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DOUBLE DUTY: PROCESSING AND EXHIBITING THE CHILDREN’S HOME SOCIETY OF FLORIDA PAPERS AS AN ARCHIVIST AND PUBLIC HISTORIAN

by

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B.A. University of West Florida, 2003

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ABSTRACT

The Children’s Home Society of Florida, often referred to as “Florida’s Greatest Charity”, is the state’s oldest non profit welfare agency. Founded in 1902, the society was instrumental in creating and reforming child welfare laws as well as helping countless children in the state of Florida find loving homes. This paper focuses on the archival processing of the Children’s Home Society of Florida Collection papers and the creation of a subsequent web exhibit. The role of archivist and public historian is examined to see how each profession works toward a common goal.
This paper is dedicated to my two families: my family in Pensacola, Florida and my UCF Libraries Special Collections and University Archives family. Without their love, support, and good humor, I would never have come this far.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The state superintendent of the Children’s Home Society of Florida (CHSFL) once called his society “Florida’s Greatest Charity”. However, few people today are aware of the CHSFL or its accomplishments in improving child and family welfare. I had never heard of the CHSFL before I worked on this project. The collection was important to preserve, both for its history of a Florida nonprofit social welfare agency as well as its role in the greater discourse on history in the American South. It became my job to work both as an archivist and public historian to preserve and exhibit this important collection.

My goal in this paper is twofold: to show how a collection is processed according to professional archival standards, and how a public historian can become an archivist. Through the processing of the CHSFL collection and the creation of a virtual exhibit, the papers of this important Florida organization will be preserved and exhibited for future generations to come. I will also be able to show how I grew as a professional public historian and archivist during the course of processing the CHSFL collection.
CHAPTER TWO: JUST WHAT IS THE CHILDREN’S HOME SOCIETY OF FLORIDA?

Any child who was adopted in the state of Florida in the twentieth century likely had a connection to the CHSFL. While the state organization was created to serve the poor, neglected, and abandoned children in Florida, the society became the leading advocate for child rights in the nation. Few know of the remarkable advances this society made for children in addition to the stories of many thousands of children who were placed with loving families. The society was the only recognized organization to handle adoptions in the state of Florida before the Department of Children and Families took over in the early 1970s. Without these documents, one might never have had the chance to fully know the many achievements of the CHSFL.

In 1902 the CHSFL was started in Jacksonville, Florida as a response to the growing number of abandoned and destitute children in the state of Florida. A small group of wealthy community members organized the society from their homes, raising money and collecting supplies to aid in the care of orphan children. Two of these supporters, Mr. and Mrs. Elwes, offered their residence as the first home for the society’s children. The society called this house a ‘receiving home’ since this was the place where children were received into the society’s care and lived until a proper home could be found. The CHSFL mission was unusual for its time; the society strived to keep families together rather than take children from their homes. Only if a child’s life or health was in danger would the CHSFL take action. If a family was placing children for adoption because of financial constraints, the CHSFL would work with the parents in order to keep the family together. The goal of
the CHSFL was not just to place an orphan with parents, but to strengthen the well-being of the child through the care and support of the family.¹

Most organizations revere their founders and first administrators as ‘fathers’ and ‘mothers’. The CHSFL points its achievements, awards, and survival to its third state superintendent, Marcus C. “Daddy” Fagg. Fagg was the CHSFL state superintendent from 1910-1951. It was because of Fagg’s financial savvy that the society not only pulled itself from severe debt but raised large sums of money for Florida’s children and families. Laws and child rights legislation were a big part of Fagg’s legacy. He participated in the White House Conference on Child Welfare at the request of the American Child Welfare Association and President Herbert Hoover in 1938. Fagg was an active contributor to the writing and editing of several state and national child welfare laws including the Child Labor Law, the Compulsory Education Law, and the Wife Desertion Law, among others². Fagg was also responsible for helping to start the first Florida state run public welfare organization, the Florida State Board of Welfare, and serving as its first president.

Additionally, while Fagg was raising money and advocating on the behalf of Florida’s children, he also personally cared for the children at the Jacksonville receiving home, helping children to find homes. Fagg’s compassion towards children and families helped earn him the moniker ‘Daddy Fagg’, which he carried with him well past his death in 1958. It was through the work of Daddy Fagg that the CHSFL could flourish and remain in operation to the current day.³

¹ The Children’s Home Society of Florida Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.
² Ibid. The Children’s Home Society of Florida Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.
³ Ibid, CHSFL.
The CHSFL celebrated one hundred years of service to Florida in 2002, donating its papers a year later to the University of Central Florida Libraries Special Collections and University Archives. During the anniversary, the society moved its headquarters from Jacksonville to Winter Park, and uncovered several boxes of historic organizational records. The society knew that these records were important and in need of preservation, but did not have the personnel or a proper storage facility in which to house them. The materials included paper records, scrapbooks, film reels, and photographs among other items. Through the efforts of the Carla Summers, head of the UCF Special Collections and University Archives, and Elizabeth Konzak, University Archivist, the UCF Special Collections and University Archives became the home for the current and future archival records of the CHSFL. Records generated by the society in the future will be accessioned by the UCF Special Collections and University Archives, thus providing preservation for important records early and keeping the society’s operational history consistent and intact. By making the UCF Special Collections and University Archives the sole repository for its papers, the CHSFL can take comfort in knowing that its records are being preserved for many decades to come. The UCF Special Collections and University Archives also benefits by being the only place in the world one can find the CHSFL organizational papers. Because the CHSFL is a nonprofit, agency and the UCF Special Collections department had limited funds for use in processing the papers, the collection was not processed until 2006 when I chose to organize it for my master’s thesis project. The twenty or more boxes that made up the bulk of the collection were initially accessioned in 2003, however the society donated additional boxes of materials until I began to process the collection in 2006. After it was fully processed, the CHSFL collection contained forty-four
boxes, eight books, and sixteen flat filed folders. Researchers can now use this collection to
rediscover a society that did so much for the children of the state of Florida as well as the
nation.
CHAPTER THREE: A LITTLE ARCHIVAL THEORY

What is an archive? Why should papers and artifacts be preserved? In her book, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*, Mary J. Pugh writes:

“Actions create records. As people order, direct, design, build, report, inform, communicate, instruct, plan, evaluate, advertise, apply, announce, authorize, request, compensate, contract, or otherwise do their jobs, they create records. The title of a record often reflects the action that creates it, such as report, order, request, plan, or permit. All records are utilitarian, created in the course of practical archives. Records provide evidence of the actions that created them.”

Pugh discusses what records are and how they can be classified for use in the larger research community. She also traces archives and manuscripts to ancient materials made of clay, stone, and papyrus, explaining that these artifacts are like ‘talking objects’. Archivists preserve these objects and interpret their information, hence letting the objects ‘talk’ for themselves. Put simply, “Records can be thought of as “the working files of working folks.”

There are differences in the types of records archivists collect for their repositories. The most significant are personal papers and organizational papers. Pugh explains that collecting personal papers is important because, “Manuscript repositories, or collecting repositories, collect such personal papers because the activities of the individuals who generated them contain evidence or information of interest to others.” As for organizational papers, Pugh states that the record of an organization’s daily operations is important for both researchers and employees:

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5 Ibid, Pugh, pg 11.
6 Ibid, Pugh, pg 12.
“With the passage of time, employees leave or retire, but the organization continues. With good records management, records documenting significant actions with continuing consequences are transferred to organizational archives so that later information seekers, whether organizational successors or others seeking evidence of past actions, can find them. The mission of the archival profession is to identify records that have continuing usefulness, preserve them and make the information in them accessible through time.”

The Children’s Home Society of Florida is a perfect representation of Pugh’s example for organizational records. Preserving the original organizational system of a collection is very important when processing, because it gives an overall context to a collection. Filing alphabetically, by subject or by date, provides an insight into the organization’s original filing scheme. The job of the archivist is not only to preserve this original filing, but to make the collection as easily accessible to the researcher as possible.

In the case of the CHSFL papers, I was faced with many miscellaneous boxes of materials that had little to no original filing left. The society was staffed by both volunteers and paid workers, who filtered in and out of the society for over one hundred years. Naturally, everyone has an opinion about how items should be managed, so keeping a cohesive filing system for one hundred years was virtually impossible. It was my job to try to make sense of the original filing and also to organize the papers for research use. My work will help researchers and members of the organization more readily find the information they need. This work will also give a glimpse into the organization’s paper operations. As Pugh states, preserving these organizational papers will make the context of the society’s management style available throughout time.

From a different perspective, the book entitled Documenting Localities: A Practical Model for American Archivists and Manuscript Curators by Richard J. Cox discusses archives and

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7 Ibid, Pugh, pg 18.
manuscripts at the local level and how they add to the discourse of monument and memory. Using place as an example of the importance of preserving memory, Cox cites Kevin Lynch in *What Time is this Place* as saying,

> “Many symbolic and historic locations in a city are rarely visited by its inhabitants, however, they may be sought out by tourists. But a threat to destroy these places will evoke a strong reaction, even from those who have never seen, and perhaps never will see, them. The survival of these unvisited, hearsay settings conveys a sense of security and continuity.”

This idea falls parallel to ideas presented by such public historians as Delores Hayden (*The Power of Place*) and Mike Wallace (*Mickey Mouse History*) who also discuss communities in common memory. Cox sees manuscripts and archives as a monument in the community memory. He defines community and locality as “that geographical area (from neighborhood to county or city to region) that an individual identifies with because of cultural, political, socioeconomic, historical or other reasons” but for the archivist

> “the precise definition of locality is that most rooted in the particular needs of the archivists and their colleagues. It may shift to suit the needs of the archival programs, historical manuscripts repositories, and the users of the holding of these institutions.”

Cox also discusses the surge in research at the local level in the 1960s among historians. These historians recognized the link between national history and local history; they began researching from the ‘bottom up’. Some historians argued against including this type of research, saying that local history was only produced as a public relations ploy meant to glorify the wealthy and notable in the community. Other historians utilized these histories, saying instead that they were written by the people of the community and should be included as a small part of the overall discourse. Cox sums up the relationship between an archivist

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10 Ibid, Cox, pg 9.
11 Ibid, Cox, pg 10.
and a researcher as that of “grist for the mill”, and describes this relationship as symbiotic in nature. One cannot survive without the other. This is true for my project: I could not have produced a thorough and historically accurate web exhibit without first having an archivist properly process the collection. On the other hand, the collection would not have this increased public exposure without the research and work of a historian or public historian. As the title of this thesis suggests, I have been pulling double duty by first working as an archivist to process the collection and then as a public historian to exhibit it to the public.

One additional argument for preserving archives comes from French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs in his posthumously-published work *On Collective Memory*. Lewis Coser translated several of Halbwachs’s works into *On Collective Memory*, including his theories on memory in the family and memory in religion. Halbwachs’s position is that memory is not an individual process but one of a collective function. Without the context of place in which the memory happened, events would hang separately from one another and not connect:

“We can understand each memory as it occurs in individual thought only if we locate each within the thought of the corresponding group. We cannot properly (*sic*) understand their relative strength and the ways in which they combine within individual thought unless we connect the individual to the various groups of which he is simultaneously a member.”

Halbwachs explains that through the discourse of the memory, its context of place and participating members, memory becomes fluid and connected for that individual. Archivists preserve the context so that the individual can link with the memory which in turn remains preserved and fluid.

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CHAPTER FOUR: STARTING WITH A PHYSICAL INVENTORY

When the CHSFL collection came to the UCF Special Collections in 2003, a student assistant was given the task of making a preliminary inventory. With this initial inventory, the manuscript curator had a physical inventory control of the collection. Items could be tracked as they were moved in and out of the collection, and any new items could be accessioned in as additions to the collection. Having an accurate inventory of the physical items contained in the collection, the manuscript curator had complete control of the items. While this is certainly not processing a collection, it mimics processing and helps to give the archivist a greater understanding of the materials. By having this information, I was able to get an idea of what the collection contained so that I could do background research before I started processing.

Simply organizing archival records is not enough when processing a collection. The archivist must play the part of researcher and gather background information about the time period and subject they are processing. I personally already had the benefit of being a trained historian. The time period and the region in which the CHSFL originated are areas with which I am very familiar. Despite this, without doing additional research, I would not have fully realized the significance of the work the CHSFL did at the turn of the century.

Writing about the history of the professionalization of social work, *Wayward Girls and Immoral Women: Case Records and the Professionalization of Social Work*, Karen W. Tice shows how dramatically the practice of social work has changed over the past hundred years. Record keeping was a major issue among social work professionals, first about whether or not

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not to keep them and then how the records should be kept. For the CHSFL, records were kept from the start, both for the society itself and for each child involved. Tice explains that from the late 19th century to about 1920, though records were being kept on individuals in various welfare organizations around the country, record keeping was haphazard and scattered among ledger books. As evidenced by a circa 1915 form recording the investigative findings of a potential adoptive home, the CHSFL was, in a sense, revolutionary with its recordkeeping practices.

Finding the information about early social work is significant, but knowing about the existence of the investigative forms in the collection from the initial inventory before my research began was extremely helpful. I knew to look further into the subject of record keeping instead of skimming over the topic. Initial surveying of a collection and background research go hand-in-hand; this creates a context that is vital to the archivist’s work when processing a collection. The context of the collection becomes fuller, richer, and is a great asset to the researcher who will eventually be using the collection for their own work.
CHAPTER FIVE: LETTING THE COLLECTION SPEAK FOR ITSELF

As mentioned previously with reference to Pugh, papers can ‘talk’. When processing a collection, the archivist should ‘listen’ to the papers and allow this subtle information to be shared. Again, Pugh calls this ‘talking objects’. It is essential for the archivist to take copious notes and notice details about the collection’s holdings. This type of listening is what helps the archivist to find the context of the collection and properly organize the papers for others to use.

The archivist is merely the interpreter for a collection. I originally felt that the CHSFL papers were a collection about child adoption. However, as I processed the papers and took meticulous notes about the types of materials, I learned that this was not necessarily the case. The CHSFL is a nonprofit organization that has always relied on donations from the public. The papers showed the trials and tribulations of a fledgling service organization, and the near death experience it faced until Marcus Fagg took over as the society’s state superintendent. The papers also showed the love and admiration for the man many affectionately called ‘Daddy Fagg’, and the concern for the well-being of the thousands of children who walked through the society’s doors over the years. Political battles, financial records, and publications told the story of a society that was committed to surviving the worst of times to provide the best they could for the orphaned and less fortunate. By allowing myself to be immersed in the collection, taking notes and not making assumptions, the papers guided me to understand what the collection was truly about, thus enabling me to find an organizational system for the files that may have been similar to the original.
When a collection is organized, it is split into sections called ‘series’ and ‘sub-series’. This makes a collection easier to manage, both for the manuscript curator and the researcher. Once a collection is processed, this organizational hierarchy is put into a finding aid, another form of inventory control. The finding aid is a guide used by the researcher to pinpoint the exact material they are looking for. Through the series and sub-series, the manuscript curator knows exactly where to look in the collection’s boxes to find the material.

After I performed my initial survey of the collection, I had a pretty good idea of what my main series titles would be: State, Division, Photos, and Scrapbooks. Past those series titles, I was at a loss for how I should process the remainder of the collection. The size of the project overwhelmed me, and for a time I did not know where to begin my work. I knew that I needed to start breaking the materials down into their respective series, but I was not sure if I would be doing myself a disservice if I processed one series section before another. I also had the task of surveying the audio/visual materials, sorting through several boxes of photographs, and preserving scrapbooks that were in advanced states of decay. I was laboring under a time constraint; I had just under four months to get the collection into a usable state so that I could begin work on the exhibit website, the thesis paper, and the finding aid. Putting my fears aside, I created a sort of battle plan complete with charts and to-do lists. I processed the collection in sections, using a timetable with a completion date set three months in the future.

The first papers I worked with were the society’s meeting minutes; they were already in some order having been filed chronologically. These papers were kept in binders, with dates that spanned from the 1940s through the early 21st century. The meeting minutes were
not just records for the society in general, but rather for the many committees the society formed and ran throughout the years. Division meeting minutes were also stored in these binders, but did not belong in the same series as the committee meeting minutes. State and Division meeting minute records were different because the meetings were not held together. The State organization ran as a separate entity from the many Divisions. Rules and regulations were passed in the State organization and then filtered down to the Divisions where separate meetings were held to implement the changes. I had to work my way through the rusting binders and sort out which minutes belonged in which series. I removed the materials from the binders, placed them in acid-free folders, and affixed small post-it notes to the front of the folders with content information such as temporary folder titles and dates.

Removing the materials from binders and boxes and placing them in acid-free storage was on the top of my priorities list. Preservation management is an important part of any archival institution, for it is what defines the work that an archivist performs. As Mary Lynn Ritzenhaler states in her book *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts*, preservation is used in an archive, “to encompass a wide variety of interrelated activities designed to prolong the usable life of archival and manuscript materials.” 14 Preservation of manuscript materials can be as simple as placing archival documents into an acid-free folder to slow and prevent any further paper deterioration, or can require advanced service such as specialized document treatments by a paper conservator. Archival documents are best preserved in a stable environment (dehumidifiers and temperature control), and metal shelving, ultraviolet

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light filters, and dehumidifiers provide added protection to document preservation. Attics, basements, spare bedrooms, and storage units are all common places that family and business documents of archival importance can be found, and few of them have the preservation functions that an archival storage facility has to offer. Had the CHSFL documents remained in the closets and storage units where they were found, the documentation would not have lasted another few decades. Now that they reside in the UCF Special Collections and University Archives, they will have a much longer life and keep alive the society’s very important history as well as being made available to the public.

Processing the meeting minutes took longer than I had originally anticipated. It seemed like an easy task to relocate papers from binders to prepared folders, but I was wrong. Nearly every binder had paper that was bound with some sort of paper clip or rubber band, all of which were rusty or an advanced stage of decay. I came across papers that were stored in folders with metal clasps that attached together at the top of the folder. These metal clasps were rusted so badly that they stained and deteriorated the papers to the point that I had to take great care in removing them from the clasps. The papers were fragile and ripping so, it took more time than I had originally planned to remove them with limited damage. After several days of processing, I completed the binders and moved on to the large bulk of paperwork boxes. I spent the next two to three weeks working through the materials, sorting them into the respective categories I planned after my initial survey.

About halfway through this stage of processing, I took a break to work on the collection’s scrapbooks. I needed a diversion from the repetition of placing bulk files into folders and moved on to something a bit more creative in nature. Except for the few ledgers that were used for record keeping in the society, the majority of the scrapbooks held news
clippings. The scrapbooks dated back as far as 1900, with some news clippings that reached into the 1890s. Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler discusses the history of paper in her book and how it may be preserved. Ritzenthaler states that, “The period from 1850 to the present has often been considered ‘the era of bad paper’ thanks to the increase of acidity during the production of paper. Newspaper is a, “soft paper with short fibers, largely composed of ground wood pulp” and is not meant to be long lasting. High acidity levels coupled with its soft and temporary nature, newspaper was never meant to last longer than the time spent reading it. One can only imagine the time I had carefully sifting through hundred year old scrapbooks, filled with clippings of the same age that had been glued to previously used invoice ledger pages. Various society members created these scrapbooks using thick white glue and straight pins. Surprisingly, many of the news clippings are still intact and may still be opened up to their full size. However, there are several pages of clippings that have crumbled. These pieces were housed in acid free folders which I then placed in the area where they were found in the scrapbook. Page by page, these scrapbooks tell the story of the birth and creation of the society. The scrapbooks, though deteriorating and crumbling away, were created with great care by workers of the society. For any researcher looking for a detailed narrative on the creation and members of the CHSFL, the scrapbooks provide a wealth of information.

Once the scrapbooks were processed, I used cotton string to tie the books up so as to keep the loose covers and the pages together. Again, the pages and covers were falling off many of the books; this was done for safety’s sake in the event that the books need to be

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16 Ibid, Ritzenthaler, pg 29.
moved. I then took large sheets of acid free paper and wrapped the books, tying them with cotton string once again and then labeling the front with a soft lead pencil. Wrapping the books in acid free paper protects the materials; much in the same way paper documents are stored in acid free folders and boxes to slow decay, the acid free wrapping paper helps slow the decay of the scrapbooks. I ended up with eight wrapped scrapbooks and seven books that I placed in acid free archival trays that would stack neatly into an acid free archival box. These trays are meant to further protect items by limiting the handling of the materials. When the items are needed, the tray may be lifted out of the box by cotton string that is tied around the tray. The books in the trays did not need any wrapping since they were already contained in an acid free environment, but a few needed cotton string tied around them to keep them intact. I placed everything into their trays and put the trays into a box, four trays to a box.

After I finished the scrapbooks, I went back to the meeting minutes papers. Processing the scrapbooks was exactly what I needed to give me a boost to continue the collection. I had a more solid foundation in the history of the society from which to work from, and I thirsted for more information. I finished the meeting minutes in just a few days.

The photos were my next challenge in the processing of the CHSFL collection. I knew that I would be coming across individuals in the collection who were important to the society but, I would have no idea who they were. Luckily, many of the photos were identified with both names and descriptions of the photo in question.

Here I will pause in my processing descriptions and give a quick overview on the types of photographs archivists generally deal with as well as preservation issues. Mary Lynn
Ritzenthaler provides a great and straightforward discussion on photographs and photographic materials:

“Photographic images are formed by the action of light on chemical compounds. Very simply, a photograph (print, negative, or positive transparency) may be defined as a support upon which an image-bearing layer is applied.”

Ritzenthaler goes on to explain that common binders used in the nineteenth century were albumen and collodion while gelatin is a more recent binder. Black and white prints contain, “finely divided metallic sliver, but other final image materials include platinum, pigments, and dyes.” Generally, the less of a chemical used to produce the photograph, the longer the photograph will last. Many photographs created before the 1960’s were mounted on simple fiber based papers which were stronger and well supported. From the 1960’s to the present, photographic mounting papers were coated with various resins to keep the paper from cracking and curling as well as to help preserve the image. As time has shown, these resins were more detrimental to the preservation of the photograph than they were of any help. Ritzenthaler counts five factors that contribute to the long term stability of photographic materials:

“1) the inherent stability of the component materials; 2) the quality of original processing, including proper or improper fixing and washing; 3) exposure to an uncontrolled environment, including high temperature and relative humidity, light, and pollutants; 4) physical and chemical suitability of enclosure materials; and 5) handling and use procedures.”

For the CHSFL photographs, a few needed to be placed in mylar sleeves due to their deterioration. They were printed on paper with a resin like material that had started ‘flaking’

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17 Ritzenthaler, Mary Lynn, Preserving Archives and Manuscripts, (Maryland: Port City Press of Baltimore & The Society of American Archivists, 1993), pg 37
18 Ibid, Ritzenthaler, pg 37.
19 Ibid, Ritzenthaler, pg 38.
the image and curling the corners of the mounting paper – the opposite of what the resin was originally meant to do. The vast majority of the CHSFL photographs were mounted on heavy, uncoated paper so, the problem facing the collection was the curling and silvering of some black and white photographs. Placing these photographs in sleeves prevents further breakage and keeps unnecessary elements from creating additional damage. The photograph’s heavy mounting paper allows them to be foldered and placed upright in boxes since they face no further deterioration issues. The photographs were organized with negatives and slides found in the collection. The CHSFL created slide presentations for various audiences that were meant as educational tools in terms of adoption and safe sex. The slides were stored in a particular order and in some cases, had an accompanying audio tape. The slides were placed in the order they were found in protective slide sheets. These slides were listed by presentation and housed together with their audio tapes.

Another interesting part of the CHSFL collection is a variety of photographic printing blocks. The blocks were derived from images in the collection and were used in various CHSFL publications. Images are burned in negative to tin or copper and the metal is wrapped around the wooden block. The block is then loaded into a printing press and pages for a publication are produced. For preservation, I wrapped the blocks in acid free tissue paper and placed them in archival trays. I fitted the trays with dividers so that the blocks would stay separated and not scratch one another.

The last types of photo that I handled with this collection were two photo books that dated back to circa 1912. The photo books were created by CHSFL state superintendent Marcus Fagg, who made these books as appreciation gifts for donors of the society. The books were generally made with a leather type of cover, held together with
heavy black string that was threaded through the spine. The pages of the photograph books were black with a construction paper like quality which over time became very brittle. Many of the photographs were glued to the pages while a few were held by plastic photograph corners. The corners were glued to the page and the corners of the photograph placed under them to hold the photograph in place without affixing it permanently to the page. Writing in white and silver-ish ink can be found around and under the photographs, describing their contents and participants. Marcus Fagg wrote on the inside front cover in one of the books, praising its recipient for helping the society and offering the book as a token of his appreciation. Over the years, society members had removed photographs from the pages of these books, leaving behind ripped paper and at times sticky residues. Since I could not verify from the loose photograph part of the collection which, if any, of the photographs belonged in the books, I left the pages blank and worked with what was left. I then tied the books with cotton string and placed them in archival trays and boxes, as I had for the photographic blocks earlier in the project. By using this system, the books would be well protected by limiting their movement amongst other items in the collection. I also had the pages digitized by the UCF Digital Libraries Systems department for use later in my web exhibit. The books are a look into the life of both Marcus Fagg and the society so it was important for me to take the greatest of care in preserving these treasures.

Within the first month, I had processed all of the papers that would eventually be in the State series. This included all of the meeting minutes from the state organizational side of the society, personal papers of the society’s important state administrators, financial documentation for both the society and for families that the society assisted, and
publications produced by the society for distribution throughout the state and the nation. The next series I would tackle were the Division Papers series.

The series was going to be extremely exciting for me to process. The Division Papers series includes the operational papers used by various city divisions organized by the society. I am familiar with many of these towns for I am a native Floridian and have traveled through many of the areas featured in the collection. The division papers also had files from the Western division of the CHSFL which is located in Pensacola, Florida, my hometown. It was exciting for me to be processing papers important to the discourse of my hometown’s history even though I was on the other side of the state.

I faced the same kind of preservation issues as I had with earlier stages of the project, including rusty paper clips, deteriorating rubber bands, and sticky residue. I had paper documents dating back to circa 1902 that were brittle and needed to be placed in protective archival sleeves. Processing this series did not take me as long as the other series, mostly because it was smaller in content but I had already performed the same type of preservation measures with other documents in the collection. This part of the project went very quickly and soon, I was faced with a mostly processed collection.
CHAPTER SIX: RE-LIVING A COLLECTION

The archivist has processed the collection. Now what? The next step in processing a collection is creating a finding aid. The purpose of a finding aid is to help those who are interested in researching the collection to find the materials they are looking for more efficiently. The finding aid helps a researcher to discover new materials one may not have known existed as well as provide the manuscript curator a way to track the materials in the collection.

The archivist should be keeping notes as the collection was being processed. Especially in the case of a large collection, such as the CHSFL, keeping a notebook handy during processing will be invaluable later when the finding aid is being written. I kept a small notebook with me throughout the processing of the CHSFL; I took the book with me to meetings, I used it to make notes for both the thesis paper and what I could use in the website, and I used it to make preliminary organizational hierarchies throughout processing. By the time I was done with putting the files into boxes, anything I may have thought was interesting and needed to be put in the collection description had left my brain. I was mentally exhausted from the sorting and filing and moving boxes that I could not call to memory even the simplest bits of information that could be used. The notebook was a great way for me to remind myself of the little things that I found which researchers could find useful.

Writing a finding aid is a bit like you are processing the collection all over again. Besides the biographical and/or organizational history, the scope and content, and administrative information sections that go into a finding aid, the organizational hierarchy is
added. For those not familiar with a standard finding aid, let me explain what each of these sections provides a researcher:

1) Administrative Information – provides researchers with information about the institution that holds the records, how and when the records came to reside at the institution and by whom the materials were donated, and how the collection was physically processed. Search terms, additional resources, and proper citation information can be found in this section.

2) Biographical/Organizational History – included a brief background of the person, persons, or organization that the collection encompasses. This could include birth and death dates (or start and end dates for an organization), important dates through the span of time covered, and historical fact that would be important to a researcher. This history is not to substitute for research in the collection but meant to give a context to what the collection is about.

3) Scope and Content – contains information for the researcher to see what types of materials the collection holds and how it has been organized. Here the researcher can see if the collection was organized by theme, dates, alphabetically, or in another manner as well as to see why the collection was organized in that stated manner. Important items in the collection can also be pointed out here, inviting the researcher to look further into these materials.

4) Container List – often the largest part of the finding aid, the Container List shows how the collection is organized by series and sub-series. Each
new series has its own scope and content and in some cases, box numbers and folder numbers are given with each entry.

For my finding aid, I went to a folder level hierarchy, which means that I listed each folder according to the series. This required me to go back to the collection and list the folder titles box by box according to how I organized them to their series. When the end user looks at the finding aid, they can not only find the materials they are looking for by the series titles but, the manuscript curator can go directly to the box listed and pull the folders. Listing each folder in the finding aid has its advantages as well as its shortcomings. The biggest complaint is that this is a tedious procedure and it takes far too long to list by folder titles. However, by writing the finding aid in this manner, the archivist has the opportunity to go through the collection one last time. The archivist can preserve any items that they may have thought were not initially in need of sleeving or document tape as well as rearrange folders in the hierarchy. Each time I went through the collection, I found something that I thought needed moving or reshuffling. Most often, organizing at folder level rather than item level is much easier on the researcher, archivist, and manuscript curator. Item level organization can be used for smaller collections or collections containing special materials such as art pieces and unique objects. However, in the case of the CHSFL, were I to have listed the materials by item, the finding aid would have been hundreds of pages long. The researcher and manuscript curator would have a difficult time locating materials

Lastly, I typed the organizational hierarchy of the collection has been written into the finding aid, I wrote the organizational history and the administrative information. The administrative information is fairly straightforward – this included the contact information for the repository where the materials are kept, the size and extent of the collection,
information on how the collection was obtained and processed as well as additional research resources and index terms that might be of use for a researcher. The CHSFL finding aid included information about books that had been written about the society or had information significant to its history. I also included contact information for researchers who might be looking for their own adoption records through the society. The UCF Libraries Special Collections and University Archives did not accession the adoption records for several reasons, one of the biggest being that the CHSFL had already established an adoption records research department. Privacy laws as well as a lack of storage space were also concerns in accessioning adoption records. During my research period, it occurred to me that researchers might find this collection and assume that it would have adoption records that they could use for their own genealogical research. I decided that putting a note into both the abstract and additional resources section would help potential genealogist save valuable research time as well as give them a place to contact to obtain the information they seek.
CHAPTER SEVEN: FILM AND VINEGAR SYNDROME

When processing a large collection, the collection becomes a part of the life of the archivist. In the beginning, the archivist may have little knowledge of the subject area they are about to process but by the end, the archivist is all but an expert. The archivist can tell you exactly where something is in a collection, almost from memory. Some talk to the collection during processing, yelling at a stubborn paper clip, laughing at a funny picture, and holding a one person conversation with the materials. Weeks go by and during that time, there is box shuffling, new box building, note taking, foldering of materials, and complaining to fellow archivists about how much of a pain this collection is being. Then suddenly, as quickly and as the collection began the processing phase, the materials are settled in their new home and the archival box building days are over. Or is it?

Just because a collection is finally processed and ready for research use does not mean that the work of the archivist is over. In many collections, there are materials that are in need of preservation care beyond the scope of what that particular archive can provide. In the case of the CHSFL, there are several boxes of film and audio reels that need to be preserved. These reels and film are starting to ‘turn’ or deteriorate via the chemicals used to initially produce them. As I mentioned before when discussing the photographs, Ritzenthaler points to the chemicals used to produce film as the cause for the film’s eventual deterioration. A type of film used for over half a century, cellulose nitrate, “is inherently unstable, flammable, and emits oxides of nitrogen, which, in the presence of moisture, convert to nitric acid as the film deteriorates.”20

20 Ibid, Ritzenthaler, pg 38.
also defines cellulose nitrate as a highly flammable substance. Plastics made from cellulose acetate were explored as early as 1909 and used through the late 1940’s though these films were at risk for acetate decay or, “vinegar syndrome” where moisture destroys the acetate and produces a vinegar like odor.\footnote{The National Film Preservation Foundation, \textit{The Film Preservation Guide: The Basics for Archives, Libraries, and Museums}, (California: The National Film Preservation Foundation, 2004), 6-14.} Cellulose ester films began to replace cellulose nitrate films in the 1930’s but the chemical stability of these films were proven to be even more unstable than its counterpart. These types of film, while also emitting chemicals that destroy the original material also crack, buckle, and shrink as they age. The most common types of film in use today, cellulose triacetate and polyester, have proven far more stable though as time has passed, cellulose triacetate has given some archivists pause for concern over evidence of deterioration.

These visual and audio aids are important to the CHSFL collection for they provide a visual context that papers and photos alone cannot provide. Audio interviews of people who worked for the society, film reels of dinners and ceremonies, as well as films produced by the society as education tools for the public are all valuable resources that need to be saved. However, the society is non profit and the UCF Libraries does not have the funding required to transfer this material to digital media. Preservation and digital transfer of audio and visual materials requires special machines and materials, as well as time and skilled conservationists. To preserve a damaged reel of film can cost thousands of dollars. Several of the film reels dating in the 1950’s are made of the cellulose acetate that I mentioned earlier in this paper. The films are beginning to suffer from vinegar syndrome and are in desperate need of preservation. For one item in particular, it is no longer playable and will
need to go to a special lab for conservation and digitization. By digitizing these materials, the original items can be spared repeated use as digitized copies serve as research replacements. Having the digitized copies also provide a backup to the original in the event that the film becomes unplayable. So, the work on the CHSFL continues in the form of grant writing and funding. The papers and tangible materials are now preserved in a stable environment but the film and audio is beyond the scope of care that I can provide. It is up to the archivist to find money to continue the preservation work.

Besides being great resources for research, collections can be used to exhibit a topic or subject to the general public. For an exhibit to be properly developed from the CHSFL collection, the papers needed to be in a processed state. Now that the collection was in the final stages of processing, I could begin creating a storyboard for the web exhibit.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CREATING THE VIRTUAL EXHIBIT

I wanted the website to have the same feel as the photograph books in the collection. This would give the audience a connection to the CHSFL collection; it would be as if the photograph book was made for them, much as Marcus Fagg made photograph books for CHSFL supporters. I also wanted the audience to be moved not only to explore the materials contained within the CHSFL collection but to further explore the topic of adoption. My hope was that the connection between the audience and the archive would become fluid, in that the audience would be moved to explore materials at the UCF Special Collections and University Archives and the Archives would in turn gain additional patrons.

The original layout for the website changed several times before it was finished. I tried several different approaches to make the website fit within my original layout, but with limitations to my web publishing knowledge, they all did not make the cut. I do have some XML writing skill, along with many years of desktop publishing software knowledge. I knew I would need help in this stage of the project. I checked out books on using Front Page and friends loaned me books on how to use and work with HTML. In the end, it was actually getting my hands into the work and doing it that made everything click in my head.

Once I figured out how to get the web pages working, the website just fell together. My original plan, including a few new ideas, started to take shape as the homepage to the virtual exhibit came together. I finished the design of the page, looked at it, and felt a sense of surprise and completion. It looked good and I knew this was a solid anchor for me to
base the rest of the site around. Yet I still needed to figure out a way to bring the feel of the photograph book to the virtual exhibit.

The flipbook option was a bit more complicated for me to get working. This is a web component that a webpage design friend of mine pointed me to several months before I began work on the thesis project. I had expressed to him in a conversation my desire for a feature that would look like an album and give the user the feeling that they were actually flipping through a picture book. As I mentioned with personalized photograph albums that Marcus Fagg created, photos and photo albums are important in this collection. Pictures were a key ingredient to the society’s successful advertising over the years, and I wanted this to play into the web exhibit. This would be a fun and engaging tool for the user as well as giving them a sort of emotional tie to the collection. All I had to do was go to the software developers website, pay for and download the code, and incorporate the code into the website. The flipbook for me was going to be a second level webpage; the page that holds the flipbook would be accessed by clicking on a link on the homepage. The way that the code works is that it displays a platform on your webpage. All you have to do is put a link in the code telling the software were to look for an image you want on the page. Once this is done, the image is displayed on the platform. Multiple image links in the code mean multiple pages on your platform. In my mind, the plan was to create pages that looked like pages from an old photo album. I would use software such as Photoshop to create the images, save the images as jpegs, and upload all of the images to Front Page and point the code to the images. This worked great until the images made it on the page platform. They looked a skewed and stretched; not at all the vision I had in my head of what the album would be. It took me several days of fixing, futzing, and moaning about how this just was
not working. My web friends could not seem to help me fix this problem. The whole idea of using the flipbook feature seemed as if it would have to be scrapped because of this usability issue. Then, on a whim, I went back to the Publisher software. I made a template page in Publisher, copied the image into Photoshop, thus making the layers Publisher makes into one image, saved it as a jpeg, and inserted it into my code. This method seemed to work and after another four days of page layout, all twenty two of my album pages were done. I also incorporated a photo gallery of images from the collection that did not make it into the virtual flip book as well as links to the UCF Special Collections and University Archives website and the online finding aid for the CHSFL collection, as well as history of the society and a visual timeline of important society events. The virtual exhibit was complete and ready to tell audiences about the history of the CSHFL.
CHAPTER NINE: TWO FACES OF THE SAME COIN

When I first started at UCF as a graduate student in the history department, I had no idea I would travel down the archives career path. I already knew what I wanted to write a thesis about: the Saenger Amusement Company which built one of its architecturally creative theaters in my hometown of Pensacola, Florida. Then the job as a graduate assistant at the UCF Special Collections department came along after my first semester, I was hooked. I knew that archives, processing, and showcasing history was where my heart belonged. Though, gaining employment in specific areas, such as in the academic library would be more difficult with a Masters of Art in Public History, I believe that getting this masters has been beneficial to my overall professional growth.

I like to think of myself as two faces of the same coin. I am both and archivist as well as a public historian. I did not just arrive at UCF looking for a master’s degree; I already had a degree in history from the University of West Florida in Pensacola, Florida. I would do a great disservice to myself and my profession if I simply discounted my public history roots. Public history is what brought me to the archival profession and it is public history that has helped me to become a better archivist.

There is a debate among the professionals in the archive and museum world which asks who is more qualified: a person with a history/public history degree or someone with a library information science degree? The arguments all come down to two factors which are education and experience. Each candidate brings with them special abilities that enhances the archival profession. The historian has been trained to research and most come with breadth of knowledge in a particular field. A historical society that deals with a local industry
might benefit from a historian who has studied American Industrial Revolutions. The public historian is useful for they are trained not only to be a historian but to interact with the public; to get the information to the people as well as encourage the community to participate in preserving their heritage. The person who was trained in library science knows the methods necessary to operate and run an archives smoothly within a library, using practices like MARC cataloging. However, all archivists can do the same types of duties in different settings: a museum, a historical society, or in an academic library. It is up to the institution to determine if they need a generalist or a specialist. Yet there is no one way to be an archivist; I started out with several years working as a professional props master in the theater world before working as an archivist. Everyone has a different story.

Archival and museum professionals to agree on one aspect of this debate: you can’t predict the future. Working in the profession is what will determine if more education is needed. For example, if I find that I want to get back into academic library archives, the requirements generally call for a Masters of Library Science or a Masters of Library Information Science. Sometimes having similar degree, usually history or public history with an archival certification through the Association of Certified Archivist will be acceptable. But in either case, I will likely have to take additional steps to gain employment into the academic arena. I do have advantages to my education in three forms: my extensive design experience in professional theater, my Master’s of Art in Public History and my years with the UCF Special Collections and University Archives. The latter is what will be most important on my resume and CV: employers will want to know that I can work in and around an archive. My talents are well suited for a career that involves working with the public, researching, and exhibit displays and design. These are things that are not often
taught in the Library Science field and I would be a great asset to a historical society or museum.

So, I refer back to my original question of, “What was I thinking?” I can give you a very simple answer: I wasn’t. I was following my heart and the love of the job. My co-workers can certainly attest to my days of questioning, complaining, and general griping. Yet, I was always happy doing the work. I may have complained about how horrible some of the original organization was, questioned why some of the more valuable documents were allowed to deteriorate, or got incredibly bored with the monotonousness of constant re-foldering, filing, and boxing materials but I was always happy doing the work. When I first petitioned the UCF History department to allow me to process a collection as part of my thesis requirements, I wrote a letter to the department head as well as my thesis committee and explained: “I have never before had the experience of waking up in the mornings and looking forward to going to work. Even working as a properties master, while I enjoyed building set pieces and props, I never achieved the fulfillment I get when I can put my hands on a document that has seen more history than I could ever hope to witness in a lifetime.” More than a year since that letter, I feel more strongly than ever that the decisions I made to obtain this masters degree were the right ones and that becoming an archivist is what I am meant to do.
CHAPTER TEN: CONCLUSION

There are many paths to becoming an archivist as well as a public historian. So often have I heard people proclaim that they cannot achieve a professional dream due to financial constraints, educational limitations, or personal issues. In the short span that I have spent processing and exhibiting the CHSFL collection, I realized a professional dream. It is important to me to not let go of my theatrical roots; it is through working with exhibits that I am able to continue my love of design work. I also do not want to loose sight of my love of being a historian and researching, processing, and performing archival duties gives me the research satisfaction that I crave. I believe that if a person is to spend the next several decades of their life working in a career, they should find a career they absolutely love. I have found my love and my place in the professional world is as an archivist and public historian.

The path I have taken to become an archivist is not the one often traveled. A large number of archivists find their calling while in library school and specialize in archival training while others who already have a degree in history find the profession by accident. In my case, I started out far from the history field, working as a professional props master in the theater world. A Bachelors degree in History later and now I find myself working toward a Masters degree in public history but concentrating on becoming an archivist. This will present new challenges for me as I enter in the working world both in finding work as well as proving myself to the archival community.

I have shown in this paper how a public historian can become an archivist through the processing of the CHSFL collection. Through hard work, long hours, dedication, a little
bit of humor and caffeine, the CHSFL collection was transformed from a miscellaneous
array of boxed materials into a premiere research collection that will benefit many disciplines
in their research needs. The accompanying virtual exhibit is a benefit to those who would
like to learn more about the CHSFL, both in their rich history and of the materials preserved
in the collection. The website provides a service to those who are unable to leave their
homes and travel to the repository a chance to learn about an important contribution to
Florida’s heritage.

It is my belief that this collection will open a new chapter for the CHSFL as people
learn how important to Florida’s history, as well as the nation’s children, this society has
become. It is also my hope that with the completion of this project and thesis paper that
aspiring public historians see that there are exciting paths out there of which they can take
full advantage.
The following is the finding aid that was generated after the Children’s Home Society of Florida Collection was processed. The finding aid was created as an EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and typed in XML format using XMetal software. The finding aid was then run through two separate style sheets to create a web linked version as well as a printer friendly version of html. To see these finding aids, please point your browser to

http://www.library.ucf.edu/SpecialCollections/FindingAids/CHSFL-print.htm and

# Finding Aid for The Children's Home Society of Florida Collection, 1886-2000

## Descriptive Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Repository</strong></th>
<th>Special Collections and University Archives, University of Central Florida Libraries, P. O. Box 162666 Orlando, FL 32816, Telephone: 407-823-2576, E-mail: <a href="mailto:specoll@mail.ucf.edu">specoll@mail.ucf.edu</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Creator</strong></td>
<td>These papers were created by the Children's Home Society of Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title</strong></td>
<td>Children's Home Society of Florida Collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>1886-2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bulk</strong></td>
<td>1902-1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Extent</strong></td>
<td>44 Boxes; 8 Books; 16 Flat Folders; (54 Linear Feet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>The Children's Home Society of Florida Collection contains organizational papers and ephemera that document the creation and operations of Florida's oldest non-profit adoption agency. The collection includes organizational papers from its state and local divisions, photographs, news clippings, audio and visual media, scrapbooks, and blueprints of the many receiving homes in the state, but does not contain adoption records. Adoption records remain at the CHSFL Adoption Archive and are available by contacting the society directly.</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>Accession Number</strong></td>
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<td>Special Collections, University of Central Florida Libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language:</strong></td>
<td>The Materials are written in English</td>
</tr>
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## Biographical/Historical Note

To be an orphan in Florida at the turn of the twentieth century was a dangerous prospect. Children were being orphaned due to farm and industrial accidents and
numerous poor families had to give up children they could no longer afford. Many children were abused and there were few laws that protected children's rights. Homeless children had little place to go where they could be safe, properly cared for, and loved.

In response to this increasing crisis, the National Children's Home Society was formed in Illinois in 1883 to help place children who had been orphaned in farming and industrial accidents, spreading to several other states over the next decade. The Revered D. W. Comstock came to Jacksonville, Florida in 1902 as a representative of the National Children's Home Society to help organize the state's first child welfare society. On November 17, 1902, with the help of Rev. D. W. Comstock and Jacksonville's city and religious leaders, The Children's Home Society of Florida (CHSFL) was established. The welfare of the child was the society's primary focus, making sure that if the family could not be preserved that the child was placed in a happy and healthy home.

The CHSFL was developed as a non-profit organization, relying solely on donations from the community. Fund-raising efforts began as administrative duties were carried out in private homes around the city. The children were also being cared for in private residences as there was not yet a home secured for the society to board its charges. The CHSFL committed itself to not only children but to babies who were not accepted until the age of three at state orphanages (Mahoney, 5). Money was tight for the society and within the first few years, the CHSFL found itself in deep debt. By September of 1910, the CHSFL was facing the possibility of ending operations when a new state superintendent for the society entered its doors. Marcus C. Fagg was just 24 when he took control of the CHSFL but within a few short months, he had already obtained funding to start his first appeals drive. Many in the society to this day believe that it was Marcus C. Fagg who saved the CHSFL from closing its doors and built it to the standards that society members and workers adhere to today. Fagg's compassion towards children also did not go unnoticed; from his early years with the CHSFL, many children he helped referred to him as "Daddy" Fagg as a token of their appreciation for finding them loving homes.

Marcus Fagg brought innovative solutions to a dire financial situation. Using land donated or sold at cost to the society, Fagg either rented or sold land at higher costs to turn a profit. Fagg also helped poor families by renting them homes at drastically reduced rental costs with an option to later buy the homes. Marcus Fagg helped dozens of poor families regain their footing while also helping the CHSFL emerge from a deep hole of financial debt.

Though Marcus Fagg began to save the society financially, the society still fell on hard times. The country became entangled in the agony of the Great Depression in the 1930s and the CHSFL suffered with the rest of the nation. The Miami receiving home was lost due to a lack of finances but was thankfully picked up and operated
by the Junior League until 1936 when CHSFL was able to once again run the home. Marcus Fagg also made history in 1932 by becoming the first chairman of the new Florida State Welfare Board. Through the 1940s and 1950s, CHSFL was instrumental in securing rights and welfare laws for children nationwide. CHSFL was one of the founding members of the Child Welfare League of America and was one of the only societies in the country to handle state adoptions without the aid of a state agency. The society also saw rapid growth, thanks in part to the massive fund-raising performed by Marcus Fagg; several new division offices opened throughout the state, many of whom offered special services for children. CHSFL also began offering services to unwed mothers, further committing themselves to the family rather than just simply finding homes for children.

One of the saddest moments for the CHSFL was the loss of their mentor and leader, Marcus C. "Daddy" Fagg in 1958. After Fagg's passing, newspapers throughout Florida ran headlines announcing the loss of a great state hero. Buried in a simple grave in Jacksonville, Florida, Fagg's life and legacy still serves as a reminder to the CHSFL of their continued effort to help abused and orphaned children in the state of Florida.

Segregation and integration played an important role for CHSFL in the 1960s as the society began caring for and adopting out African-American children from their receiving homes. Historically, the society took in mostly white children. As the Civil Rights movement grew in the 1960’s, the society re-examined the scope of its adoption policies and began taking in and offering adoption services for the African-American community. This was a significant development both for the society and for the Civil Rights movement; African-American children were being given the same adoption services as white children at a time when the issue of race was dominant in society and politics. As the country rapidly changed, so did the society, offering for the first time services in schools for handicapped, delinquent, and abused children as well children living in racially mixed households. These services would grow and define the society through to the end of the 1990s.

Just three years into the new millennium and the society's second century of service, the CHSFL moved its headquarters from its birthplace in Jacksonville to more centrally located offices in Winter Park, Florida. Now over one hundred years old, the CHSFL offers fourteen divisions that serve the entire state of Florida.

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**Collection Scope and Content**

The Children's Home Society of Florida Collection is arranged into 5 series by types of content as well as by types of materials. The first three series feature personal and office files which show the birth and growth of the organization,
sorted at the state and local division levels. The last two series holds audio visual and photographic ephemera as well as scrapbooks created by workers at the society.

The Children's Home Society of Florida Collection contains personal and organizational papers, photographs, audio and visual materials, as well as ledgers and scrapbooks. The collection is arranged by both content and materials types and have been organized into the following series:

Series I: Biographical Files, 1900-1991, contains the files of individuals who were instrumental in the creation and/or the operations of the Children's Home Society of Florida. Correspondence makes up the majority of this series as it show the creation of the society (Comstock, Harkins, Seaton), its resurrection (Fagg), and its continued operations.

Series II: State Organizational Files, 1886-2000, includes files that were used in the operations of the society as a whole. Financial documents, correspondence, reports, as well as the meeting minutes of the various committees that ran the society can be found in this series.

Series III: Division Files, 1921-circa 1995, consists of files for local divisions located throughout the state. Some divisions are no longer in operation, having been closed completely or absorbed into another division. These older divisions can be found here in their original name. Meeting minutes for each division are also located here.

Series IV: Photographs and Audio Visual, 1902-1997, holds both audio and visual media used by the Children's Home Society of Florida in promoting their society as well as raising funds.

Series V: Ledger and Scrapbooks, 1902-1978, includes miscellaneous ledger and scrapbooks created by the Children's Home Society of Florida. The ledger books vary in format but are generally are either inventory or accounting in nature. The scrapbooks are made up of five volumes, all created by workers at the Children's Home Society of Florida. News clippings make up the majority of the scrapbooks contents but some do contain publications made by the Children's Home Society of Florida. There are also four Rose Keller Home scrapbooks made by workers at the Rose Keller Division in Lakeland, Florida. The Rose Keller Home scrapbooks give a brief history of the division as well as chronicle events at the home.

Restrictions
Access

The entire collection is open for research.

Copyright Statement

Unpublished manuscripts are protected by copyright. Permission to publish, quote, or reproduce must be secured from the repository and the copyright holder.

Audio Visual Availability

Some audio and visual media may not be available for use without reformatting. Please see the Curator of Manuscripts for further information.

Related Material

Books:


Adoption Records:

This collection does not contain any records on adopted individuals or families from the Children's Home Society of Florida. However, the society does have the CHS Adoptions Archive Unit which is dedicated to the preservation and research of these records. They can be found at http://www.chsfl.org/what-we-can-do.php.

Other Locations:

Pensacola Historical Society's Historical Resource Center, 110 East Church Street, Pensacola, Florida 32502. Phone: (850) 434-5455 Website: http://www.pensacolahistory.org (Western Division).

The University of West Florida Pace Library, Special Collections, Pensacola, Florida. (Blount Family Papers - Western Division).
Selected Subjects and Access Points

Similar records may be found by searching under the following index terms.

Abandoned Children
Adoption--Florida
Adoption--United States--History
Child Welfare League of America
Child welfare--United States--History
Child welfare--Florida
Children's Home Society of Florida
Florida Dept. of Children and Families
Florida State Board of Public Welfare
Foster children--United States--History
Nonprofit organizations--Finance
Nonprofit organizations--Management
Nonprofit organizations--Planning
Orphanages--Florida
Poverty

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation

The Children's Home Society of Florida Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.

Acquisition Information

The Children's Home Society of Florida donated these materials to the University of Central Florida Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives Department in 2004.

Access

The entire collection is open for research.
Series I: Biographical Files, 1900-1991. 0.5 boxes.

This series contains files for various founders and administrators of the Children's Home Society of Florida. Correspondence makes up a majority of the papers found in this collection. Several of the society's founders can be found here including D. W. Comstock who traveled to Florida for the National Children's Home Society. D. W. Comstock was the society's first state superintendent, but died the following year in 1903. His niece and assistant state superintendent Cora Seaton took Comstock's position until 1912 when Marcus C. Fagg was installed. Information on other administrators can be found here including society presidents and executive directors as well as an obituary for Elizabeth Harkins who helped found the society. The Orphan Train is briefly mentioned in this series as it holds a few pieces of correspondence by Cora Seaton for a child she is trying to remove from the train and bring into her care.

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Series II: State Organizational Files, 1886-2000. 19.5 Boxes

This series holds files and papers for the state run portion of the Children's Home Society of Florida. The society functions as a statewide entity with local operating divisions; these files focus on the operations of the society as a state entity.

By-laws created for the society are held here as well as various society publications. Reports and surveys help give a more complete picture in the work being performed. Studies came from both inside the society and outside from state and national organizations.

Throughout the years, various committees were formed by the society to help in running its operational duties more smoothly. Though several of these committees changed names or were dissolved, they can be found here under their original titles. Many committees were also paired with other society committees, condensing several committee meetings into one monthly meeting.

Finance takes up another large portion of this series holding title deeds, mortgage papers, and land plat information. For research ease, title deed documents have been sorted by the property owner's name who possessed the land immediately before it was given to the Children's Home Society of Florida. Mortgages are organized by the name of the individual on the lease through the Children's Home Society of Florida.

General finance ledgers as well as ledgers containing additional mortgage and funds information can be found in Series V.

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Series III: Division Files, 1921-circa 1995. 8 boxes
This series contains files and papers for the local divisions that operated throughout the state for the Children's Home Society of Florida. As Jacksonville was a receiving home as well as the state headquarters, the materials found here focus more on the day-to-day operations of the home rather than the state administrative functions. Files such as menus, home inventories, and adoption forms can be found as well as "medical remedies" such as cures for masturbation and treatments for tapeworms and scabies.

Also included are blueprints for various receiving homes around the state. The majority of blueprints in this collection are for the Rose Keller Home in Lakeland, Florida though some blueprints in Jacksonville and Pensacola can also be found here. The blueprints include home dimensions, landscaping schemes, as well as later room additions and office expansions. A land plat can also be found here as it shows property in Jacksonville that came into the ownership of the Children's Home Society of Florida to either be used by the society or sold for profit.

Only a few pictures of various receiving homes can be found here with their respective divisions. The remainder can be found in Series IV.

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<td>Meeting Minutes. 1954-1960.</td>
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<td>Meeting Minutes. 1958-1983.</td>
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**Series IV: Photographs and Audio Visual, 1902-1997. 13 boxes**

This series holds materials used to advertise and promote The Children's Home Society of Florida as well as loosely chronicle its history. Items here include film reels, audio reels, TV and video tapes, photographs, and photo blocks. The photo blocks are made up of wood and metal with a negative of an image imprinted on a metal sheet which is then wrapped and nailed to a block of wood. This photo block is then placed on a printing press and copies of the image are printed onto media.

A vast majority of the photographs found here have not been identified. They are grouped into categories ranging from founders, administrators, and caseworkers to teen boys, teen girls, young boys, young girls, and babies. Original artwork for various publications can be found here including a hand painted cover for the 1923 annual report.

Many of the items found in this series were created for use in advertising campaigns as well as the society's own publications. Some reels are archival footage of events and meetings by and for the society while slide presentations were created by the society for use in educational seminars. In some cases, multiple film and audio presentations can be found on one film or audio reel. All presentations have been listed by name in the finding aid and are numbered according to which media reel it is contained on. Each film, television, and audio reel has been given a number so it is possible to find several presentations on the same piece of media.

**Use Restrictions**

Some audio and visual media may not be available for use without
reformatting. Please see the Curator of Manuscripts for further information.

**Photos. 1902-1997.**

**Administration and Staff 1902-1972.**

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Founders and Presidents. 1902-1971.


Anton Vlcek, Executive Director. 1965-1972.


Administrative Staff. 1920-1976.


Miscellaneous Women. 1949-1962.


**Division Photos. 1920-1997.**

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Central (Orlando). Circa 1955.

Mid Florida (Gainseville). Circa 1965.


South Central (Indian River). 1961.


**Events. 1950-1972.**

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Weddings. 1952-1968.

Cisco Kid Contest. 1950.

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<td>Jacksonville Fair Booth. 1962.</td>
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<td>Florida Conference of Social Welfare, 50th Annual Meeting. 1961.</td>
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<td>Children, Groups. Circa 1920-1963.</td>
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- Pigeon Lift. Circa 1978. 28 717
- Untitled Jacksonville Event. 1988. 28 718
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  - A Child Needs to Belong (Buckner Division). 1985. 29 724
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- Recording of the Annual Meeting. 1971. 32 6
- Public Service Spot 1 - General. undated. 32 7-11
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Series V: Ledger and Scrapbooks, 1902-1978. 17 books

This series holds a variety of ledgers and scrapbooks created by workers and volunteers of The Children's Home Society of Florida. The ledgers were used to track finances, adoptions, and incoming children. The scrapbooks are made up of newscuttings from the Jacksonville area and were compiled by the workers and volunteers of the society.

The ledgers vary in content from general finance to child visitations, fund accounts tracking and mileage counts. Many of the ledgers have been used multiple times so a great majority of information has been removed, erased, or pasted over with different types of information. However, the ledgers are still readable and have retained many pages of their original content.

The scrapbooks were most likely created by various workers and volunteers of the society. The news clippings found in the scrapbooks come mostly from local Jacksonville newspapers and chronicle the early start of the society via the public eye. The biggest event of the young society was a May Day festival held at a local home in 1912. Here, thousands of dollars was raised for the society and it was billed as the
biggest event ever to occur in the Jacksonville area. The scrapbooks also hold newspaper advertisements asking for donations to the society, human interest stories that describe the work of Marcus "Daddy" Fagg and his efforts to save the children of Florida, and articles that give general meeting information regarding the society and society events.

The Rose Keller scrapbooks were created by workers and volunteers from the Rose Keller division in Lakeland, Florida. These scrapbooks are made up mostly of photographs and were likely used as coffee table books for visitors waiting in the lobby. They chronicle everyday events up to the home's fiftieth anniversary in 1952.

**Box | Tray**

| Visitation of Children in Their Homes. 1910. | 40 | 1 |
| Memorandum of Applications. 1903-1910. | 40 | 2 |
| Newspaper Clippings. 1902-1907. | 40 | 3 |
| Bonds and Mortgages Ledger. 1924-1944. | 42 | 4 |
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| Henry Training School Ledger. 1928-1935. | 42 | 2 |
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| Rose Keller 50th Anniversary Yearbook/Scrapbook. 1977. | SB6 |
| Untitled Rose Keller Division Scrapbook. 1976. | SB7 |
| Untitled Rose Keller Division Scrapbook. 1978. | SB8 |
APPENDIX B: EXHIBIT WEBSITE
The following pages are images rendered from the completed virtual exhibit for the Children’s Home Society of Florida Collection. These pages are meant to represent the website and do not show the entire site. Updates will also occur in the future, thus changing what is represented here. The site includes links to a brief history of the society, a timeline of important society events, a photo gallery of images from the collection, an interactive flip book, and links to the finding aid for the collection. To see the full site, please point your web browser to www.libraries.ucf.edu/SpecialCollections/Exhibits/CHSFL.
A Brief History of the Children's Home Society of Florida

Any child who was adopted in the state of Florida in the twentieth century was likely to have had a connection to the Children's Home Society of Florida (CHSFL). While this organization was created to serve the poor, neglected, and abandoned children in Florida, the society became the leading advocate for child rights in the nation. Few know of the remarkable advances this society has made for children as well as the stories of many thousands of children who were placed with loving families. This is why saving organizational papers is so important to our society. The society was the only recognized organization that cared for and handled adoptions in the state of Florida before handing adoption operations over to the Department of Children and Families in the early 1970's. Without these documents, we may never have had the chance to fully know the many achievements of the Children's Home Society of Florida.

Figure 1: Homepage to the CHSFL virtual exhibit

Figure 2: Top half of history page
The CHSFL was started in 1902 in Jacksonville, Florida as a response to the growing number of abandoned and destitute children in the state of Florida. A small group of wealthy community members organized the society in their homes, raising money and collecting supplies to aid in the care of orphan children. Two of these supporters, Mr. and Mrs. Elwes, offered their residence to the society as the first home for the society's children. The society called this house a "receiving home" since this was the place where were received into the society's care and lived until a proper home could be found. The CHSFL mission was unusual for its time; the society strived to keep families together rather than take children from their homes. Only if a child's life or health was in danger would the CHSFL take action. If a family were placing children for adoption because of financial constraints, the CHSFL would work with the parents in order to keep the family together. The goal of the CHSFL was not just to place an orphan with parents but to strengthen the well being of the child through the care and support of the family.

Most organizations revere their founders and first administrators when they write their histories and refer to them as 'fathers' and 'mothers'. The CHSFL points its achievements, awards, and survival to its third ever state superintendent, Marcus C. "Daddy" Fagg. Fagg was the CHSFL state superintendent from 1910-1931. It was because of Fagg's financial savvy that the society not only pulled itself from severe debt but raised large sums of money for Florida's children and families. Laws and child rights legislation was a big part of Fagg's legacy as he participated in White House Conference on Child Welfare at the request of American Child Welfare Association and President Herbert Hoover. Fagg was a huge contributor to the writing and editing of several state and national child welfare laws including the Child Labor Law, the Compulsory Education Law, and the Wife Desertion Law among others. Fagg was also responsible for helping to start and serve as the first president for the Florida State Board of Welfare, the first Florida state run public welfare organization. Yet, while Fagg was busy raising money and advocating on the behalf of Florida's children, he also personally cared for the children at the Jacksonville receiving home, helping children to find homes. Fagg's compassion towards children and families helped to give him the moniker, 'Daddy Fagg' of which he carried with him well past his death in 1958. It was through the work of Daddy Fagg that the CHSFL could flourish and remain in operation to the current day.
The CHSFL celebrated one hundred years of service in 2002 and donated its papers only a year later to the University of Central Florida Special Collections department. During the anniversary, the society moved its headquarters from Jacksonville to Winter Park and uncovered several boxes of old organizational records. The society knew that these records were important and in need of preservation but had no personnel or a proper storage facility in which to house them. These materials included paper records, scrapbooks, film reels, and photographs among other items. Through the efforts of the Carla Summers, head of the UCF Special Collections and University Archives department, as well as Elizabeth Konzak, University Archivist, the UCF Archives became the home for the current and future archival records of the CHSFL. Records generated by the society in the future will be accessioned by the UCF Archives, thus providing preservation for important records early and keeping the society's operational history consistent and intact. By making the UCF Archives the sole repository for their papers, the CHSFL can take comfort in knowing that their records are being preserved for many decades to come. Researchers can now use this collection to rediscover a society that did so much for the children of the state of Florida as well as the nation.

The collection was processed in late 2006 by UCF graduate student April Karlene Anderson as part of her thesis project to complete her degree requirements for a Master of Art in Public History. An accompanying thesis and this website were also part of the project. For further information regarding the collection or the project, please contact the UCF Archives through the links provided on this website.
Figure 5: Timeline front page

Figure 6: Timeline for CHSFL virtual exhibit
Figure 7: Front page for photo gallery. There are over fifty images in the photo gallery feature.
Welcome to the Children's Home Society of Florida picture flip book. This book was created for online visitors to explore the history of the Children's Home Society of Florida in a fun and interactive way.

Personalized picture albums were given to volunteers and donors who made significant contributions to the society. In the Children's Home Society of Florida collection, two such albums are held which were created by the society's most revered leader, Marcus C. Fagg. This picture flip book is an homage to those picture albums; you now have your own personalized look at Florida's Greatest Charity. Here you will see early photos of the society's founders, pictures of some of the first receiving homes, bills, correspondence, and publications made by the society.

Jacksonville civic leaders are seen here in a photo dated circa 1900.

CHFSJ founders, including D.W. Comstock, Cora Seaton, and William Boggs can be seen in this photo.

This 1902 photo features another early founder of the CHFSJ, Mrs. Elizabeth Her Ezell working on society paperwork.

Figure 8: Flip book front page
Research the Collection

Want to explore the Children’s Home Society of Florida Collection further? This collection contains organizational papers and ephemera that document the creation and operations of Florida’s oldest non-profit adoption agency. The collection includes organizational papers from its state and local divisions, photographs, news clippings, audio and visual media, scrapbooks, and blueprints of the many receiving homes in the state, but does not contain adoption records. Adoption records remain at the CHSFL Adoption Archive and are available by contacting the society directly.

Click here for a printer-friendly link.

Figure 9: Sample of pages from the flip book feature for the CHSFL virtual exhibit

Figure 10: Research page for the CHSFL virtual exhibit
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Figure II: Copyright notice for the CHSFL virtual exhibit
LIST OF REFERENCES

The Children’s Home Society of Florida Collection, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Central Florida, Orlando, Florida.


