 1954 and 1982. These papers include reports, research files, publications, speeches, and correspondence documenting Horton's career with the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, and shed light on the process of consolidating city-county government and the difficult transition thereof. Much of the collection details Horton's work with Mayor's Office, his involvement in the Environmental Planning and Management Project and the Urban Observatory, and his influence in the consolidation of Nashville and Davidson County.

**Index Terms:**

**Subjects:**

Briley, Beverly, 1914-1980  
Environmental planning  
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County (Tenn.)  
Metropolitan Planning Commission (Nashville and Davidson County (Tenn.))  
Mid-Cumberland Council of Governments  
Nashville and Davidson Co.  
Nashville and Davidson County (Tenn.). Metropolitan Development and Housing Agency  
Nashville (Tenn.)--History--20<sup>th</sup> century.  
Nashville (Tenn.)--Politics and government.  
Nashville (Tenn.)--Politics and government 20<sup>th</sup> century  
Urban development.  
Urban Observatory of Metropolitan Nashville

**Related Collections:**

C. Beverly Briley Mayoral Papers  
Dick Battle Papers  
Formation of Metro Government Files  
Metropolitan Clerk's Office Records

**Arrangement:**

This collection is arranged into twelve series: *correspondence, environmental planning, finance, health, metro consolidation, organizations, publications, reports, research files, speeches, urban development, and multimedia materials.*

The *correspondence* series contains memoranda and correspondence largely having to do with activities and issues within the Mayor's Office, including Robert Horton's time as Fiscal Administrative Assistant. Topics of correspondence include legislation, the Nashville Thermal Transfer Corporation, natural disasters, and the Transition Committee's preparations for the first change in the Metro Chief Executive's position since the city-county consolidation.

The *environmental planning* series contains energy audits for various municipal buildings, information on energy use and conservation, as well as reports and other documentation relating to Robert Horton's service as Project Director of the Environmental Planning and Management Project, which was funded by the Ford Foundation.

The *finance* series includes materials relating to city, county, and metropolitan budgets. Most of these materials focus on the Capital Improvements Budget, as well as data and statistics regarding government expenditures, taxation, and general economic information. Some of the data included in this series precedes the city-county consolidation.

*Health* consists of materials largely relating to the Board of Hospitals and the Future Needs Committee, including hospital bed studies, statistical data, and economic feasibility studies. Another large part of this series concerns Meharry Medical College's proposal to lease Hubbard Hospital to the city in 1976, as well as federal assistance in the construction of a new addition to Hubbard Hospital and remodeling existing areas.

The *metro consolidation* series contains materials related to the first attempt at city-county consolidation in 1958 and the successful establishment of Metropolitan Government in 1962-1963. Materials include annexation data, drafts of articles in the Metropolitan Charter, research data, organizational charts, and reports regarding the transition to Metropolitan Government. Also included are Robert Horton's desk copy of the proposed Metropolitan Government Charter from 1958 (containing notes), a review of events relating to the city-county consolidation, and work program materials of the Advance Planning Division of the Nashville City and Davidson County Planning Commissions.

The *organizations* series includes materials relating to conferences and activities of various organizations with whom Robert Horton was affiliated. These organizations include the American Institute of Planners, Manpower, the Mid-Cumberland Council of Governments, the National Association of Counties (NACO), the National League of Cities, and the Tennessee Taxpayers Association.

*Publications* includes books, newsletters and bulletins, clippings, and booklets largely relating to government policy, community development, and management.

The *reports* series covers a multitude of topics, including census population data, housing and urban development, and monthly reports to the Mayor's Office. Notable reports include a thesis by Robert Horton titled, "Obstacles to Governmental Integration in Four Southern Areas," a report of the experiences of Metro Government in developing planning, programming, and budgeting under the Ford Foundation grant, and a study of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County by James C. Coomer.

The *research files* series includes materials used by Robert Horton in researching issues such as local government, population and census data, employment statistics and practices, and sales assessment ratio studies with transfer records for various properties. This series also contains resumes for Metropolitan Government employees in various departments, as well as research data on the War on Poverty, streets and highways, and state legislation.

*Speeches* mainly consists of Mayor Beverly Briley's "State of Metro" addresses from 1964-1975 (with the 1967 address missing). Also included are speeches given by Seymour Samuels, Jr., Charles H. Warfield, and Joe E. Torrence.

The *urban development* series contains materials relating to Nashville's urban growth, community development, and housing services. Included in this series are the East Nashville and Edgehill urban renewal plans, information and correspondence for Neighborhood Housing Services, and a number of materials relating to the Urban Observatory of Metropolitan Nashville-University Centers.

*Multimedia materials* consists of audio and video recordings, as well as slides. Audio recordings include reel-to-reel tapes of the Black Expo of 1973, the Environmental Planning and Management project, and recordings from the Ford Conference in 1972. Video recordings include one of a 1972 meeting regarding the Ford Environmental Project and the slaughterhouse program and a Metro Parks public hearing. This series also includes thirty slides used for a presentation on Nashville's growth, featuring charts and graphs.

## **Contents Listing**

**Boxes 1-5:** Correspondence

**Boxes 5-9:** Environmental Planning

**Boxes 9-11:** Finance

**Boxes 12-13:** Health

**Boxes 13-16:** Metro Consolidation

**Boxes 16-19:** Organizations  
**Boxes 19-26:** Publications  
**Boxes 26-32:** Reports  
**Boxes 32-36:** Research Files  
**Box 37:** Speeches  
**Boxes 38-41:** Urban Development  
**Boxes 42-44:** Multimedia Materials

**Restrictions:**

**Restrictions on Access:** In-library use only.

**Restrictions on Use and Reproduction:** The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County owns the intellectual rights to these materials. Materials may be used for research purposes only, and cannot be used in a publication or reproduced.

**Administrative Information:**

**Copyright:** The Metropolitan Government Archives of Nashville-Davidson County retains intellectual property rights to this collection. Some restrictions may apply.

**Provenance:** Donated to the Metro Archives in two parts by Robert A. Horton and the Horton family.

**Processing Information:** Processed by Kelley Sirko, February 2018

**Accruals:** No further accruals expected.