Kansas City (Mo.) School District Records

This collection contains some early school records for the Kansas City School District as well as photographs, scrapbooks, board minutes, and a wide variety of material.

**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Kansas City (Mo.) School District  
**Title:** Kansas City (Mo.) School District records  
**Dates:** 1860s-1990s  
**Size:** 30 linear feet, 57 boxes  
**Location:** SC23

**Administrative Information**

**Restrictions on access:** Unrestricted access.

**Additional physical form available:** Majority of photographs have been digitized.

**Reproduction note:** School district board minutes available only on microfilm.

**Related collections in other repositories:** Kansas City (MO) School District Desegregation Clippings (1038kc), Western Historical Manuscript Collections-Kansas City.

**Acquisition information:** Gift, 1992-, Accession #1992-18. Collection was given in segments over a period of time and is open for future additions.

**Citation note:** Kansas City (Mo.) School District records (SC23), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

**Collection Description**

**Biographical/historical note**

The Board of Education of Kansas City was organized August 1, 1867. At that time there were 2,150 children of school age living in the school district with no public school building in the city and rented rooms to use for classrooms. The first school building opened in 1868 and was Washington School located at Independence Avenue and Cherry Street. The first high school was Central High School, acquiring its own building in 1883. As the population of Kansas City grew after the Civil War, so did the school district.

The most notable of the early leaders was school superintendent James Greenwood who led the school for 38 years, 1874-1913. The district is spread over an area which includes much of the inner core of the city, parts of eastern Independence and Sugar Creek. Over the ensuing years, the district has dealt with suburban growth and sprawl and the ramifications of that on the district enrollment. This as well as desegregation issues have caused instability in the district at times.

The Kansas City Public Library was associated with the school district until 1988 when it separated and established its own board, retaining the same district boundaries.
Scope and content note

A collection of various types of material was officially transferred from the Kansas City School District to the Kansas City Public Library and the Missouri Valley Special Collections over a period of time in the 1990s beginning in February, 1992. The school district representative who was first instrumental in the transfer process was retired school official J. Glenn Travis. Later retired school official John Duncan assumed this role and assisted with the later transfers. Transfer forms and other documentation may be found in the collection folder.

There are a variety of different types of material contained in the collection. Those items that were published by the district, many of which the library already possessed in their classed book collection, were similarly added to the department’s classified (call number) arrangement. These included Board of Education reports, employee and school directories, superintendent’s reports, secretary and treasurer reports, handbooks, etc. Also the donated school yearbooks were placed in the department’s school yearbook collection. A more detailed accounting of these materials which were placed elsewhere can be found in the collection folder. These materials can be accessed using the library’s online catalog.

Those items placed in this special collection, include original, older school record/attendance books for some schools as well as school census books. These items are all late nineteenth and early twentieth century in date and may prove helpful to those tracing students and teachers in the early period. Photographs add the visual image associated with the school structures. There are over 500 photographs included with many of them featuring early schools, some no longer standing. In addition to structures there are photographs of school personnel and events, primarily covering the last 50 years. The finding aid found in the collection folder lists identification when known. The school building photographs have been digitized and are online.

The Kansas City School District Board minutes from the beginning in 1867 up through 1993 are included, available on microfilm only. These records were microfilmed in the 1990s through a Missouri Local Records Grant program in conjunction with the school district. Microfilm copies were transferred with this donation. It is believed the original minutes at the time of processing were still in the possession of the school district.

A unique portion of the collection includes records of the Radio and Television Council of Greater Kansas City. This includes minutes, scrapbooks, photographs, official records, newspaper clippings, etc. Early Kansas City television personalities participated as guests and members covering the years 1943-1958. The collection also includes scrapbooks for Benton School and Kumpf School, both from the 1940s.

Typed minutes and reports for various administrative groups covering the 1940s to early 1960s add to information on the district's programs and administration. Within the miscellaneous category can be found typed school histories, budget control summaries for the library in the 1970s-1980s, various financial records, a school district property book, and teaching aids including a turn of the century flip chart. Early records for the Westport School District, prior to that district becoming a part of the Kansas City School District, were not donated with this collection. It is believed they may have perhaps been given to the library by the school district at an earlier date. Therefore, they have been included as the last series of this collection. They are useful when looking at Westport as a community.
The highlights of the collection include the numerous school building photographs, the 126 years of Board of Education minutes which give the researcher an opportunity to study the issues and resolutions the members faced. Also the items relating to the Radio and Television Council of Greater Kansas City provide insight into the beginning media of television in the city and the school district. The property book helps to trace the history of individual schools in the district with references to the 1925 atlas of Kansas City by Tuttle and Pike. Lastly, the records of the Westport School District provide names of early (1854 on) people in that community, demonstrate the importance of education and help to establish the school age African Americans living there in the late 1860s.

Missouri Valley Special Collections also has a number of other collections and sources of information concerning the study of the Kansas City School District. It appears the library microfilmed some of the school district archives in 1976-1978. Located in the department’s microfilm cabinet under the “Miscellaneous” drawer are 14 rolls of microfilm. Included are numerous school district reports, 1950s-1970s; resources related to building needs and bond issues, 1920-1951; salaries and salary data, 1920-1957; various reports, 1921-1957; financial data, 1934-1957; scrapbooks, 1917-1929 and press clippings, 1941-1952, 1965-1967.

Another source of information can be found in the department’s newspaper clipping collection which dates from 1900 through the twentieth century. Under the subject “Schools-Public” can be found numerous clippings relating to individual schools as well as to district issues.

Special Collections with related information include the Greenwood Collection (SC 86) and the James Hazlett Papers (SC 84). Both were superintendents in the school district. SC 88, the Carl Betz Papers, relates as Mr. Betz was a physical education instructor in the district and a pioneer in that field.

Checking the department’s online Local History Index gives many entries for the school district. Citations to additional photographs may be found there as well as vertical files for different schools and other education related topics. The library’s online catalog should also be searched to discover the depth of books and published materials cataloged over the long years of the existence of both the school district and the library.

**Arrangement Note**

The collection has been divided into eight series groups by the processor. They include: Series I – School/Record Attendance Books; Series II – Photographs; Series III – Kansas City School District Board Minutes; Series IV – Radio and Television Council of Greater Kansas City Records; Series V – School Scrapbooks; Series VI – Minutes and Reports; Series VII – Miscellaneous; and Series VIII – Westport School District Records.
Collection Inventory

Series I – School Record/Attendance Books

- Bristol School – 1902-1905, Daily Record Books, 2 books
- Central High School
  - Record book – 1872-1889 (Actual student records start in 1873), 1 book
  - Record book – 1889-1892, 1 book
  - Record book – 1895-1898, 1 book
  - Record book – 1901-1910, 1 book
  - Record book – 1905-1910, 1 book
  - Record book – 1910-1915, 1 book, Record of Normal Training Department, 1909-1911
- Lincoln High School, Record book – 1889-1907, 1 book
- Swope School, Daily Register book, 1910-1914, 1 book
- Westport Public Schools, Annual Record of Attendance and Scholarship - 1892-1897, 1 book

Series I – School Census Books

- 4 volumes – 1884, 1885, 1886, 1887. Title: School census of the School District of Kansas City, Missouri. Originally classed as: q093.9 K16sch, #70-52324. Lists names of students only. Divided by schools and student names listed alphabetically
  - List of schools included in the census:
    - Benton, Bryant, Chase, Cherry H. Branch, Franklin, Garfield, Humbolt, Karnes, Lathrope, Lincoln, Martin, Morse, Nordland, Sumner, Switzer, Turner (colored), Washington, Webster, Woodland

Series II - Photographs

- Box 1 – Kansas City Public Schools, A - J - (See View Collection Records)
- Box 2 - Kansas City Public Schools, K - M - (See View Collection Records)
- Box 3 - Kansas City Public Schools, N - S - (See View Collection Records)
- Box 4 - Kansas City Public Schools, T - W - (See View Collection Records)
- Box 5 - Kansas City School District - Individuals, administrators, employees, class photos, former superintendents, unidentified
- Box 6 - Kansas City School District - Miscellaneous, unidentified photographs

Series III - Kansas City School District BoardMinutes (Microfilm)

- Box 1 - Reel 1D, 1867 - Reel 9, 1965
- Box 2 - Reel 10D, 1966 - Reel 19, 9/1950
- Box 3 - Reel 20D, 10/1950 - Reel 29, 4/1960
- Box 4 - Reel 30, 5/1960 - Reel 39, 4/1970
- Box 5 - Reel 40, 5/1970 - Reel 49, 2/1977
- Box 6 - Reel 50, 3/1977 - Reel 59, 7/1980
- Box 7 - Reel 60, 8/1980 - Reel 69, 2/1983
- Box 8 - Reel 70, 3/1983 - Reel 79, 4/1986
- Box 9 - Reel 80, 5/1986 - Reel 90, 8/1987
• Box 10 - Reel 91, 9/1987 - Reel 100, 1/24/1989
• Box 11 - Reel 101, 2/2/1989 - Reel 110, 5/8/ 1990
• Box 12 - Reel 111, 5/17/1990 - Reel 120, 7/9/1991
• Box 13 - Reel 121, 7/15/1991 - Reel 129, 12/14/1993
• Box 14 - Duplicate reels of film
• Box 15 - Duplicate reels of film

Series IV - Radio and Television Council of Greater Kansas City Records

• Box 1

  Book 1, Minutes of the Board of Directors, June 15, 1943 - September 6, 1951, handwritten in ledger book

  Book 2, Minutes of General Meetings, April 1, 1943 - March 23, 1948. Includes constitution and by-laws, committee and treasurer's reports, membership lists, and attendance record

  Book 3, Officers and committees, membership for 1943 - 1967, organizations admitted to membership


• Box 2

  Scrapbook #1, 1944-1954 - Contains meeting notices, newspaper clippings, certificates, letters including from Gov. Phil Donnelly, Bess Truman, and Margaret Truman, listings, brochures, radio listings, photographs including Ann Hayes, luncheon meetings with some in the Aztec Room of the Hotel President, and various individuals.

  Scrapbook #2, 1954-1958 - Contains meeting notices, numerous photographs including the officers, early television personalities as Walt Bodine, Frank Wziarde, Bea Johnson, Harold Ensley, Randall Jessee, Anne Hayes, Sam Molen, Owen Bush, Bruce Rice, Bill Yearout and others, newspaper clippings, reports, etc.

Series V - Scrapbooks

• Scrapbook #1 - Benton School, 1940-1945, 149 pages (many pages not used), 13 folders - Contains the following: newspaper clippings, ephemera, programs, correspondence, forms, badges, World War II rationing items, date schedules, Benton School News, graduation exercise programs, certificates, photographs (mainly class photos), etc. Included is coverage of the visit of Walt Disney and of Ginger Rogers to the school in the 1940s.

• Scrapbook #2-3 - Kumpf School, 1940s, Part I (117 pages, 19 folders) and Part II (119 pages, 19 folders) - Contains the following: newspaper clippings, invitations, forms, brochures, lists, ephemera, correspondence, PTA convention items, reports, postcards, by-laws, mimeographed school material, certificates, greeting cards, newsletters, programs, photographs, and other PTA related material. Part II covers 1946-1947.
Series VI - Minutes and Reports (Typewritten)

- **Box 1** - Minutes and Announcements of the Superintendent/Principals, 1942-1946 - Contains circulars, reports, minutes and agendas, policies, forms, charts, etc.
- **Box 2** - Minutes and Announcements of the Superintendent/Principals, 1946-1949 - Contains circulars, minutes and agendas, notices, etc.
- **Box 3** - Minutes and Announcements of the Superintendent/Principals, 1949-1951 - Contains circulars, minutes and agendas, notices, etc.
- **Box 4** - Instructional Council Minutes and Reports (Bound), 1957-1962
- **Box 5** - Instructional Council Minutes and Reports (Bound), 1962-1964
- **Box 6** - Research and Curriculum Department Reports and Materials (Bound), 1942-1950
- **Box 7** - Research and Curriculum Department Reports and Materials (Bound), 1945-1947
- **Box 8** - Research and Curriculum Department Reports and Materials (Bound), 1947-48, 1954-55
- **Box 9** - Statistics - School Attendance (Bound), 1943-1944 to 1946-1947
- **Box 10** - Instructional Division Annual Reports (Binders), 1966-1967 and 1967-1968

Series VII - Miscellaneous

- Budget Control Summaries - 3 boxes - Kansas City Public Library only - 1973-81, 1985-86
- Primarily Biographical Material - Chester Anderson, Orville Bliss, Hale H. Cook, Fletcher Daniels, Arnold Davenport, Harry C. Dille, George F. Garcia, James A. Hazlett, Mrs. Tom Mason, George Melcher, Mrs. Nelly Don Reed, Robert R. Wheeler (Includes copy of desegregation plan), K.C. Schoolmasters and Spouses List for 1992, correspondence, color photocopies, miscellaneous items and handwritten school related notes of Alice Stewart, 1885
- **Cash Book for the Kansas City Board of Public Schools, 1867-1872** - 1 ledger book - Starts at August 24, 1867 - October, 1870, p. 2-117. On p. 119 it reads “J.V.C. Karnes, Treasurer, Kansas City Board of Education, From October 1870-” This section includes an index and goes to p. 317, 1872. Expenses shown include teacher's salaries, janitor service and supplies, heating expenses, school maintenance, bond payments, etc.
Pasted in the back are newspaper clippings concerning the report of the treasurer and secretary of the School Board as well as a handwritten copy of the treasurer’s report for 1867-68.

- Property Book and School District Map - 1 ledger book with index entitled "Property Book, 1867-1990+" - Traces the property history for each school in the Kansas City School District listing costs, some architects and contractors, land owners, sell and purchase dates, and accompanying documents and notes, etc. Pages 1-174 of the ledger are used. References to page numbers in the 1925 Tuttle and Pike Atlas for Kansas City. School district map is folded and bound and shows the location and boundaries of the schools, [1942].

- Teaching Aids - One box of various cut-outs and patterns used in making bulletin boards and as teaching aids in the classroom, primarily ca1930s forward. Also a rolled chart entitled Bell's Common School Charts, revised series, with practical helps for teaching reading, phonics, language drills, drawing, penmanship, letter writing, arithmetic, geography, book-keeping, business forms, vertical penmanship, U.S. History, U.S. Civil Government and physiology. Made by W. L. Bell & Co. of Kansas City, Mo., c1891-'93-'95.


Series VIII - Westport School District (Not associated with Accession Number 1992-18)

- Box 1 - Four Record Books

  Westport Male Academy - School Records (Minutes primarily), October 10, 1854 - June 14, 1861.

  Record of the Proceedings of the Board of Education for the Town of Westport, Jackson County, Mo., October 12, 1867 - November 18, 1873 and February 21, 1880 - October 8, 1881 (Page 1-212). Record also contains "List of Colored Scholars Attending Westport District Public School for Colored Children", September 1, 1869 (Page 192-193); "List of Pupils Admitted to Westport District School Since September 1st, 1869" (Page 195-203); and "List of Scholars in the Public Schools at the 2nd Session Commencing Tuesday, February 1, 1870", (Page 204 - 211).

  Westport District Financial Accounts, 1868 - 1869 (Page 7-30) and Enumeration Book, 1882 - 1890 (Page 34-[329]) which includes a list of resident tax payers for each year. Enumeration includes name of parent or guardian, names of children, sex and race.

• **Box 2 - Two Record Books**

Poll Book, Westport School District, Sub District No. 8-Township 49-Range 33, April 5, 1887. Contains 178 names, for the election of two directors to serve three years and county school commissioner.

Westport Board of Education Minute Book of Westport School District #8, Township 49, Range 33, Jackson County, Missouri, August 4, 1891 - [July 7, 1897], Pages 1 - 264.


Photographs Processed in mid-1990s by volunteer Alice Miller.