

Hillcrest Children's Center (Washington, D.C.) Records

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Prepared by Joseph Sullivan

Collection Summary

Title: Hillcrest Children's Center (Washington, D.C.) Records

Span Dates: 1815-1966

Bulk Dates: (bulk 1880-1960)

ID No.: MSS54916

Creator: Hillcrest Children's Center (Washington, D.C.)

Extent: 9,500 items ; 54 containers plus 5 oversize ; 22 linear feet ; 1 microfilm reel

Language: Collection material in English

Location: Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Summary: Founded in 1815 as the Washington Female Orphan Asylum to care for girls left homeless by the British invasion of Washington, D.C., during the War of 1812. Official name changed to Washington City Orphan Asylum in 1828. Unofficially renamed Hillcrest Children's Village (1927-1953) and Hillcrest Children's Center (1953-). Provided for the care and protection of homeless youths until 1953 and afterward for the treatment of emotionally disturbed children. Correspondence, minutes of meetings, committee and staff reports, admittance and application records, journals, ledgers, financial statements, deeds, mortgages, bank checks, budget estimates, index cards, and miscellaneous material reflecting the financial and managerial techniques of the center.

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Organizations

Hillcrest Children's Center (Washington, D.C.)

Subjects

Child welfare--Washington (D.C.)

Children--Institutional care--Washington (D.C.)

Mentally ill children--Care--Washington (D.C.)

Administrative Information

Provenance

The records of Hillcrest Children's Center, Washington, D.C., were given to the Library of Congress by the center in 1968.

Processing History

The collection was processed in 1968. The finding aid was revised in 2007, 2009, and 2013.

Transfers

Photographs have been transferred to the Library's Prints and Photographs Division where they are identified as part of these records.

Copyright Status

The status of copyright in the unpublished writings of Hillcrest Children's Center is governed by the Copyright Law of the United States (Title 17, U.S.C.).

Access and Restrictions

The records of Hillcrest Children's Center are open to research. Researchers are advised to contact the Manuscript Reading Room prior to visiting. Many collections are stored off-site and advance notice is needed to retrieve these items for research use.

Microfilm

A microfilm edition of part of these papers is available on one reel. Consult reference staff in the Manuscript Division concerning availability for purchase or interlibrary loan. To promote preservation of the originals, researchers are required to consult the microfilm edition as available.

Preferred Citation

Researchers wishing to cite this collection should include the following information: Container or reel number, Hillcrest Children's Center Records, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Scope and Content Note

The records of the Hillcrest Children's Center span the years 1815-1966, with the bulk of the material concentrated in the period 1880-1960. Largely administrative, the records reflect the financial and managerial techniques of the institution that until the 1950s provided for the care and protection of homeless youths and in subsequent years for the treatment of emotionally disturbed children. The records include correspondence, minutes of meetings, committee and staff reports, admittance and application records, indentures, journals, ledgers, financial statements, deeds, mortgages, bank checks, budget estimates, index cards, and miscellaneous material.

The records have been organized into three series: [Unbound Records](#), [Bound Records](#), and [Miscellany \(Oversize\)](#). The [Unbound Records](#) are further subdivided into seven numerically classified categories: general records (100s), children's records (200s), lady managers' records (300s), trustees' records (400s-500s), property records (600s-700s), legacy and gift records (800s), and historical and miscellaneous records (900s). The numerical classification system, which also extends to the other two series, was designed by Dorothy Smith Coleman for the center in 1953 and has been left largely intact with only minor revisions and processing refinements.

The Washington Female Orphan Asylum, Hillcrest Center's original name when it was founded in 1815, was initially established to care for girls left homeless by the British invasion of the capital during the War of 1812 [1]. In the years since its founding, many Washington notables, including Dolly Madison (the center's first director), Marcia and John Van Ness, William Corcoran, and Blair Lee, among others, have contributed to the success of the institution as trustees or members of the Board of Lady Managers. Documentation relating to the early history of the institution is scanty and can be found chiefly in the minutes of the meetings of the Board of Lady Managers.

1. In 1828 the institution's name was changed "forever" by act of Congress (May 24) to the Washington City Orphan Asylum. Though Washington City Orphan Asylum still remains its official name, the institution was called Hillcrest Children's Village from 1927 to 1953 and Hillcrest Children's Center since 1953.

Traditionally the administration of the asylum rested with a Board of Lady Managers, charged with supervising the daily management of the institution and the care of the children, and with five male trustees, whose duties included financial and property management. Of the two administrative units, the ladies' records are the more varied and complete, especially after the turn of the century. Of prime importance to the ladies' records are the minutes of the meetings which contain much of the basic information abstracted for the annual reports. The minutes contain correspondence, directives, committee and staff reports, resolutions, and memoranda prepared for and included as a result of the meetings. Other informative data concerning the lady managers, as well as the children receiving services, will be found in the staff and committee reports which, for the most part, are organized separately. Staffing, budgeting, maintenance, and medical services available for the children are the central points depicted in the superintendent and staff reports for the period 1933-1956. Beginning in the 1930s, a social worker prepared reports for the case committee detailing information on the applicants and residents. This information, in the form of case histories, describes to some degree the child's family background and personality traits. The lady managers' records also include reports of the Grounds and Educational Committees, journals listing the amount of overhead such as staff salaries and plant maintenance, and financial records pertaining to the Hillcrest home on Nebraska Avenue, N.W.

The records relating to the trustees are primarily financial in character, reflecting their role as budget directors and property managers. Although incomplete, the files include minutes of meetings, ledgers, journals, auditors' reports, promissory notes, and some correspondence. The property records, which comprise a separate series, greatly augment the fragmentary

trustees' file and contain a wealth of information focused equally between investment properties and the asylum's residences.

The property records, while lacking in correspondence, reflect land values, building, repair, and rental costs in Washington, especially for the years 1870-1900. The trustee and property records and the files relating to legacies form the core of the center's financial records for the middle period and later years.

A significant though limited amount of material remains in the collection relating to the merger of Hillcrest with the Washington Institute of Mental Hygiene and Children's House. Documentation supplied by the annual reports and the ladies' minutes outlines the merger procedure which took place over the period 1953-1961. The superintendent's reports, together with information supplied by the case histories, treat with detail the staff's growing conviction that psychological treatment of children took precedence over other considerations. Consequently, in 1953 Hillcrest formed a working arrangement with the above-mentioned institutions to care exclusively for emotionally disturbed children. In 1961, after a report prepared by the Community Research Center of New York, the separate institutions merged under one administration.

Rounding out the collection are three file groups entitled children, general, and miscellaneous records. Files within these groups contain references to adoptions, indentures, constitutions, bylaws, annual and biennial reports, early acts of Congress relating to the formative years of the institution, historical sketches of the asylum, and complete description of the archives by Coleman.

In addition to the numerical classification outlined above, there is a further decimal classification for some of the records (see the first folder in Container 1 for details). Generally, the numerical classification is followed by three letters as described below:

Alphabetical Key

The alphabetical key classifies documents or file groups into three component parts: administrative relationship, chronological time span, and type of material.

| First letter | Second letter | Third letter |
|----------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| T-Trustees | A-1815-1865 | B-Bound volume |
| L-Ladies | D-1866-1875 | F-Folder* |
| O-Both ladies and trustees | S-1876-1925 | E-Window binder* |
| | H-1926- | R-Looseleaf binder* |
| | C-A combination of two or more periods | N-Newspaper clippings |
| | | P-Pamphlet |

*All documents formerly in looseleaf and window binders have been placed into folders and should be considered under the "F" classification. Consequently, all materials labeled E, R, or F are contained in the Unbound Records.

Arrangement of the Papers

This collection is arranged in three series:

- [Unbound Records, 1815-1966](#)
- [Bound Records, 1815-1955](#)
- [Miscellany \(Oversize\)](#)

Description of Series

Container

BOXES 1-33

Series

Unbound Records, 1815-1966

Correspondence, minutes of meetings, committee and staff reports, accounting statements, bills, receipts, canceled checks, notes, list, vouchers, deeds, titles, blueprints, tax and rent receipts, legal opinions, and printed matter.

Numerically arranged and decimally cataloged within seven major groupings.

BOXES 34-57

Bound Records, 1815-1955

Journals, ledgers, minutes of meetings, financial statements, applications, relinquishments, check stubs, indentures, numerical index, and some correspondence.

Numerically arranged and decimally cataloged. Some overlapping exists in the numerical order of the records in this series as a result of the binding arrangement. Includes oversize items.

**Containers 34-35 are available on microfilm, shelf no. 21,372*

BOXES OV 58-OV 59

Miscellany (Oversize)

An alphabetical index, maintenance and beneficiary journal, and deed and schedule of lots donated by Congress in 1832.

Arranged by type of material.

Container List

| <i>Container</i> | <i>Contents</i> |
|-------------------|--|
| BOXES 1-33 | Unbound Records, 1815-1966 Correspondence, minutes of meetings, committee and staff reports, accounting statements, bills, receipts, canceled checks, notes, list, vouchers, deeds, titles, blueprints, tax and rent receipts, legal opinions, and printed matter. Numerically arranged and decimally cataloged within seven major groupings. |
| BOX 1 | General records |
| 100 OCF | File code key and archives data, 1953 Archives, reports and correspondence |
| 100.1-100.2 | 1952 |
| 100.2-OHF | 1953 |
| 101 | Affidavit, management funds and taxes, 1947 |
| 102 OHF | Merger, Washington Institute of Mental Hygiene, 1952-1953 |
| 113 OCF | Acts of Congress, constitutions and bylaws |
| 113.1 OCF | Photocopy of constitution and early relinquishments Amendments of constitution and by laws |
| 113.2 OCF | 1937 |
| 114 OHF | 1948 |
| 115 OCF | Authority of ladies versus trustees, 1896, 1939 |
| 130 OCF | Constitution, bylaws, acts of Congress (copies and pamphlets) |
| 131 TSF | Authority under charter, 1901 |
| 132 TDF | 1874 amendment to Act |
| 133 TSF | Congressional appropriation, 1876 |
| 134 OSF | Public welfare legislation, 1924 |
| 135 TSF | 1933 amendment to Act, 1930-1933 |
| BOX 2 | Free water, act of Congress |
| 136 OSF | |
| 151 LAE | Annual reports, 1840-1860 |
| 154 OCF | Annual reports at Public Library, correspondence concerning, 1932, 1935 |
| 155 OCE | Annual reports, 1838 |
| 180 OCF | Ladies and trustees, correspondence, 1866-1951 |
| 182 OHF | Operating expenses, Hillcrest, 1924-1930 |
| 190 OHF | Washington City Orphan Asylum (WCOA), name controversy, 1926 |
| 191 OHF | Child Welfare League, WCOA report, 1937 |
| 192 OHF | Washington Institute, Lucia Whittemore study, 1952 |
| 193 LHF | National Child Research Center, recommendations, 1942 |
| 194 OHF | Annual administration announcement, sustaining members data, 1946 |
| 195 LHF | Historical summary, speech of Ms. Arthur Wallace Dunn |
| 200 LAE | Flinn, Anne, note on life, 1827 |
| | Children's records |
| 201 OHF | Board of Public Welfare contracts, 1944-1948 |
| 202 OHF | Payments by children's parents, 1941 |

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| 203 OSF | Lusby boys |
| 204 LSF | Board of Children's Guardians |
| 216 LCF | Admission of children, reference letters, 1876-1922 |
| 217 OSF | Juvenile Court commitment orders, 1909-1910 |
| 218 LSF | Government application for admissions |
| 225 LSF | Indian captive from Idaho, 1882, 1892 |
| 226 LSF | Application for admission, 1908-1923 |
| 230 LHF | Children's activities, "Sparks," 1932-1949 |
| BOX 3 | Little Museum <i>News</i> , 1936-1950 |
| 231 LHF | |
| 232 LSF | Kindergarten, 1896 |
| 233 LHF | Kindergarten and Gould monthly report, 1935-1943 |
| 240 LSF | Application for return of children to parents |
| 241 LSF | Return of children to parents, 1918 |
| 242 LSF | Legal custody of child, 1918 |
| 250 LAF | Indentures for binding out children, 1851-1854 |
| 255 LSF | Indentures, adoptions, court orders, 1870-1923, 1941 |
| 256 TSF | Legality of apprenticing outside of the District of Columbia |
| 257 LCF | Binding out of Sturgis children, 1864-1869 |
| 258 LCF | Indentures and adoptions, correspondence |
| 261 LHF | Adoption of Elizabeth Keyes by Admiral Hooper, 1941-1944 |
| 262 LCF | Reference letters, adoption of children, 1897-1918 |
| 263 LCF | Applications for adoption, 1906-1913 |
| 264 OHF | Adoption of children, legal questions, 1942, 1947 |
| 270 DSE | Orphan's picture, 1898 |
| 280 LCF | Letters from children, 1871-1941 |
| 281 LCF | Adult accomplishments of former inmates, 1910-1930 |
| 282 LCF | James E. West |
| 283 LSF | Boys in service, 1917-1918, Miss Colt's note |
| 291 OHF | Care of European refugee children, 1940 |
| 292 OCF | Death certificates, 1872-1896 |
| 292 LCF | Doctors for asylum, 1870-1940 |
| 294 LCF | Children, miscellaneous, 1872-1947 |
| 295 LCF | Genealogical data, legal adoption, 1876-1942 |
| 296 LCF | Children, involved cases, correspondence relating to |
| 297 LHF | Benet psychology test |
| 298 LHF | Menu, 1951 |
| BOX 4 | Lady managers' records |
| 300 LHF | First directress or secretary, annual report Case Committee |
| 301 LHF | Annual report |
| 301.1 LHF | Reports, 1938-1944 |
| 301.1 LHF | Reports, 1945-1949, 1951-1952 |
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| 304 LHF | Membership Committee, annual reports, 1946-1949 |
| 305 LHF | Archives Committee, annual reports, 1915, 1937, 1954, 1956 |
| 306 LHF | Little Museum, annual reports, 1938-1951 |
| 307 LHF | Grounds Committee, annual reports, 1927-1952, 1954 |
| 308 LHF | House Committee, annual reports, 1923-1951 |
| 308 LHF | Finance Committee, annual reports, 1923-1951 |
| 309.1 LHF | Future Plans Committee, reports and data, 1938-1951 |
| | Minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors |
| 317 LHF | 1953-June 1958 |
| BOX 6 | July 1958-1960 |
| 317 LHF | |
| | Superintendent and staff |
| | Annual and monthly reports |
| 330 LHF | 1933-1940 |
| BOX 7 | 1941-1956 |
| 330 LHF | |
| 331 LHF | Employees, injuries and retirement, 1930-1947 |
| 332 LCF | Teachers, 1862, 1896 |
| | Unemployment Compensation Board, Social Security |
| 333 LHF | 1938-1947 |
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| BOX 8 | Staff, contracts, duties, recommendations, etc., 1932-1942 |
| 334 LHF | |
| 335 LHF | Social worker's annual and monthly reports, 1941-1950 |
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| 346.1 LCF | |
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| 347.1 LHF | Hillcrest, payroll records and control sheets, 1951-1960 |
| 348 | Investments of ladies, 1927-1950 |
| 349.1 LCF | Ladies, miscellaneous financial data, 1926-1950 |
| BOX 11 | Miss Colt, miscellaneous financial data, 1927-1939 |
| 349.2 LCF | |
| 353 OAE | Original subscription paper for additional building, 1856 |
| 370 LHF | Budget estimates, 1923-1951 |
| 371 OSF | Increased expenditures, correspondence, 1924, 1935, 1950 |
| 380 LAE | Titcomb to Bomford letter concerning position, 1834 |
| 382 LCF | Letters concerning Ladies' Board, 1941-1950 |

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| 411 TSF | 1923-1926 |
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| 413 THF | 1935-1946 |
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| 430 LAE | Legal opinion of Richard S. Coxe, 1828 |
| 432 OHF | Legal opinion of James Wilkes, 1952 |
| 480 TAE | Larned to French correspondence concerning French's election to Board of Trustees, 1845 |
| 481 TCF | Trustees' letters, 1845-1948 |
| 490 TDF | Hall and Temple's visit to St. Vincent, 1875 |
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| 511 TAE | Account of A. C. Smith, 1840 |
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| 541 TAF | Securities, 1836-1851 |
| 542 TAF | Promissory notes, 1833-1851 |
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| 546 TCF | Indentures, 1860-1886 |
| 547 TDF | Securities and notes, 1872-1874 |
| 549 TCF | Securities, 1872-1885 |
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| 559 THF | Savings and loan association accounts |
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| BOX 16 | Laurie Fund |
| 560 TSF | Property left by Hall |
| 561 TSF | Treasurer's account, 1882-1884, 1887 |
| 570 THF | Dividends credited to Snow Fund by mistake |
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| 583 TCF | 1852-1896, 1900 |
| 590 OAE | Asylum debt to John Van Ness, 1820-1821 |
| 590.1 TAE | James Larned notation concerning Bomford estate |
| 591 TCF | Money borrowed by asylum, 1851-1872 |
| 592 TSF | Income of Alexandria Orphan Asylum, 1882 |
| 594 OCF | Miscellaneous bills, 1868-1892 |
| 595 TCF | Banks' checks, 1833-1901 |
| 597 TSF | WCOA v Tucker, non payment of promissory note, 1894 |
| 598 TSF | Direction concerning entries in books, deposits, etc., 1906 |
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| | Lee house in Douglas row |
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| 644 TSF | Taxes and assessments, 1870-1893, 1917, and 1927 |
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| 667 THF | Taxation, 1925-1947 |
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| 690 OSF | Proposal for new asylum home, 1897 |
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| 700 TSF | |
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| 746 TAF | Square 400, 1848-1859, 1869, 1885 |
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| 748 TAF | Square 128, 1846-1888 |
| 749 TAF | Square 259, 1843-1890 |
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| 801 TSF | Acker, Nicholas, 1881 |
| 801.1 LHF | Gift, Avalon Foundation, 1950 |
| | Legacies |
| 802 | Bailey, Charles B., 1925-1929 |
| 803 THF | Baker, John A. |
| 804 THF | Barrick, Clara A., 1927 |
| 805 THF | Berman, Lillian Hunt, 1936-1937 |
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| 813.1 THF | Cox, Juliet Haxeltine, 1932 |
| 814 TSF | Cox, George G., 1908-1910, 1942-1943 |
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| 816 TDF | Duvall, Eliza Ann, 1869 |
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