

**S0744 St. Louis Zoological Park
Addenda, 1919-1950
6 Folders**

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A city ordinance officially established the St. Louis Zoo on 77 acres in Forest Park on December 13, 1913. However, its origins can be traced to the founding of Forest Park in 1874. Scattered, improvised housing for the display of a few animals was built there during the next 20 years. In 1904, the Louisiana Purchase Exposition included as a major exhibit a huge, wire-mesh aviary built by the Smithsonian Institution. Left standing after the fair, the aviary proved to be the catalyst in sparking civic interest in a permanent zoo.

The five-member Zoological Board of Control held its first meeting on December 26, 1913, under the chairmanship of St. Louis Park Commissioner Dwight F. Davis. Other members included St. Louis Mayor Henry W. Kiel, James Y. Player, Robert H. Keiser and George H. Dieckman, a broker who had used his own money to purchase animals for exhibit in the park. In November 1916, St. Louis voters approved a 1/5 mill tax and the Zoo became the first in the world to be so supported.

The board appointed George Vierheller as Zoo director in 1919, beginning a 40-year career which led to the Zoo's growth from infancy to the position of a world famous institution. Marlin Perkins, who became director in 1960, began his career at the Zoo in 1926.

Zoo construction landmarks from 1917 through 1941 include: Chain of Lakes and Seal Basin; Bear Pits with geologically accurate reproductions of Mississippi River limestone palisades; Primate House; Reptile House and Small Mammal Wing; Bird House and Wing; Antelope House with man-made boulders reproducing granite outcroppings at Graniteville, Missouri; Barless Animal Units with moats, landscaped yards, Anthropoid Ape House, and Chimpanzee Arena and Addition.

FOLDER LIST

1. Map, 1919
2. Published Photo Albums, 1922, 1929
3. Annual Reports, 1920s, 1965
4. *St. Louis Zoo*, monthly, then quarterly newsletter, various, 1929-1950
5. Pamphlet, *St. Louis as It is Today*, 1929
6. Undated photograph

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