

Collection #s:
M 0166
BV 1510-1551
OM 0298

INDIANAPOLIS FREE KINDERGARTEN AND CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY RECORDS, 1881-1972

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Indianapolis, IN 46202-3269

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COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION: 2 manuscript boxes, 1 small manuscript box, 1 oversize folder, and 42 bound volumes

COLLECTION DATES: Inclusive, 1881-1972; Bulk, 1881-1950

PROVENANCE: Mrs. John G. Rauch, Indianapolis, Indiana, November 1969

RESTRICTIONS: Reproduction prohibited for all student and personnel records 70 years old or less

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RELATED HOLDINGS: Lelia E. Kern Taylor collection (BV 1747); Thornbrough, Emma. *Eliza Blaker: Her Life Story and Work, 1854-1926* ([rr]LA2317.B52 T4 1956); *Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Society, 1882-1942* (LB1238.I55 I53 1943)

ACCESSION NUMBER: 1969.1107

HISTORICAL SKETCH

The Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society was formally established in September 1884. Originally, the idea for free kindergarten came about before the Society's formal incorporation in 1884. In 1881 the Reverend Oscar C. McCulloch, pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church, formed an auxiliary society to the Social Science Association of Indiana in order to assess the educational conditions of the poor children of Indianapolis. This new society was called the Children's Aid Society. Through the Society's investigations it was apparent that these children were not being properly educated and later that same year a trial kindergarten was set up. When it proved to be successful, the Society opened its first permanent kindergarten in the Old Friendly Inn on West Market Street in 1882. In 1884, the Society voted to rename itself the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society. Also at this time, the Society selected Mrs. Eliza A. Blaker as the first superintendent. Mrs. Blaker held this position until her death in 1926.

The Society's main purpose, as stated by article II of the 1884 articles of incorporation, was to maintain free kindergarten schools for educational and moral training of poor children ages 3-8. Also, the association provided material assistance for families in need. The Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society depended financially on annual membership fees from its members, donations, and charity benefits such as balls and luncheons until the year 1901. In 1901 a law was passed making tax money available for the Society's expenses.

The success of and interest in the free kindergartens prompted Mrs. Blaker to start a training school for kindergarten teachers. When it was organized, shortly after the first kindergarten was created, classes were taught in Mrs. Blaker's home. From 1890-1907 it was known as the Indianapolis Kindergarten and Primary Normal Training School and it was located in various unoccupied rooms of churches and schools until, in 1887, a building was erected specifically for the training school. It was located at 617 Pearl Street (this is now the American Settlement House.) Later, in 1903, the William N. Jackson building was erected and the training school remained at this location for a number of years. There, student teachers were taught educational methods, as well as, domestic duties such as sewing, housekeeping, health and hygiene in order to pass this information on to the mothers. The students of the Normal Training School also assisted the teachers at the kindergartens as part of their training and they made in-home visits to the children's families. In 1907, the Training School became known as the Teachers College of Indianapolis and in 1930 it became part of Butler University's Education Department.

Along with training teachers, Mrs. Blaker's administration organized regular meetings of the mothers and child study classes to better inform families about child care. The idea of mother's meetings grew to include meetings for older sisters and fathers.

The Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society continued to build new kindergartens, expanding student enrollment almost every year. The Society's efforts flourished for over sixty years and the importance of the idea of early education and socialization of young children was recognized. As a result, by the late 1940's The

Indianapolis Public School System wanted to create kindergartens in all of its schools. In 1948 the school board made plans to take over the existing free kindergartens and by 1949, Public school commissioners had adopted a plan to provide a free semester to preschoolers and to work with the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Society. This provision would provide even more kindergartens, especially in areas not already served by the Indianapolis Free Kindergarten Society. By 1952, Kindergartens were a part of the Indianapolis Public school system.

Sources: Materials in collection
Indianapolis News, 1 December 1948
Indianapolis Star, 13 April 1949

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection consists of organizational records, minutes, printed materials and publications, correspondence, and newspaper articles. The bulk of the collection spans the years 1881-1950, although there is one newspaper article dated 1972. Also included are 42 bound volumes (BV 1510-1551) and 1 oversize folder (OM 0298). The collection is organized by subject and chronologically within each subject area.

Three folders, labeled "organizational records," contain the articles of incorporation (1884), copies of the Society's constitution (1902 and 1917), bylaws, a memorandum concerning tax for benefit of Free Kindergartens (1919), and fact sheets and general historical sketches (1910-1943).

The financial records consist of cash books, treasurer's books, and payroll and salary ledgers. These records include the years 1921-1943 and are located in the bound volumes, numbers BV 1543-1544, and BV 1547-1550. The collection also contains information on officers and members (1912-1949), the executive board (1927), and correspondence (1927-1949). In addition, there are printed programs and reports which include a copy of *The Indianapolis Kindergarten Monthly* (1900), programs of plays and other school activities, and a small pamphlet containing the history of the Society from 1882-1942 commemorating the Society's 60th Birthday. Also, there are four issues of *T.C.I. Collegiate*, a newsletter of the Teachers College of Indianapolis, (1926-1928) located in the oversize folder (OM 0298).

There are numerous newspaper articles (1893-1972) concerning the history of the society, biographies of the superintendents, and reports of the many benefits held by the society.

The bulk of the collection consists of minutes. Among these records are minutes from the annual meeting and report of the superintendent and notes for the superintendent's report (1927-1949). There are 34 bound volumes, which contain superintendent reports spanning the earlier years (1884-1927). Box 2 contains only minutes from board meetings and includes the years (1881-1950.) BV 1551 contains the minutes for the years 1910-1925. BV 1545 contains meeting minutes for the years 1881-1888.

Please note that within the collection there are several historical sketches, such as the pamphlet celebrating the Society's 60th birthday, which contain date discrepancies on the year the Society was first organized. The original source, (BV 1545) the minute book of 1881-1888, begins with minutes of the Society's first years of existence. It states that the Society was created in 1881 under the name The Children's Aid Society, which was an auxiliary society to the Social Science

Association of Indiana (see page 1.) Later, in 1884 (see page 50) it was renamed The Indianapolis Free Kindergarten and Children's Aid Society and, according to the minutes, it was at this time that Eliza Blaker was chosen as the supervising principal. Many of the historical accounts mention the beginning date as 1882. Consult the minute book of 1881-1888 for the most accurate account of the beginning of the Society.

BOX AND FOLDER LISTING

BOX 1: Organizational and Financial Records, 1884-1943; Officers and Members, 1912-1949; Minutes of the Executive Board and the Superintendent's Reports, 1884-1949

FOLDER CONTENTS

- 1 Organizational Records, 1884-1914
- 2 Organizational Records, 1917-1931
- 3 Organizational Records, 1936-1943
- 4 Officers and Members, 1912-1943
- 5 Officers and Members, 1944-1949
- 6 (BV 1543-44, BV 1547-1550) Financial Records, 1917-1943
- 7 Annual Meeting of Executive Board, Oct. 1927
- 8 (BV 1510-1542, BV 1546) Reports of the Superintendent, 1884-1927
- 9 Annual Meeting and Report of the Superintendent, 1927-1930
- 10 Annual Meeting and Report of the Superintendent, 1931-1935
- 11 Annual Meeting and Report of the Superintendent, 1936-1950
- 12 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1936
- 13 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1937
- 14 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1938
- 15 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1939
- 16 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1940
- 17 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1941
- 18 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1942
- 19 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1943
- 20 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1944
- 21 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1945
- 22 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1946
- 23 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1947
- 24 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1948
- 25 Notes for Superintendent's Report, 1949

BOX 2: Meeting Minutes, 1881-1950

FOLDER CONTENTS

- 1 (BV 1545, BV 1551) Minutes, 1881-1925

- 2 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1927-June 1928
- 3 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1928-June 1929
- 4 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1929-June 1930
- 5 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1930-June 1931
- 6 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1931-June 1932
- 7 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1932-June 1933
- 8 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1933-June 1934
- 9 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1934-June 1935
- 10 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1935-June 1936
- 11 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1936-June 1937
- 12 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1937-June 1938
- 13 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1938-June 1939
- 14 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1939-June 1940
- 15 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1940-June 1941
- 16 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1941-June 1942
- 17 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1942-June 1943
- 18 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1943-June 1944
- 19 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1944-June 1945
- 20 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1945-June 1946
- 21 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1946-June 1947
- 22 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1947-June 1948
- 23 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1948-June 1949
- 24 Board Meeting Minutes, Sept. 1949-Sept.1950

BOX 3: Correspondence, 1927-1949; Printed Programs and Reports, 1883-1942;Biographical Information on Eliza Blaker, 1924-1927; Articles and Newspaper Clippings on the Society, 1893-1972
FOLDER CONTENTS

- 1 Correspondence, 1927
- 2 Correspondence, 1928-1932
- 3 Correspondence, 1932-1949
- 4 Printed Programs and Reports, 1883-1900

- 5 Printed Programs and Reports, 1915-1942 (see also OM 0298)
- 6 Biographical Information on Eliza Blaker, 1924-1927
- 7 *The Educator Journal*, 1907, Containing articles on Indianapolis Free Kindergarten
- 8 Articles and Newspaper Clippings, 1893-1925
- 9 Articles and Newspaper Clippings, 1925-1972

CATALOGING INFORMATION

For additional information on this collection, including a list of subject headings that may lead you to related materials:

1. Go to the Indiana Historical Society's online catalog: <http://opac.indianahistory.org/>
2. Click on the "Basic Search" icon.
3. Select "Call Number" from the "Search In:" box.
4. Search for the collection by its basic call number (in this case, M 0166).
5. When you find the collection, go to the "Full Record" screen for a list of headings that can be searched for related materials.