



**American Association of University Women,
Ferguson-Florissant Branch Records
S1163**

Collection Number: S1163

Collection Title: American Association of University Women, Ferguson-Florissant Branch Records

Dates: 1959-2015

Creator: American Association of University Women, Ferguson-Florissant Branch

Abstract: The records of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), Ferguson-Florissant Branch contain correspondence, meeting minutes, newsletters, yearbooks, and reports relating to the group's mission to empower women in their community through public service, education, political lobbying. Topics of interest include histories of the Ferguson-Florissant Branch, the group's participation in the Famous American Women Project, as well as their publication of *Show-Me the Arts: A Guide to Missouri's Cultural Resources*. Also included in these records are the branch's scrapbooks, containing extensive photographic documentation of their meetings and charitable endeavors, including the Annual Book Fair. The materials date from 1959 to 2015.

Collection Size: 8 cubic feet
(92 folders, 12 volumes, 638 photographs)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: This is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#) but stored offsite. If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Shirley Breeze on June 29, 2015 (Accession No. 15-33). An addition was made on November 4, 2016 by Shirley Breeze (Accession No. 16-51).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the American Association of University Women, Ferguson-Florissant Branch can be found in the following collections:

American Association of University Women, St. Louis Branch Records (S0739)

American Association of University Women, Ballwin-Chesterfield Branch Records (S1158)

American Association of University Women, Kirkwood-Webster Branch Records (S1159)

Processed by: Processed by Kenn Thomas, April 9, 2018; Revised by AJ Medlock, April 27, 2018

Historical Note:

The first meeting of the Ferguson-Florissant Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) occurred on September 30, 1963, in the home of Dr. Helen Graham. Led by Ida Burroughs, a graduate of Montana University, attendees learned about AAUW's mission to empower women through community service, education, political lobbying and discussed petitioning the Missouri Division of AAUW to become a chartered member of the organization. Membership to the organization was (and remains) limited to women who have earned higher education degrees from an accredited college or university. Over the next several months, the group proposed and adopted by-laws and applied to become an official branch of AAUW, which the Missouri Division accepted on January 30, 1964. Members of the Ferguson-Florissant chapter officially celebrated their admittance to AAUW at a gala banquet on May 18, 1964, at the Albert-Pick motel.

From the Ferguson-Florissant Branch's inception, the Board of Directors has governed the group's activities and related business in the absence of regular meetings, while the Executive Board executes tasks assigned to it by the Board. General meetings are held nine times a year, where members receive reports from branch officers and special committees, as well as listen guest lecturers orate on a variety of subjects relating to the interests of AAUW, including the Equal Rights Amendment and women's liberation. In addition to the regular meetings, the group holds an annual meeting each March to elect officers and revise the bylaws as needed.

In 1966, branch members inaugurated their first large-scale charity event—the annual book sale. Each year, members gathered book donations and held the sale at a local shopping mall in August, donating the proceeds to AAUW's Educational Fund, as well as to St. Louis Metropolitan community service organizations, including the Judevine Center for Autistic Children. In the later years of the book sale, the branch also selected the Family Resource Center and the Citizens Education Clearing House to receive portions of the sale's profits. Due to declining membership, the Ferguson-Florissant branch discontinued the book sale in 1993. During its existence, the book sale distributed more than \$48,000 to local non-profit organizations.

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The Ferguson-Florissant branch has also been active in promoting Missouri's cultural heritage. In 1978, the chapter published *Show Me the Arts: A Guide to Missouri's Cultural Resources*. Written and edited by Pat Castles, Velja Lacey, and Shirley Breeze, the booklet provided citizens with a directory of cultural heritage organizations in Missouri, along with brief histories of these institutions. In 1993, Branch members purchased copies of *Show Me Missouri Women, Volume II*, and distributed them to classrooms in Riverview Gardens, Florissant, and Hazelwood. From 1998 to 2001, members dressed as historical American women and gave lectures on their contributions to American society to Ferguson-Florissant classrooms as part of Famous American Women Project.

Branch members have also engaged in socio-economic and environmental issues affecting the lives of women and Missourians by forming study groups. One of the earliest groups was the Air Pollution study group, which was active from 1966 to 1971. Led by Ida Burroughs, the group helped sponsor the first conference on Air Pollution Control at Washington University on November 5, 1966. They also provided testimony in support of President Lyndon Baines Johnson's air pollution control proposals to Senator Edmund Muskie's Sub-committee on Air and Water Pollution on April 4, 1967, in St. Louis, Missouri. One of the study group's final acts was to hold a public forum on air pollution for candidates running for political office on October 15, 1970, at Florissant Valley Community College.

Today, the Ferguson-Florissant Branch remains active in the community, tutoring elementary students in reading, supporting STEM projects for young women, including a robotics team, and making financial contributions to St. Louis area scholarship funds for women. Members also remain active in fighting for women's equality through the Women's Action Network, which has lobbied the Missouri State Assembly to pass equal pay legislation and ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. Regular branch meetings occur at Immanuel United Church-Christ on the third Monday of the month.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following seven series:

- Histories
- Administrative
- Correspondence
- Programming
- Membership
- Publications
- Photographs and Scrapbooks

Scope and Content Note:

Histories

This series contains histories of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Missouri division, and the Ferguson-Florissant Branch relating to AAUW's founding principles, charitable endeavors, and political lobbying on women's issues. Items of interest include a twenty-page booklet on the history of the Ferguson-Florissant Branch titled *AAUW Ferguson-Florissant Branch: 45 Years of Action in North County 1964-2009*. Also included in the series are drafts of Ferguson-Florissant Branch histories that eventually appeared in the 1996 and 2010

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editions of the *History of the American Association of University Women of Missouri*. The minutes of the AAUW petitioning meeting for the Ferguson-Florissant Branch, dated September 30, 1963, is also featured. The materials in this series date from 1963 to 2011 and are arranged alphabetically.

Administrative

This series documents the activities of the Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and General Meetings, reflecting the Board's mandate to oversee the branch's financial affairs and programming efforts, as well as the Executive Committee's mission to carry out tasks delegated to it by the Board. The minutes of the General Meetings chronicle members' decisions to ratify, amend, or reject the decisions made by the Board of Directors and Executive Committee. Some subjects of interest in this series pertain to the recruitment and retention of new members, the selection of lecturers to speak at general meetings, potential topics for study groups, and identifying worthy community service organizations to receive the proceeds of the branch's philanthropic programs. The meeting minutes are incomplete, with gaps in the record from 1986 to 1990. Also included in this series are financial statements and the meeting minutes of the St. Louis Area Interbranch Council, which coordinated the activities and resources of St. Louis area AAUW groups. The materials in this series date from 1959 to 2014, and are arranged alphabetically and chronologically thereunder.

Missouri Division

This subseries contains meeting minutes, correspondence, reports, and convention pamphlets relating to the administration of the annual convention of the Missouri Division of AAUW, as well as conferences and workshops sponsored by the Division. Topics of interest include guidelines for participating in the Missouri Branch/State Public Information Awards Competition, instructions for crafting branch bylaws in accordance with Missouri Division rules, and statewide petitioning campaigns urging the Missouri General Assembly to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment. The materials in this subseries date from 1968 to 1983 and are arranged alphabetically.

National American Association of University Women

This subseries consists of annual reports, convention booklets, and a national AAUW strategic plan relating to the gender-wage gap in the United States, as well as AAUW's support of the Paycheck Fairness Act and the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act. Other subjects featured in this subseries include AAUW's grassroots efforts to save state-sponsored affirmative action programs, their support of women students in the fields of science, technology, education, and mathematics (STEM), and voter registration projects. Items of interest include a photograph album of Ferguson-Florissant branch attendees of the 1975 AAUW convention. The materials in this subseries date from 1975 to 2012 and are arranged alphabetically.

Correspondence

This series contains correspondence sent to and from members of the Ferguson-Florissant Branch regarding the responsibilities and expectations of the branch's board of directors, the 1978 African Educators project, and the Famous American Women living history programs branch members presented to Ferguson-Florissant school children. Also included in this series

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are correspondence sent from St. Louis area non-profit groups, including the Family Resource Center, thanking Ferguson-Florissant branch members for their financial contributions. The materials in this series date from 1966 to 2005 and are arranged chronologically.

Programming

This series contains correspondence, reports, booklets, newspaper clippings, and expense sheets chronicling the Ferguson-Florissant Branch's public service programs, including its annual book sale, the Festival of Missouri Women in the Arts, and the group's publication of *Show Me Missouri Women*. Located in this series are folders on the branch's Air Pollution and Arts Study Group, which include a published statement made by branch member Helen Graham, before the East-West Gateway Coordinating Council on the Ferguson-Florissant Branch's efforts to advocate for effective forms of air pollution control. Also included in this series are Shirley Breeze's files of the Missouri Women's Network, of which she served a state chairperson (AAUW frequently speaks on behalf of the Missouri Women's Network). Most of the materials in these files contain Breeze's email correspondence, documenting her efforts to secure the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment in the Missouri State Assembly. The materials in this series date from 1968 to 2015 and are arranged alphabetically.

Membership

The series predominantly contains handwritten lists of members of the Ferguson-Florissant Branch. These lists are by no means comprehensive, with gaps in the record from 1963 to 1969, as well as from 1983 to 2015, except for two membership rosters from 2007 and 2008. The Branch yearbooks in the Publications Series contain a complete listing of the branch's membership derived their information from the original lists in this series. This series is arranged alphabetically.

Publications

This series contains the Ferguson-Florissant Branch's newsletters and yearbooks, as well as the Missouri Division's newsletters and directories. The branch's newsletters date from 1964 to 2015 and provide an overview of its monthly activities, including brief summaries of Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and General Meetings, progress reports for the branch's various study groups, as well as biographies of new and notable members. These issues also provide legislative updates on bills pending before the Missouri State Assembly, including the Equal Rights Amendment and equal pay legislation. The Missouri Division newsletters follow a similar format, providing updates on the activities of branches throughout the state of Missouri and news from AAUW headquarters in Washington D.C. The Missouri Division newsletters are not comprehensive, although earlier editions appear in the volumes 1-8 of the Ferguson-Florissant Branch's scrapbooks. The Ferguson-Florissant Branch yearbooks contain membership rosters, listings of current officers, as well as updated bylaws and histories of the branch. The materials in this series are arranged alphabetically and chronologically thereunder.

Photographs and Scrapbooks

This series consists of photographs and scrapbooks relating to the Ferguson-Florissant Branch's study groups, charity fundraisers, social events, and community outreach programs, including the *Show Missouri Women* and Famous American Women lectures branch members gave to students in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. Branch members produced the scrapbooks yearly,

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from 1967 to 1986, and intermittingly from 1987 to 2004. They contain copies of meeting minutes, newsletters, and yearbooks, as well as newspaper clippings chronicling the branch's history. Materials of interest include photographs of the branch's Board of Directors meetings from the 1960s, the annual book sale, and correspondence sent from Ferguson-Florissant students to branch members, dated 1995, thanking them for donating copies of *Show Missouri Women* to their classes. The materials in this series are arranged according to type, with photographs appearing first, and then the scrapbooks appearing chronologically thereunder.

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