



Mary Lou Martin Drosten Papers (S0720)

Collection Number: S0720

Collection Title: Mary Lou Martin Drosten Papers

Dates: 1935-1941

Creator: Drosten, Mary Lou Martin, 1910-1991

Abstract: The Mary Lou Martin Drosten Papers contain correspondence, photographs, and newspaper clippings documenting her work with the National Youth Administration in St. Louis, Missouri. Included in the collection is a scrapbook chronicling her work with African American children in the Webster Groves and Kinloch communities.

Collection Size: 0.25 cubic feet

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at stlouis@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: The Donor has given and assigned to the Society all rights of copyright, which the Donor has in the Materials and in such of the Donor's works as may be found among any collections of Materials received by the University from others.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Mary Lou Martin Drosten Papers* (S0720); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-St. Louis [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-St. Louis].

Donor Information: The papers were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Caroline E. Rivard on February 27, 2025 (Accession No. SA4739).

Processed by: Processed by AJ Medlock, May 2026

Biographical Note:

Mary Lou Martin Drosten was born on July 5, 1910, in St. Louis City, Missouri, to Charles and Eleanor Martin. After earning her degree in architecture from Washington University in 1933, Drosten served as the St. Louis County Supervisor for the National Youth Administration (NYA) from 1936 to 1941. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the NYA at the height of the Great Depression via Executive Order 7086 on June 26, 1935, to provide job training and employment opportunities for youth, ages 16 to 25. Drosten's work included securing part-time work for young women and creating summer recreation opportunities for Black and white children in Webster Groves, Kinloch, Kinloch, and Affton. Drosten left the NYA in 1940 to pursue a career in architecture and raise her children with her husband, Fred W. Drosten. Shortly thereafter, the Roosevelt administration shuttered the NYA on July 3, 1943, due to World War II. Drosten died from pneumonia on November 16, 1991.

Arrangement:

The collection is arranged alphabetically.

Scope and Content:

The Mary Lou Martin Drosten Papers contain correspondence, case lists, handbooks, photographs, and a scrapbook primarily documenting her work as the St. Louis County Supervisor for the National Youth Administration. Materials of note include a scrapbook compiled by Drosten during her years with the NYA, including newspaper clippings, program booklets, fliers, and correspondence, chronicling her work establishing summer playgrounds for St. Louis County youth. Photographs of interest in the scrapbook include images of track meets and related recreational activities organized by Drosten in the African American communities of North Webster Groves, Kinloch, and Robertson, Missouri. Also featured in the collection are photographs of flooding in Creve Coeur in 1935; Drosten assisted flood victims with the Red Cross before joining the NYA. The materials in this collection are arranged alphabetically and date from 1935 to 1941.

Container List:

Box 1	f. 1	Correspondence, case lists, handbooks, and newspaper clippings, 1935-1940
	f. 2	Photographs, 1936-1941
	f. 3	Photographs, Creve Coeur, 1935
	f. 4	Scrapbook, 1936-1941

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