

**S0174 Family And Children's Service Of Greater St. Louis
Records, 1861-1960
13 Folders, 10 Rolls Microfilm**

MICROFILM

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Related collection: S0360 Provident Counseling, Records, 1909-1990

Family and Children's Service of Greater St. Louis was formed in 1954 by the merger of three social services agencies: the St. Louis Provident Association, the Children's Aid Society and the Family Service Society of St. Louis County. Kenneth Dick, the retired acting ex-director of Family and Children's Service, loaned the records of all three agencies for microfilming to the Western Historical Manuscript Collection-St. Louis in increments from April to July 1984.

The St. Louis "Providence" Association began in the late 1850s at the home of Thomas Morrison, a canvas goods manufacturer, to distribute supplies to the poor. Morrison later enlisted the assistance of James Yeatman, a St. Louis banker and civic leader, who organized other local business and community leaders and formally founded the St. Louis Provident Association on December 3, 1860. The purpose of the Association was to alleviate the poverty in St. Louis caused by an increasing population, the cholera epidemic of the 1840s, a city-wide fire shortly thereafter and the disruptions of the Civil War.

The Provident Association sought to improve the social conditions and business climate in St. Louis by identifying the truly needy and providing them with food, shelter and social services. It emphasized the rigorous investigation of aid applicants' needs before supplying relief. It also worked to rehabilitate the poor, encouraging applicants to view their poverty--and assistance from the Association--as temporary. Because many of its social workers and directors belonged to the clergy, the Provident Association also stressed religious values.

James Yeatman served as the Association's first president and later as its treasurer. Other board members included Clinton Fisk, who later founded Fisk University, John Lionberger, a merchant who led the effort to construct Eads Bridge, and other prominent St. Louis businessmen and merchants. The Association raised money through donations from local businesses and from appeals to individuals. In 1866 it began receiving public funds through donations from the County Court.

In January 1893 the Association opened a wood yard to provide work for the unemployed. The wood yard supplied fuel for a large clientele but never made enough profit to sustain itself. It primarily helped to alleviate street begging; the Association encouraged people to give wood yard job application cards to beggars instead of money.

The Provident Association also provided homeless indigents with food and lodging through the establishment of the Men's Lodging House in 1895, which was closed in 1917 when the

city opened its Municipal Lodging House for transients. When the city closed that facility four years later the Provident Association provided men with a list of private lodging quarters and restaurants honoring meal tickets. The Municipal Lodge was reopened in 1925 through the efforts of the Association, the Community Fund, the Community Council and the St. Louis Department of Public Works. At the same time, the Community Council created an experimental department that later developed into the Bureau for Men, a social service agency for non-family men (see collection S0176).

A Woman's Lodge was opened in 1894 after James Yeatman secured a building from the Western Sanitary Commission's board of trustees. This building, located on Twelfth Street, provided sleeping quarters, a kitchen and a day nursery for its applicants as well as employment through a sewing room and laundry. In 1897 the Lodge added power sewing machines to train women in factory work. A second lodge, called the Alcott Club, was opened in 1900 to accommodate the large number of applicants, but a gradual decline in that number led the Association to close the Twelfth Street lodge in 1907. The Alcott Club closed in 1912, one year after the closing of the laundry. The sewing room remained open until 1921.

As the Provident Association grew, it created several departments to handle different aspects of its charitable work. These departments later became independent social agencies. After the tornado in St. Louis in May 1897, the Association opened a Visiting Nurses Department and hired three nurses to administer to the injured and homeless. The Department continued after it completed its relief work, providing health assistance and child care to the poor. It became a separate agency in 1910. In 1901 the Association created a Legal Aid Department to protect its clients from bad loans and illegal contracts and to mitigate cases of non-support, desertion, and probate violations. The Legal Aid Society of St. Louis was founded in 1914 and worked with the Association's department until the department was dissolved in the 1930s.

The ministers of the Provident Association began training social workers in 1903. By 1907 their efforts had grown to such an extent that Washington University's Department of Economics and Sociology agreed to establish formal classes, which were held first at the YMCA and later at the Association's central office building on Locust, constructed in 1910. In 1924 Washington University began offering training courses for social workers on its campus, using books supplied by the Provident Association. These courses eventually developed into Washington University's George Warren Brown School of Social Work.

In 1912 the Provident Association established a confidential registration bureau to encourage an exchange of information among various charitable organizations to reduce the duplication of relief efforts. Agencies handling the case work for the same families would get together through the network to coordinate their assistance to these families. A board of governors representing the various agencies was elected and membership fees were collected. When the Provident Association became a member of the Community Fund in 1923, the Community Council (later Health and Welfare Council, see collection S0434), assumed responsibility for the registration bureau and became the Social Service Exchange.

The Provident Association created an Urban League Department in 1912 to open educational, recreational and employment opportunities for blacks. When the Association joined the

Community Fund, the Urban League was made an independent agency and joined the Fund separately (see collection S0093).

Financial difficulties in the 1920s caused the Provident Association to discontinue its wood yard and reduce the number of social services it provided to the poor. It continued its mission of counseling and attempting to rehabilitate its clients and offered relief to those affected by the tornado that struck St. Louis in 1927. With the coming of the Depression, the Association changed its methods and structure as a private family service organization and worked with other agencies in reorganizing the public relief system. In December, 1930 it joined the St. Vincent De Paul Society, the Jewish Social Service Bureau, the Salvation Army, the Bureau For Men and the Red Cross as a cooperating member agency of the city government's newly created Citizens' Committee on Relief and Unemployment, thus becoming an administrator of public funds.

As the initial crisis of the Depression subsided, the Provident Association returned to its status as a private agency. In May 1935, it notified other social agencies that the emphasis of its work would shift to family counseling and service. After the establishment of the Missouri Department of Public Welfare many of the relief services provided by the Provident Association were taken over by the state government. The Association became increasingly involved in research on the family and developing family life programs for its clients. This led to a merger with the St. Louis Children's Aid Society in 1936. (For more information see "The St. Louis Provident Association: An Elitist War on Poverty, 1860-1899" by Jeanette Claver and Robert H. Lauer, *Missouri Historical Review*, vol. LXXVII, April 1983, pp. 296-309.)

The St. Louis Children's Aid Society was founded in 1909 by Mrs. George C. Hitchcock and others interested in addressing the welfare needs of St. Louis children. It led a campaign to establish the Board of Children's Guardians, later renamed Children's Services of the City of St. Louis, as a public service agency for dependent and neglected children. The Society also developed a program of providing financial allowances to mothers of dependent children which later served as a model for similar public programs.

Like the Provident Association, the Children's Aid Society sought to rehabilitate and preserve the families that came to it for assistance. In lieu of such rehabilitation it attempted to find foster homes for its clients' children. The Society raised money through private donations and through a fund-raising Christmas caroling program that later became the independent Christmas Carols Association.

A study by the Community Council and the Child Welfare League in October 1931 recommended the consolidation of the child placement programs of the Children's Aid Society and that of another social service group, the Family Service Society of St. Louis County, to form a county division of the Society. The Children's Aid Society, County Division helped facilitate the construction of the St. Louis County Hospital, to assure employment of trained social workers in the probation office of the county juvenile court, and to establish a county unit of the Missouri Child Welfare Services of the Division of Welfare. The state child welfare office took over much of the Society's casework, enabling the Society to concentrate more on children requiring special treatment outside the home.

Because working with children necessitated working with families, the Children's Aid Society often provided social services to the same families served by the Provident Association, particularly as the Association concentrated increasingly on family counseling. The two agencies established a working agreement in 1936 to reduce the duplication. In 1941 the merger became more formalized and both groups assumed one name: Family and Children's Service. The agency operated under that name until 1954 when it merged with the Family Service Society of St. Louis County to become the Family and Children's Service Society of Greater St. Louis.

The Family Service Society of St. Louis County, also called the St. Louis County Welfare Association, was founded in 1915 as the first and only social agency in St. Louis County. Its early work emphasized the preventing of tuberculosis in localities with poor sanitary conditions. Volunteer workers awarded prizes to the most successful trappers of disease carrying flies. The agency also provided nurses for victims of an influenza epidemic in 1919.

Most of the work of the Family Service Society was educational. It sponsored classes in home nursing, distributed pamphlets on disease prevention and its volunteers gave talks on child welfare. In 1920-1921 it helped establish clinics in county public schools for eye examinations and tuberculosis detection tests for school children. It also urged the creation of the Public Health Department of the County Court in 1925. During the Depression, the Family Service Society expanded its operation to include family and individual counseling. In the 1940s and early 1950s the Society's casework program grew to encompass the largest number of applicants in the St. Louis vicinity. Studies conducted in the early 1950s revealed that the Family Service Society, like the Children's Aid Society, was serving many of the same families as the Provident Association.

In 1954 it merged with both groups to create a new, comprehensive social service agency called the Family and Children's Service of Greater St. Louis. This agency offers casework counseling for individuals and troubled families, primarily emphasizing the prevention of family break-ups. It also provides social services for unmarried mothers and emotionally disturbed children and has a large adoption program. Family and Children's Service provides educational services such as seminars and workshops on parenting, divorce, stress, and aging to individuals as well as community groups. It also offers training opportunities in therapy and counseling for mental health professionals.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The collection provides a comprehensive view of the history of Family and Children's Service for Greater St. Louis and its predecessor organizations. Although it contains board meeting minutes from the early years of the Provident Association and the Children's Aid Society, the records of the Family Service Society (also called the St. Louis County Welfare Association) date only from 1932. The collection includes the first annual report of the Provident Association. Records of the Children's Aid Society date from 1910.

The records reflect the activities of St. Louis' largest social service agencies from the late 1800s to the late 1950s, and therefore also reflect the daily life of St. Louis' poor. They are particularly valuable in studying the social conditions in St. Louis immediately following the population increases of the late 1800s and the subsequent natural calamities such as plague

and fire. The collection also contains early reference to such agencies as Visiting Nurses and the Urban League which began as departments of the Provident Association. Records from the 1930s show how various private agencies joined with the city and federal governments to meet the problems of the Depression. The collection includes scrapbooks of newsclippings regarding the three agencies from this period. The material from the 1950s reflects a trend toward the centralization of social work. The collection also contains complete records of the mergers of all three agencies.

Most of the collection is on microfilm. The annual reports of the Provident Association from 1861 to 1912 are contained in folders 1 through 9. Two master theses on the history of the Provident Association and one on the county division of the Children's Aid Society, written in the 1930s and 1941, are found in folders 10 through 12. Folder 13 contains a history of Family and Children's Service, 1860-1960. Histories of the Juvenile Court and the St. Louis County Welfare Association, an agency self-study of Family and Children's Service, and a foster care study from 1939-1940 comprise the final series on the microfilm rolls.

The collection is divided into six series: (1) St. Louis Provident Association Records, 1861-1956; (2) St. Louis Children's Aid Society Records, 1910-1947; (3) Family Service Society of St. Louis (St. Louis County Welfare Association) Records, 1932-1954; (4) Family and Children's Service of Greater St. Louis Records, 1954-1955; (5) Social Agencies Scrapbooks, 1922-1940; and (6) Histories and Studies, 1931-1959.

Topics include: adoption, Afro-Americans--Social Conditions, Board of Children's Guardians, Central Council of Social Agencies, Children's Hospital, Citizen's Committee on Relief and Unemployment, Community Council, Depression, handicapped, juvenile delinquency, Missouri Association for Social Welfare, Municipal Lodging House, Pure Milk Commission, St. Louis Children's Hospital, St. Louis County Hospital, St. Louis Relief Administration, Social Planning Council of St. Louis and St. Louis County, social work, United Fund, Urban League, Visiting Nurses Association, Women's Lodge and Sewing Room, and World War II.

Complementary collections include: Health and Welfare Council of Metropolitan St. Louis (S0434); St. Louis Protestant Orphan's Asylum (S0058); the Bureau For Men (S0176); and Urban League (S0093).

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SERIES 1 - ST. LOUIS PROVIDENT ASSOCIATION RECORDS, 1861-1960, 13 folders, 9 volumes.

Divided in three sub-series: Annual Reports, Rules and Regulations, and Histories, 1861-1941 (includes history of the Children's Aid Society, 1941); and Record Books, 1871-1956. Annual reports, minutes of the board of directors and executive committees, and the daily log of the secretary and general manager (1919-1923). Both sub-series are arranged chronologically.

SERIES 2 - ST. LOUIS CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY RECORDS, 1910-1947, 2 volumes.

Annual reports and board meeting minutes. Arranged chronologically. (A history of the Society's County Division appears in series 1. A 1922 public scrapbook appears in series 5.)

SERIES 3 - FAMILY SERVICE SOCIETY OF ST. LOUIS COUNTY (ST. LOUIS COUNTY WELFARE ASSOCIATION) RECORDS, 1932-1954, 11 volumes.

Monthly reports and board meeting minutes. Arranged chronologically.

SERIES 4 - FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICE OF GREATER ST. LOUIS RECORDS, 1954-1955, 1 volume.

Board and executive committee meeting minutes. Arranged chronologically.

SERIES 5 - SOCIAL AGENCY SCRAPBOOKS, 1922-1940, 5 volumes.

Newsclippings on all three agencies and a 1922 publicity scrapbook of the Children's Aid Society. Arranged chronologically.

SERIES 6 - HISTORIES AND STUDIES, 1931-1959, 6 volumes.

Histories of the juvenile court and the St. Louis County Welfare Association, a foster care study and an agency self-study of Family and Children's Service. Arranged chronologically.

FOLDER LIST

SERIES 1 - St. Louis Provident Association Records, 1861-1956.

Annual Reports, Rules and Regulations and Histories, 1861-1941

- Folder 1. Annual Reports, 1861-1963
2. Annual Reports, 1864-1887
3. Annual Reports, 1888-1899
4. Rules and Regulations, 1898
5. Annual Reports, 1900-1907
6. Annual Report, 1908
7. Annual Report, 1909
8. Annual Report, 1910
9. Annual Report, 1911-1912
10. History of the Provident Association, 1860-1930, by Dorothy LeMond, 1933
11. History of the Provident Association, 1930-1935, by Alma Vanek, 1938
12. History of the Children's Aid Society, County Division, 1941
13. History of Family and Children's Service, 1860-1960, 1960

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ROLL 1: Minute Books-. 1871-1956

- Volume 1. Board of Directors Minute Book, 1871-1883
2. Board of Directors Minute Book, 1884-1898

3. Executive Committee Minute Book, 1897-1911
4. Board of Directors Minute Book, 1898-1914

ROLL 2

5. Board of Directors Minute Book, 1898-1914
6. Secretary and General Manager 's Day Log, 1915-1923
7. Board of Directors Minute Book, 1941-1947
8. Executive Committee Minute Book, 1938-1942

ROLL 3

9. Board of Directors and Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, 1947-1956

ROLL 4

SERIES 2 - St. Louis Children's Aid Society Records, 1910-1947

1. Annual Reports, 1910-1936
2. Board Meeting Minutes, 1914-1947

ROLL 5

SERIES 3 Family Service Society of St. Louis, St. Louis County Welfare Association, Records, 1932-1954

1. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1932-1935
2. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1936-1937
3. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1938-1939
4. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1940-1941
5. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1942-1943
6. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1944-1945
7. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1946-1947

ROLL 6

8. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1948-1949
9. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1950-1951
10. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1952
11. Monthly Reports and Board Meeting Minutes, 1953-1954

SERIES 4: Family and Children's Service of Greater St. Louis, Records, 1954-1955

1. Board and Executive Committee Meeting Minutes, Merger to Consolidation, 1954-1955

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SERIES 5: Social Agencies Scrapbooks, 1922-1940

1. St. Louis Children's Aid Society, General Publicity, 1922-
2. Social Agencies Newsclippings, 1931

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3. Social Agencies Newsclippings, 1934-1936

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4. Social Agencies Newsclippings, 1935-1938
5. Social Agencies Newsclippings, 1936-1940

ROLL 10

SERIES 6: Histories and Studies, 1931-1959

1. "History of Juvenile Court in St. Louis," 1931
2. Foster Care Study Group, 1939-1940
3. "History of County Welfare Association, 1915-1937," 1941
4. Family and Children's Service of Greater St. Louis, Agency Self-Study, Parts 1 and 2, 1957-1958
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6. Family and Children's Service of Greater St. Louis, Agency Self-Study, Part 4, 1957-1958

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