

**THE OFFICE OF MAYOR IN  
THE UNITED  
STATES: A STUDY IN  
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW**

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The Office of Mayor in the United States: A Study in Administrative Law by George J. Bayles

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**GEORGE J. BAYLES**

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# THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

## IN THE UNITED STATES.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### *Introduction.*

From the statistics of the federal census I gather the following facts :

At the beginning of this century only six cities of the United States had populations exceeding 8,000. The largest city had not 75,000 inhabitants.

In 1850 the number of cities with more than 8,000 inhabitants had increased to 141, in 1860 to 286 and in 1890 to 437.

In the year 1800 only 4 per cent. of the population of the United States resided in cities with 8,000 or more inhabitants. In 1860 16 per cent. lived in cities of this size; in 1870 20 per cent., and in 1880 22½ per cent.

During the last fourteen years the increase in urban population has been marked, and now not far from 25 per cent. of the people of the United States reside in cities.

Everywhere it is acknowledged that the development of municipal administration has not kept pace with the increase of urban population. City government has been the weak point in our political organization.

The people of this country thus far in their history as a nation have neglected their municipal affairs because of their intense interest in the development of their com-

mercial resources, and the absorbing attention demanded by grave questions of national politics.

But outrageous abuses of power by municipal authorities have at last drawn the attention of all citizens to matters nearest home, and the study of municipal organization and administration has become popular.

The organic laws of our municipalities as a rule appear to be satisfactory and the law made by municipal legislatures though often originating in corrupt sources has never been so bad as to arouse the people as a whole for reform.

It has been the execution, or, more accurately, the non-execution of the law by vicious and incompetent men that has caused the scandal, and now when the spirit of reform is moving over the land it is the executive departments of city governments that are undergoing closest examination.

At the head of the administration in every city of the country is an officer, "an executive magistrate," usually styled the Mayor, who, in theory at least, is responsible for the execution of law and the maintenance of order within the municipality.

A brief study, therefore, of the powers and duties pertaining to the office of Mayor is opportune.

In order to study with appreciation the present constitution of the office and the power and duties now belonging to it, it is necessary to understand what the office has been in this country.

The first American city governments were established by special charters incorporating the political inhabitants of New York, Philadelphia and New Orleans.

Each of these charters provided for an executive officer styled the Mayor.

For the city of New York a Mayor was appointed by the Governor of the province, in Philadelphia the Mayor was selected from the Aldermen, by the Aldermen and Councilmen, and accepted by the Governor and for the