§ 19. Records to be kept by town and city clerks. 1. Each town and city clerk hereby empowered to issue marriage licenses shall keep a book supplied by the state department of health in which such clerk shall record and index such information as is required therein, which book shall be kept and preserved as a part of the public records of his or her office. Whenever an application is made for a search of such records the city or town clerk, excepting the city clerk of the city of New York, may make such search and furnish a certificate of the result to the applicant upon the payment of a fee of five dollars for a search of one year and a further fee of one dollar for the second year for which such search is requested and fifty cents for each additional year thereafter, which fees shall be paid in advance of such search. Whenever an application is made for a search of such records in the city of New York, the city clerk of the city of New York may make such search and furnish a certificate of the result to the applicant upon the payment of a fee of five dollars for a search of one year and a further fee of one dollar for the second year for which search is requested and fifty cents each additional year thereafter. Notwithstanding any other provision of this article, no fee shall be charged for any search or certificate when required by the United States department of veterans affairs or by the department of veterans' services of the state of New York to be used in determining the eligibility of any person to participate in the benefits made available by the United States department of veterans affairs or by the state of New York. All such affidavits, statements and consents, immediately upon the taking or receiving of the same by the town or city clerk, shall be recorded and indexed as provided herein and shall be public records and open to public inspection whenever the same may be necessary or required for judicial or other proper purposes. At such times as the commissioner shall direct, the said town or city clerk, excepting the city clerk of the city of New York, shall file in the office of the state department of health the original of each affidavit, statement, consent, order of a justice or judge authorizing immediate solemnization of marriage, license and certificate, filed with or made before such clerk during the preceding month. Such clerk shall not be required to file any of said documents with the state department of health until the license is returned with the certificate showing that the marriage to which they refer has been actually performed.

The county clerks of the counties comprising the city of New York shall cause all original applications and original licenses with the marriage solemnization statements thereon heretofore filed with each, and all papers and records and binders relating to such original documents pertaining to marriage licenses issued by said city clerk, in their custody and possession to be removed, transferred, and delivered to the borough offices of the city clerk in each of said counties.

2. (a) In lieu of the requirement of maintaining a book supplied by the state department of health pursuant to subdivision one hereof, each town or city clerk may cause all information as is required by law or rule or regulation of the department to be kept in such books to be photocopied, photographed, microphotographed or reproduced on film which shall be kept and preserved as part of the public records of his office together with an index thereto. Such photographic film shall be of durable material and the device used to reproduce such records on such film shall be one which accurately reproduces the original record in all details.

(b) Such photocopy or photographic film shall be deemed to be an original record for all purposes, including introduction in evidence in all courts or administrative agencies. A transcript, exemplification or certified copy thereof shall, for all purposes, be deemed to be a transcript, exemplification or certified copy of the original.