

The Filson Historical Society

**Jewish Hospital (Louisville, Ky.)
Records, 1905-2008**

For information regarding literary and copyright interest for these papers, contact the Collections Department.

Size of Collection:

14 cubic feet (12 boxes, 1 oversized volume, 1 oversized folder)

Location Number:

Mss. BF J59

**Jewish Hospital (Louisville, Ky.)
Records, 1905-2008**

Scope and Content Note

The collection consists of the records of Jewish Hospital, which opened in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1905. The papers, dating from 1905 to 2008, consist primarily of board and committee meeting minutes, administrative and financial records, fundraising materials, correspondence, federal grant applications, publications, and scrapbooks. Most of the early records of Jewish Hospital were lost when the Ohio River flood of 1937 destroyed papers stored in the hospital's basement. As of 2018, the Filson Historical Society has acquired the administrative papers of Jewish Hospital up through the year 1980.

The collection highlights the efforts of the Jewish Hospital Association, incorporated in 1903, to build and manage a hospital that met the medical needs of both the Jewish community in Louisville and a general patient population. The records include discussions throughout the twentieth century about the meaning of the Jewish Hospital name and identity, and they provide information about the hospital's relationships with local rabbis and Jewish organizations. Papers contain references to the provision of kosher meals, ritual circumcision ceremonies, and the observance of Jewish and Christian holidays at the hospital.

In addition to documenting the relationship of Jewish Hospital with Louisville's Jewish community, the collection covers issues faced by many private hospitals in the twentieth century. Records detail how Jewish Hospital oversaw fundraising campaigns and confronted financial challenges. The papers include information about individual employees and the hospital's management of its workforce, including nurses, orderlies, and housekeeping staff. There is some information, especially in the hospital's applications for federal Hill-Burton funds, on the religious and racial background of patients and physicians. Materials also detail volunteer work at the hospital. The records from the second half of the twentieth century document how the hospital navigated major shifts in health care, including the racial integration of patients and hospital staff, the need for malpractice liability insurance, the incorporation of new medical technologies and computers into hospital care, the introduction of Medicare, and a growing number of federal regulations tied to federal funding. The papers chart the development of Jewish Hospital into a nationally renowned medical center that specialized in hand and heart surgery and organ transplantation. Also included is information about Jewish Hospital's affiliations with the University of Louisville Medical School in regard to its teaching, open-heart surgery, and kidney transplant and treatment programs.

Folders 1-15 contain miscellaneous materials from 1910-2006, including histories about Jewish Hospital, a small number of photographs and other images, a 1941 fundraising scrapbook, and various annual reports, by-laws, certificates, correspondence, and publications.

Folders 16-84 contain papers of Jewish Hospital at its first location at the corner of Floyd and Kentucky streets in Louisville, covering the years from 1939-1954. These papers include Jewish Hospital Association by-laws, board meeting minutes, financial and fundraising records, correspondence, applications for federal Hill-Burton funds, information about medical residents, and various publications. Important issues addressed are the costs of hospital services, contributions from local Jewish organizations and individuals, the introduction of Blue Cross insurance plans, the labor shortage during World War II, and the management of nurses and the nursing school. Records from the late 1940s and early 1950s document Jewish Hospital's decision to relocate downtown and to join the newly organized Louisville Medical Center. The records include information about the hospital's fundraising efforts and its applications for federal Hill-Burton grants for the construction of a new hospital. Also of note are discussions in the late 1940s about eliminating the requirement that board members be Jewish, and references in the early 1950s to the decision to admit African American patients to the new hospital. For other records of Jewish Hospital before it moved downtown in 1955, see folders 289-292, 294-304, and volumes 307-309.

Folders 85-288 contain papers of Jewish Hospital from 1954-1980, covering the period during and after the hospital's relocation downtown to Chestnut Street. Materials include a *Courier-Journal* magazine article on the new Jewish Hospital, board meeting minutes, financial and fundraising records, correspondence, annual reports, records of bequests, publications, and applications for federal Hill-Burton funds for additions to the hospital. The *Micro-Scoop*, a monthly newsletter for hospitals employees running from 1954-1957 and 1967-1980, contains images of and information about employees and new hospital equipment. Another hospital publication was *Service*, which was distributed to Jewish Hospital Association members. The collection houses issues of *Service* from 1965-1975. Also of note are materials relating to the activities of the Women's Guild of Jewish Hospital, an organization established in 1955 to manage volunteer work at the hospital. Records document the establishment of an intensive care unit and coronary care unit (ICU-CCU) in the mid-1960s, as well as the decision-making process that led to the closing of the obstetrical department in 1967. Administrative papers discuss the impact of the decision to close the obstetrical department on the Jewish community and show how Jewish Hospital took steps to ensure that Jewish obstetrical patients at other hospitals would have access to kosher food and facilities for ritual circumcision.

Other major developments addressed in the records from the 1960s and 1970s include the creation of a cardiac catheterization laboratory, a micro-surgery unit, a nuclear medicine department, a kidney transplant program, and an end stage renal disease (ESRD) program. The records provide information about the hospital's participation in the Medicare program after 1965. Administrative papers document the establishment of the Louisville Medical Research

Foundation in affiliation with Jewish Hospital in 1970. Materials from the 1970s detail the construction of the Wheeler Tower and the pedestrian passageway between Jewish Hospital and Norton-Children's Hospital. They provide information about the board's efforts to set up a child care center for employees working day and night shifts, and about the board's reaction to union organizing activities among different groups of hospital employees. Also of note are discussions in the board minutes about ways to regulate smoking in the hospital.

Folders 289-293 contain loose materials that were removed from the following volumes: the school for nurses ledger dating from 1914-1925, a scrap book of response cards and letters sent to Jewish Hospital from former patients in 1942-1943, the 1946 Jewish Hospital building fund scrapbook, the 75th anniversary scrapbook from 1980, and the Frazier Rehabilitation Center scrapbook.

Folders 294-304 contain materials from the minute book of the Board of Trustees, dating from 1911-1921. These materials include meeting minutes, financial and legal records, correspondence, and the Jewish Hospital Association's constitution and by-laws. They contain data about hospital services, the number of paying and charity patients, and information about the nursing school and students. Records document the hospital's relationship with local Jewish organizations, such as the Jewish Welfare Federation, the Council of Jewish Women, and Jewish Ladies' Benevolent Society #1. They include discussions about adding more non-Jewish physicians to the hospital's medical staff. Also of note are discussions in 1918 regarding the offer of a \$100,000 donation from brothers Bernard and I. W. Bernheim, along with their request that the hospital be renamed Bernheim Memorial Hospital in honor of their parents. Some board members wrote about the importance of retaining the Jewish Hospital name, and the Bernheim brothers eventually donated the money without asking for a change in name.

Volumes 305-310 date from the years 1905-2008. A Board of Trustees ledger (vol. 305) dates from 1974-2008 and records the names and meeting attendance of board members. The Harland Sanders Geriatric Center scrapbook (vol. 306) dates from 1986-1987 and consists of proposals for a geriatric center, promotional materials and photographs of the opening of the center, an annual report, and newspaper clippings. The Jewish Hospital memorial book (vol. 307) consists of certificates from 1940-1952, with each certificate noting who made the donation and who was being memorialized. The 75th anniversary scrapbook from 1980 (vol. 308) includes photographic materials, old patient bills, and copies of newspaper articles. The school for nurses ledger (vol. 309) dates from 1914-1921 and consists of pages for each student at the Jewish Hospital School for Nurses, listing the student's name, dates, classes, lectures, instructors, and final grades. The Frazier Rehabilitation Center scrapbook (vol. 310) covers the years 1953-2003 and includes newspaper clippings, photographic and promotional materials, and correspondence related to the history of the center and its patients. The Rehabilitation Center was established in 1954 and renamed the Amelia Brown Frazier Rehabilitation Center in 1984, when Jewish Hospital undertook its management.

Jewish Hospital (Louisville, Ky.) Records, 1905-2008

Historical Note

The Jewish Hospital Association was incorporated in 1903 in Louisville, Kentucky, with the aim of building a hospital for Orthodox Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and other members of the Jewish community. The association's efforts led to the opening of Jewish Hospital in 1905 as a 32-bed institution at the corner of Floyd and Kentucky streets. While primarily a Jewish hospital, its articles of incorporation stated that "persons of any creed may be admitted as free or pay patients." Beginning in 1909, the cost of charity patients' hospital care was covered by the Federation of Jewish Charities, which became the Jewish Welfare Federation in 1918. The hospital offered a place to train and practice to Jewish physicians, who faced limited opportunities for internships and medical staff positions at other Louisville hospitals. Jewish Hospital also operated a nursing school from 1909 through World War II. In 1929, the hospital built a new addition and the Bernheim Nurses' Home. The hospital endured through financial deficits, the Great Depression, and the damage of the Ohio River flood of 1937.

In the decade after World War II, a fundraising drive to build a larger hospital at a new location secured over \$800,000 in donations from the community and a federal Hill-Burton allocation of \$1,284,000. The Board of Trustees hired the Jewish architectural firm Joseph and Joseph to oversee the design and construction of the new Jewish Hospital, which would offer more modern and racially inclusive facilities to patients. A 1952 *Courier-Journal* article announced that African American patients would be admitted to the new hospital, with plans to have African American and white patients use "the same medical facilities" but not share patient rooms. In 1955, the new 118-bed Jewish Hospital opened at Brook and Chestnut streets. With its location downtown, Jewish Hospital joined the newly organized Louisville Medical Center and participated in the University of Louisville medical school's teaching program. Like the old hospital, the new hospital benefited from the work of volunteers, most notably from the Women's Guild of Jewish Hospital, established in 1955. Sara Greenstein, who served as the hospital's first female president of the Board of Trustees from 1962-1965, oversaw the racial desegregation of the hospital's medical staff and patient rooms, the creation of a pension system for employees, and the establishment of the open-heart surgery program.

In the 1960s, Jewish Hospital began to build a reputation as a regional medical center specializing in heart and hand surgery and kidney transplants and treatments. The hospital closed its obstetrical department in 1967 to provide more space for its recently established intensive care and coronary care units (ICU-CCU). Two major expansions—the addition of 1960-1962 and the completion of the Wheeler Tower in 1973—increased the number of patient beds to 403. Jewish Hospital was the site of many "firsts" in Kentucky, including the first kidney transplant in 1964, the first open-heart surgery in 1965, the first heart transplant in 1984, and the first hand transplant in 1999.

The 1980s launched an era of corporate reorganization, starting with the creation of the holding company JH Systems in 1983, later renamed Jewish Hospital HealthCare Services (JHHS) in 1988. By 1995, JHHS had expanded to take on the ownership and management of the Amelia Brown Frazier Rehabilitation Center, the Rudd Heart and Lung Center, and a regional network of outpatient facilities and twelve hospitals. In 2005, JHHS and Caritas Health Services merged to create Jewish Hospital and St. Mary's HealthCare, with JHHS and Catholic Health Initiatives (CHI) as parent companies. In 2012, Jewish Hospital and St. Mary's HealthCare merged with Saint Joseph Health System of Lexington to form KentuckyOne Health. At this point, the board of JHHS reorganized to create the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence (JHFE), a nonprofit grant-making organization that gives support to medical research, community health, and the Louisville Jewish community. As of 2018, KentuckyOne Health's Jewish Hospital and St. Mary's Foundation provides support to patient care, medical education, and clinical research at Jewish Hospital and other KentuckyOne Health facilities and programs in the Louisville area.

Sources:

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Jewish Louisville: Portrait of a Community, by Carol Ely.

A Legendary Vision: The History of Jewish Hospital, by Barbara Zingman and Betty Lou Amster.

"Negro Patients to be Taken by New Jewish Hospital." 23 November 1952. *Courier-Journal*.

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**Jewish Hospital (Louisville, Ky.)
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Rabbis – Kentucky – Louisville.
Radiology – Kentucky – Louisville.
Residents (Medicine) – Kentucky – Louisville.
Rudd Heart and Lung Center (Louisville, Ky.).
Sanders, Harland, 1890-1980.
Smoking – Kentucky – Louisville.
Surgery – Kentucky – Louisville.
Teaching hospitals – Kentucky – Louisville.
Transplantation of organs, tissues, etc. – Kentucky – Louisville.
United States. Hospital Survey and Construction Act.
University of Louisville. School of Medicine.
Victor, Julia F., 1903-1988.
Volunteer workers in hospitals – Kentucky – Louisville.
Weiss, Morris M., Jr., 1933-

Women's Guild of Jewish Hospital (Louisville, Ky.).
World War, 1939-1945 – Kentucky – Louisville.