



## Children's Aid and Family Service Records

1910-1981

7 boxes (3.5 linear ft.)

Call no.: MS 8

### Collection overview

Agency providing traditional child and family service and extensive mental health services that worked closely with the SPCC, was a member in the Child Welfare League of America, and was the Northampton representative for the National Association of Travelers Aid Societies. Includes 10 versions of the constitution, typed personal recollections from the 25th anniversary, annual reports, minutes, and the correspondence of President Miriam Chrisman (1952-1957). Of special note, Mrs. Calvin Coolidge was the Chair of the Home Finding Committee of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children which helped to found the CAFS.

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## Background on Children's Aid and Family Service

In March 1910, the Home Finding Committee of the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, with Mrs. Calvin Coolidge as Chair, met to discuss the establishment and management of a temporary home for children in need of such assistance. With an initial gift of \$250 from Mrs. Arthur Curtis Jones, the first house was outfitted. Private contributions funded the Committee/Association's operations until 1921 when it became a member of the Community Chest Association of Northampton, Massachusetts.

The committee's conviction of the necessity of its becoming a child placing agency in addition to providing care in the Home, led to its resigning from the SPCC and to its being granted a charter in January 1911, as the Children's Home Association, serving Franklin and Hampshire counties. The first officers were: President, Mrs. William Ganon; Vice President, Mrs. A. L. Sessions; Secretary, Mrs. L.M. Scoville; and Treasurer, Miss Clara P. Bodman. The directors themselves sought foster homes for the children who were to be "placed out" until 1913, when a professional placing agent was hired with funds donated by one of the directors for the purpose.

Among those serving on the first Advisory Board were: L. Clark Seelye, F.W. Pitcher, John Skinner, Collins H. Gere, Robert L. Williston, and William E. Shannon.

The opening of the New England Home for Little Wanderers in Greenfield, Massachusetts in 1914 left the Association free to concentrate on Hampshire County. The spacious new Temporary Home at 425 Prospect

Street, Northampton, purchased in 1915, made possible the provision of the increasingly sought-after services of the Association. As a result of this increased activity, the first trained Executive Secretary was hired in 1917. This same year brought the first financial drive and the appointment of Association Directors in every county town. In an effort to clarify the scope of its activities to include foster care, the Association changed its name in 1919 to the Children's Aid Association.

Until mid-century the nature of the CAA remained essentially unchanged, though greater emphasis came to be placed on foster care than on institutional care in the Home. The 1927 Annual Report indicates that the loss of the town of Enfield to the Quabbin Reservoir project meant to CAA the loss of many foster homes upon which the Association had relied. During this time, in addition to its usual operations, the CAA was called upon for aid in World War I, influenza epidemics, the Depression, the flood of 1936, the hurricane and flood of 1938, and World War II, when the US Committee for the Care of European Children asked for its assistance.

Through the years the CAA worked closely with the SPCC, maintained membership in the Child Welfare League of America, and became the Northampton representative for the National Association of Travelers Aid Societies. In addition, locally, the Association was a member of the Northampton Council of Social Agencies, the Community Chests of Amherst, Easthampton, Southampton, and Ware, and, later, the Hampshire United Way.

In 1954, the closing of the Temporary Home signaled another change in the CAA's focus -- from child-placing to counseling, which came to be reflected in the name adopted in 1962, The Children's Aid and Family Service Association. This change was accompanied by growth in an increasingly professionalized staff. In 1966, in a move indicative of its future course, CAFS contracted with the Northampton School Department to provide social work service in the Headstart Program and in the School Adjustment Counselor Program. New contracts in 1972 called for the provision of social work in the Hampshire County Chronic Disease Hospital and in private nursing homes, and a service for drug users. By 1976, CAFS had evolved into an agency providing both traditional child and family service and extensive mental health services.

## Scope of collection

The papers of the Children's Aid and Family Service Association of Hampshire County, Inc., deposited in the Archives at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in 1985 by Jerrold Aspengren, Director, document the activities and nature of the agency from its volunteer beginnings to its layered, professional 1981 structure.

## Arrangement

This collection is organized into four series:

- **Series 1. Constitution and Histories, 1910-1968**
- **Series 2. Annual Reports, 1912-1981**
- **Series 3. Minutes, 1910-1981**
- **Series 4. Correspondence, Reports, and Miscellaneous Records**

## Series descriptions

### **Series 1. Constitution and Histories**

**1910-1968**

Series 1 includes 10 versions of the constitution, 1910-1968, reflective of the changing mission of the Association. Included in the histories are typed personal recollections from 1935, the 25th anniversary of the Association, by Ruth Sessions (covering 1910-1918) and Agnes Hinckley (covering 1918-1920). In addition, a pamphlet tracing the Association's history by quoting from the personal recollections and the annual reports and minutes is included. A later, mimeographed one-page overview, pre-1954, highlights significant moments in the Association's early history.

### **Series 2. Annual Reports**

**1912-1981**

The annual reports not only provide narratives by executive officers of the year's activities as well as statistics and financial reports, but also, particularly through 1940, evoke prevailing attitudes and customs in Northampton and surrounding towns, especially with respect to the family, children, ethnic groups, volunteerism, and social work. While the richness of the reports diminishes thereafter, and by 1974 comprises only a brief brochure, the growing complexity of the agency is evident nevertheless, particularly when the reports are used in conjunction with the minutes, which continue to be revealing.

### **Series 3. Minutes**

**1910-1981**

Series 3 comprises a nearly complete run of minutes from the first meeting in 1910 until 1981, including some correspondence when minute-books were used, and including as well, reports from various committees (Clothing, Case, County, for example) not in the Annual Reports. The minutes detail the work of the Association and its volunteers and staff.

### **Series 4. Correspondence, Reports, and Miscellaneous Records**

**1915-1969**

Most of the correspondence in Series 4 was kept by Miriam Chrisman during her tenure as president, 1952-1957. Other correspondence was originally filed at the appropriate date in minute-books and was left there in processing. On the whole, however, correspondence for this collection is sparse.

The bulk of the reports in this series are those prepared for accreditation visits by the Child Welfare League of America and the study of CAA done by the Northampton (Hampshire County) Council of Social Agencies in 1950. The miscellaneous records are a record book of the County Committee, 1949-1951; the Children's Home Building Fund records, 1915-1919; and a record of presentations of "A Door is Open" for 1966-1969.

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## Inventory

<b>Series 1. Constitution and Histories</b>		<b>1910-1968</b>
Constitution, various versions,	1910-1968	Box 1: 1
Histories of CAFS		Box 1: 2
<b>Series 2. Annual Reports</b>		<b>1912-1981</b>
Annual reports,	1912-1951	Box 1: 3-26
Annual reports,	1952-1981	Box 2: 27-44
<b>Series 3. Minutes</b>		<b>1910-1981</b>
Minutes,	1910-1930	Box 3: 45-52
Minutes,	1930-1952	Box 4: 53-58
Minutes,	1952-1965	Box 5: 59-72
Minutes,	1966-1981	Box 6: 73-87
<b>Series 4. Correspondence, Reports, and Miscellaneous Records</b>		<b>1915-1969</b>
Correspondence,	1952-1957, n.d.	Box 7: 88
Miscellaneous records:		Box 7: 89-91
County Committee record book,	1949-1951	Box 7
Children's Home Building Fund records,	1915-1919	Box 7
"A Door is Open" record of presentations,	1966-1969	Box 7
Reports		Box 7: 92-100
CAA Study Committee, Northampton Council of Social Agencies,	1950	Box 7
Child Welfare League of America,	1959, 1962, 1967	Box 7
CAA-SPCC Study,	1950-1952	Box 7
Northampton Community Chest, minutes and annual report,	1957	Box 7

## Administrative information

### Access

There are no restrictions on access to the records; however, the confidentiality and anonymity of all clients mentioned in the records must be maintained in published works that reference the records.

## Provenance

The records of Children's Aid and Family Service of Hampshire County, Inc., formerly Children's Aid Association, were placed on deposit in the Archives of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst in October, 1984, by Jerrold Aspengren, Director of CAFS.

## Processing Information

Processed by Linda Seidman, 1985.

## Language:

English

## Acknowledgments

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## Copyright and Use (More information )

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## Search terms

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### Subjects

- Child mental health services--Massachusetts--Hampshire County--History--Sources.
- Child welfare--Massachusetts--Hampshire County--History--Sources.
- Children's Aid Association (Hampshire County, Mass.)--Archives.
- Children's Aid and Family Service of Hampshire County (Hampshire County, Mass.)--Archives.
- Children's Home Association (Franklin County, Mass. and Hampshire County, Mass.)--Archives.
- Children--Institutional care--Massachusetts--Hampshire County--History--Sources.
- Chrisman, Miriam Usher--Correspondence.
- Coolidge, Grace Goodhue, 1879-1957.
- Floods--Massachusetts.
- Foster home care--Massachusetts--Hampshire County--History--Sources.
- Franklin County (Mass.)--Social conditions--Sources.
- Hampshire County (Mass.)--Social conditions--Sources.
- Homeless children--Massachusetts--Franklin County--History--Sources.
- Homeless children--Massachusetts--Hampshire County--History--Sources.
- Hurricanes--Massachusetts.
- Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Home Finding Committee--Archives.
- Massachusetts--History--Sources.
- Northampton (Mass.)--Social conditions--Sources.
- Social service--Massachusetts--Hampshire County--History--Sources.
- Voluntarism--Massachusetts--History--Sources.

### Contributors

- Children's Aid and Family Service[**main entry**]

### Genres and formats

- Constitutions.

Link to similar SCUA collections

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