

**MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR
THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO CHILDREN
(1878-present)**

Records, 1877-1948

Charities Collection-CC 4

1 manuscript container	Processed May 1993 by Sheri Kelley
2.5 linear inches	Supervising Archivists:
Accession number: 93.006	Megan Sniffin-Marino and Peter Carini

ACQUISITION: In 1911 the Boston Children's Aid Society gave its entire library to the Simmons College School of Social Work Library. This library included the annual reports of many local and international welfare and charitable organizations. With the passage of time this collection took on historical significance and in 1991 it was transferred to the Simmons College Archives.

As part of donations in 1988 and 1989, Donald Moreland, a local social work administrator and collector of social work history, gave the Simmons College Archives a large number of annual reports, pamphlets and other materials related to various welfare and charitable organizations. With neither of these donations a discrete collection, the materials transferred in 1991 from the School of Social Work Library and the related materials donated by Donald Moreland were combined to form the Charities Collection. The Simmons College Archives Charities Collection consists of numerous small collections. Accession numbers for the individual collections are assigned during processing.

ACCESS: Unrestricted.

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HISTORY:

In 1874 a churchworker brought a case against the abusive mother of a child named "Mary Ellen". The only way she could do this was to file her complaint under cruelty to animals statutes since there were laws punishing cruelty to animals but not cruelty to children. An immediate outcome of the imprisonment of Mary Ellen's mother was the organization in 1874 of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. A similar society was founded in Massachusetts.

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC), a private charitable organization, was incorporated on April 23, 1878, "for the purpose of awakening interest in the abuses to which children are exposed by the intemperance, cruelty, or cupidity of parents and guardians, and to help the enforcement of existing laws on the subject, procure needed legislation, and for kindred work (p.15)."

For its first twenty-nine years the Society functioned as a part of the police force, by protecting children from physical cruelty and by prosecuting the offenders. In 1907 the Society's emphasis changed from legal to social aspects, from punishment to prevention. The Society still prosecuted abusers, but reformation received the major emphasis. Its dual role, therefore, was to protect the child, and at the same time persuade the parents to establish and maintain a "respectable" home.

All information taken from, "*A Handbook of Useful Information*," n.d., The MSPCC.

SCOPE AND CONTENT:

The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC) records, 1911-(1911-1948)-1964, are arranged chronologically and include the annual reports and publications of the Society. The earlier reports, 1911-1914, list the names of contributors with the amount of their contribution and the annual reports for all the branches. The reports from 1914-1916 did not include the annual reports for the branches but did list the names and amounts donated by their benefactors. The reports for 1917-1926 list the number of children served by the branches and the expenses and contributions of each branch. The reports for 1927-1929 list the officers and addresses for each branch and the total amount of contributions and expenses for all the branches combined. The reports from 1911-1929 include case studies of children that were helped by the societies, descriptions of the society's homes and retreats, and photographs of children helped by the society and the conditions in which they lived. The reports from 1930 forward include only the total income and expenses for all the branches combined.

A handbook, a notice, and legislative results are included. *A Handbook of Useful Information* includes a history of the Society, its goals and purposes, the types of cases with which they dealt, and a description of the Children's Home. A notice of a law enacted on July 17, 1887, announces the law regarding peddling and begging children. *Legislative Results of the Massachusetts Special Commission to Investigate the Laws Relative to Children, 1931*, shows the laws passed, changed, and lost or dropped during that year.

CONTAINER LIST:

BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
		SERIES I: ANNUAL REPORTS

1	1	1911-1915
	2	1916-1925
	3	1926-1948 1959 1960 1963 1964
	SERIES II PUBLICATIONS	
	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Notice of Peddling and Begging Children, 1887</i> ◆ <i>A Handbook of Useful Information, n.d.</i> ◆ <i>Legislative Results of the Massachusetts Special Commission to Investigate the Laws Relative to Children, 1931</i>