The Christian Women’s Benevolent Association Records contain Christian Women Benevolent Association (CWBA) Board Meeting Minutes (1899–1952); Christian Old People’s Home Ledgers and Meeting Minutes (1915–1949); Christian Hospital of St. Louis Board Meeting Minutes (1923–1959); and scrapbooks, photographs, videotapes, and ephemera relating to the CWBA’s activities from 1899 – 2011. Most notably, the records include admittance ledgers from the Christian Orphan’s Home as well as the Mothers and Babies Home of St. Louis from 1899 to 1933. The admittance ledgers are a particularly rich source of genealogical information, as they contain applications for entry into the home. Details such as date and place of the child’s birth; vaccination records; parents’ full names, birthplace and occupation, and nationality and religion; and location of the nearest living relative are listed.

In 1886, Sarah Matilda (Mattie) Hart Younkin gathered five women, including Fannie Shedd Ayars, for a prayer circle in the basement of First Christian Church in St. Louis. From this prayer circle rose a goal: to establish an institution that was different from typical asylums, and to protect children while creating a loving, family-like environment for teaching self-reliance and instilling Christian values. These women founded the National Benevolent Association of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in 1887. Their first home, the Christian Orphan’s Home, opened in 1897.

The Mothers and Babies Home opened in St. Louis on June 1, 1899, as an expansion of the Christian Orphans’ Home, with Ayars at the administrative helm. Memorial funds for a separate room within the Christian Orphan’s Home to care for babies had accumulated until the women voted to establish a separate home that accepted children under two years of age. To accommodate the Mothers and Babies Home, a larger house was rented and eventually a hospital section was added. In the first six months of its existence, the Mothers and Babies Home cared for 85 babies, adopted out 15, secured work for 25 women, and gave temporary shelter to 31 women.

In early 1903, the Christian Woman’s Benevolent Association purchased a home at 2835 Lawton Avenue for use as a hospital. Board members from CWBA and local doctors were appointed to a joint committee, which developed standards of care, as well as rules and regulations by which the hospital would provide services. The doors of Christian Hospital opened to patients in August 1903.

In 1911, the group opened a home to care for the elderly - the Christian Old Peoples Home at 6600 Washington Avenue in University City. Later that year the group split into two - the Christian Women’s Benevolent Association, led by Fannie Shedd Ayars, and the National Benevolent Association. The reasons for the split were twofold. Fannie
Shedd Ayars’s stance was that all women and children, regardless of marital status and circumstances of conception, should be admitted to the Mothers and Babies Home. Admission ledgers indicate that mothers, including unmarried ones, were admitted to the Mothers and Babies Home until they could find work. Not all of the founding women shared Ayars’ liberal views, however, and this conflict contributed to her departure. The second cause of the split was discrimination against female leadership—the National Benevolent Association had recently enacted policies that eliminated women from management positions.

Christian Hospital and the Christian Old People’s Home continued to expand throughout the early and mid-20th century. In 1962, the Mothers and Babies Home and Christian Orphan’s Home were converted to the CWBA Youth Home, which provided resident care for the wards of the juvenile court system of Metropolitan St. Louis. In the 1970s, CWBA sold Christian Hospital, and the proceeds were used to expand the Christian Old People’s Home and build new facilities for the Youth Home. The CWBA’s mission of caring for youth in St. Louis persisted through the 1980s, when the Youth Home closed due to state aid cuts, management turmoil, and a lack of private donations.

In 1975, the CWBA built a new facility for the Christian Old People’s Home at 800 Chambers Road in Ferguson, Missouri. It was rebuilt in 2011 and renamed the Christian Care Home. In December, 2018 the home closed, citing the loss of Medicare funding. Following the closure of the Christian Care Home and the Christian Women’s Benevolent Association dissolved.

The National Benevolent Association remains active today, with a headquarters in St. Louis, and recently celebrated its 130th anniversary. Christian Hospital also remains active today and merged with Barnes-Jewish Inc. in June 1993 to form BJC Healthcare.

Donor Information
The records were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Viola Wieble on December 17, 2018 (Accession No. SA4379). An addition was made on July 27, 2020 by Chaudhry Sadaf (Accession No. SA4471).

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Box List

Box 1
Christian Women’s Benevolent Association
Board meeting minutes, 1911-1952

Mothers and Babies Home
  Board meeting minutes, 1899-1903; 1926-1948
  Campaign and construction newspaper clippings, 1929
  Admittance ledger, 1899-1909

**Box 2**

Christian Old People’s Home
  Admission ledgers, 1929-1935; 1942-1945
  Board meeting minutes, 1915-1917; 1923-1949

Christian Hospital of St. Louis
  Board meeting minutes, 1923-1936; 1955-1959

**Box 3**

CWBA Photographs, Scrapbooks, and Ephemera
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  f. 4 Photographs of children who were adopted from the Christian Orphans Home and Mothers and Babies Home, 1929-1935
  f. 5-6 Photographs of Youth Home and Christian Orphans Home Facilities and Residents, 1920-1980
  f. 7 Scrapbook, including photographs of CWBA members and Christian Hospital, 1934-1980
  f. 8 Scrapbook, including photographs of CWBA members, Christian Hospital, Christian Orphans Home, and Christian Old People’s Home, 1930-1950
  f. 9 Scrapbook, including photographs of CWBA members, Christian Orphans Home, and Christian Old People’s Home, 1937
  f. 10 Photographs of Christian Care Home groundbreaking, facilities, and residents, 2011
  f. 11 Unidentified, loose photographs of CWBA activities, 1920-2011
  f. 12 Scrapbook page, letter from the Office of George W. Bush acknowledging his invitation to the Christian Care Home Open House in September 2011
  f. 13 Historic ephemera left at Christian Care Home by residents and collected by CWBA members, including 1904 World’s Fair Invitation; Voter Badge, ca. 1840

Videotapes
  CWBA Member Geraldine Kamenko’s Retirement Celebration, June 25, 1998
  CWBA Youth Home Demolition, March 14, 1994
  CWBA 100 Years, 1999
  CWBA Nursing Home, no date

**Box 4**

Client Files
  A, 1904-1960
B, 1900-1942 (3 folders)
Callahan-Colvin, 1905-1943
Chandler, Cornelia Blanche, 1917
Cheesman, Timmie, “T.C.,” 1983
Collinsbaby, Fertie, no date
Conley, Cedric Elton, 1980-1982
Conley-Curtis, 1900-1937
Cosby, Barcenes (Tony), 1981
Daggett-Dodds, 1900-1942, no date
Dailey, Eric, 1980-1983
Davis, Ferris, 1920, 2000
Donald-Duval, 1900-1928
Ederati-Everett, 1896-1930
Fagerty-Freeman, 1903-1933
Feuerstein, Danny E., 1982-1983
Fisher, Jerry Michael, 1983
Gamron-Grimes, 1902-1992
Gunn, Ronald D., 1982-1983
Habschmidt-Hancock, 1899-1950
Hand-Hayes, 1898-1957
Hanson, Robert, 1980-1982
Hay-Hurlburt, 1900-1949
Jackson, Andrew, 1982-1985

Box 5
Jackson, Michael, 1980-1982
Jacobs-Johnson, 1899-2000
Johnson-Julius, 1899-1944
Joiner, Anthony, 1981-1982
Joiner, James, 1981-1983
Joiner, Ralph, 1981-1982
Kaiser-Kuns, 1899-1951
La Green-Lunn, 1901-1950
Lilie, Richard W., Jr., 1979-1983
Lynch, Charles W., 1981
Major-Meyer, 1899-1950
McCarthy, Donald E., 1981-1987
Miller, Robert, 1979-1982
Mines-Maddock, 1902-1932
Mines-Mueller, 1900-1948
Moore, Gary, 1981-1983
Moore, Terry, 1981-1983
Nast-Norma, 1901-1979
Oden-Owens, 1902-1980
Owens, Robert A., 1980-1983
Parham-Pryor, 1899-1939
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Pye, Deandra, 1982
Quinn-Ryan, 1900-1949
Repp, Kerry, 1980-1981
Sampson, Clarence, 1980-1982
Sampson, Eric Steven, 1977-1984
Sellars-Stolhoff, 1902-1923
Shegog, Charles L., 1982-1983
Slamp, Michael, 1980-1984
Smith-Summers, 1906-1961
Spencer, Floyd, 1980-1982
Stuart-Smith, 1900-1946
Tate-Tye, 1900-1944
Taylor, Robert earl, 1983
Tidwell, Donald J., 1980-1982
Unthank-Virginia, 1900-1942
Volmert, Eric, 1980-1982
Walters, Michael D., 1983
White, James, 1980-1981
Williams, Benny L., 1980-1981
Williams, Darren, 1981-1984
Williams-West, 1901-1959
Wilson, Betty Lou, 1935-1952
Wilson-West, 1901-1959

Box 7

Yager-Zeigler, 1903-1938

History

Auxiliaries, 1993-1996
Booklets, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, and photographs, 1912-1999
Christian Old People’s Home, 1977-1994
Correspondence, historical sketches and newsletters, 1929-2000
Correspondence and newspaper clippings, 1918-2009
Deeds of trust, programs, correspondence, and an annual report, 1906-1962
Handwritten history, newsletters, annuity bonds, stock certificates, newspaper clippings, and deeds of trust, 1927-1998
An Historical Overview, Christian Women’s Benevolent Association: 93 Years of Service, 1899-1992
The History of the Christian Women’s Benevolent Association, no date
Newsletters, 1941-1982
Timeline, including photographs, 1930-2010
Youth Home, 1974-1993

Administration

Annual report and Board of Trustees directory, 1994, 2004
Articles of incorporation and merger agreements, 1911-1996
Christian Old People’s Home
   Bylaws and corporate certificate, 1974-1975
   Correspondence and a last will and testament, 1979-1991
   Correspondence and reports, 1913-1915
   Legal materials, 1911-2008
Finances and Development
   Accountants’ Review Report and a liability trust, 2003, no date
   Appraisals, 6600 Washington Avenue and Hartnett Avenue, 1947
   Building Fund Campaign, 1978
   Deeds of trust
      6600 Washington 1927
   Cemeteries
      1937, 1951, 1973-1975
      Laurel Hills Cemetery, Oak Grove Cemetery, Sunset Burial
      Park, and Bellefontaine Cemetery Association, 1890-1985
      St. John’s Cemetery, 1947-1978

Box 8

Clay County, Illinois, 1947
   Hendrich Abstract Company
      6600 Washington, Christian Women’s Benevolent Association to
      Christian Old People’s Home, 1917-1977
      Fannie Shed Ayars’ will regarding Reber Place, 1933
      Park Hotel and Belleville Church, 1917, 1968, 1976
   Hurt building, Georgia; Maple Terrace, Dallas, Texas; Lubbock County, Texas; Florida Hotel, Lakeland, Florida, 1925-1936
   Midlink and Lindell Park properties, 1915-1971
   Nale farm, 1864, 1947
   Plymouth property, 1922-1953
   Shackelford Road, St. Louis County, Missouri, 1974
   Shelby County, Illinois, 1924-1974
   Stenzel Timken property, 1921
   Stoddard addition, 1914
   Valhalla lots, 1917
   Gifts and pledges, 1973-1987
   Nursing Home and Hospitality House, 800 Chambers Road, Ferguson, Missouri, 1995
   Wills, John H. King, Frank J. Morton, and Fannie Shedd Ayars, 1922-2012
Photographs and Scrapbook
   Photographs of Mothers and Babies Home, Christian Hospital, Youth Home, Christian Hospitality House, orphans, and staff members, 1930-1982
   Scrapbook, including photographs of Christian Old People’s Home, board members, and orphans, as well as correspondence and a marriage certificate of Fannie Shedd and Dr.
Treston R. Ayars) 1905-1947
Christian Old People’s Home
Members ledger, 1951-1973

**Oversize Volumes (13)**
Christian Orphans Home admission ledger, 1899-1901
Mothers and Babies Home admission ledgers, 1901-1902; 1901-1917; 1902-1904; 1902-1908; 1908-1911
Combined Christian Orphans Home/Mothers and Babies Home admission ledgers, 1908-1921; 1908-1910; 1910-1913; 1911-1914; 1921; 1921-1933
Christian Hospital, trustees minute book, 1931-1932

**Oversize photographs and architectural plans**
100 Years of Ministry poster and photograph of Christian Old People’s Home
(6600 Washington Street), 1935
Architectural plans for retirement home, 1996