



Record Group:	Department of State
Subgroup:	Division of Commercial Recording
Series:	Name-Change Judgments, 1876-1947
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Legislative History

Prior to 1876, personal names could be legally changed in New Jersey only by an act of the legislature. On 24 February of that year, however, "An act to authorize persons to change their name" (P.L. 1876, chap. 10, p. 21) was passed, making name changes a routine process of the courts. Under this legislation, individuals could present a petition to the circuit court of the county in which he or she resided, requesting authority to assume a new name. In the case of minors, applications could be made by a legal guardian or "next friend" (acting guardian).

The law further required that the petitioner publish the intention to change his or her name in a county newspaper once a week for four weeks preceding the application. If the court found no objections, an order would be issued authorizing use of the new name. The applicant was then required to publish a copy of the judgment in a county newspaper, and to file a copy of the petition, the order, and an affidavit attesting to its publication, with the county clerk. An 1894 amendment to the 1876 law extended jurisdiction over name changes to the courts of common pleas (P.L. 1894, chap. 205, p. 312). In 1982, jurisdiction was transferred to the Superior Court (P.L. 1981, chap. 362, p. 1335).

The 1876 law also required applicants to file a certified copy of the name-change judgment with the Secretary of State's Office (though this appears to have been handled directly by the county clerks). Within the Department of State, filing of name changes eventually became the responsibility of the Division of Commercial Recording, which was established in 1982 (P.L. 1982, chap. 150, p. 696).

Content Note

This series includes name-change judgments filed with the Secretary of State from 1876 to August 1947. Judgments beginning with #12,051 (August 1947) are held by the Division of Commercial Recording. Copies of judgments from 1982 to the present are also available from the Superior Court Records Management Center.

An index to the judgments included in this series (listing both the old and new names) is available online here, [Legal Name Changes, 1847-1947](#). This also includes references to name changes done by legislative act, as published in Hood's *Index of Colonial and State Laws of New Jersey* (1903). It is known that, despite the legislation passed in 1876, a small number of name changes have been granted directly by the legislature since that year (and after 1903). The legislative name changes listed in Hood's work are referenced using the year in which the name was changed by law (e.g., "PL1875") shown instead of a file number.

Finally, although this series was the direct result of the 1876 legislation, it does include some name-change judgments resulting from adoption as well as newspaper name changes. Other corporate name changes, however,

are filed separately at the Division of Commercial Recording.

Box List

<u>Box</u>	<u>Judgment Numbers Included</u>
1	#1-220
2	#221-420 [#240 missing]
3	#421-620
4	#621-820
5	#821-1,040 [#1,038 missing]
6	#1,041-1,220 [#1,166 missing]
7	#1,221-1,440
8	#1,441-1,620
9	#1,621-1,820
10	#1,821-2,020
11	#2,021-2,220
12	#2,221-2,420
13	#2,421-2,620
14	#2,621-2,780 [#2,710 missing]
15	#2,781-2,940
16	#2,941-3,120 [#2,946 missing]
17	#3,121-3,320 [#3,219 missing]
18	#3,321-3,500
19	#3,501-3,680 [#3,504 missing]
20	#3,681-3,860
21	#3,861-4,060 [#3,961 and #4,002 missing]
22	#4,061-4,240 [#4,173 missing]
23	#4,241-4,440
24	#4,441-4,660
25	#4,661-4,880
26	#4,881-5,080
27	#5,081-5,280
28	#5,281-5,480
29	#5,481-5,680
30	#5,681-5,880
31	#5,881-6,080 [#5,996]
32	#6,081-6,280
33	#6,281-6,480
34	#6,481-6,680
35	#6,681-6,880
36	#6,881-7,080
37	#7,081-7,280
38	#7,281-7,480
39	#7,481-7,680
40	#7,681-7,880

41	#7,881-8,080
42	#8,081-8,280
43	#8,281-8,480
44	#8,481-8,680
45	#8,681-8,880
46	#8,881-9,080
47	#9,081-9,280
48	#9,281-9,480 [#9,396 missing]
49	#9,481-9,680
50	#9,681-9,860
51	#9,861-10,050
52	#10,051-10,225
53	#10,226-10,425
54	#10,426-10,600
55	#10,601-10,775
56	#10,776-10,950 [#10,899]
57	#10,951-11,125
58	#11,126-11,300
59	#11,301-11,500
60	#11,501-11,675
61	#11,676-11,850
62	#11,851-12,050 [#11,853 missing]

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