

# Missouri State Archives

## Finding Aid RG 152.01

### Missouri School for the Blind

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*Abstract:* Records of students and general operation of the school, 1851-2003.

*Extent:* 2 cubic ft. (4 Hollinger boxes, 1 oversize box) and 6.27 GB.

*Physical Description:* Paper and TIFF/PDF files (Register of Pupils).

*Alternative Formats:* Registers of Pupils are also on microfilm.

*Location:* Missouri State Archives.

### Administrative Information

*Access Restrictions:* See Missouri School for the Blind Access Guidelines: [MSB-MSD Access Guidelines.docx](#).

*Publication Restrictions:* Copyright is in the public domain. Items reproduced for online or physical publication should carry the credit line: Courtesy of the Missouri State Archives.

*Preferred Citation:* [Item description], [Date]; [Box and Folder] OR [Volume and Page]; [Series]; Missouri School for the Blind, Record Group 152; Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City.

*Acquisition Information:* Agency Transfer, Accession 2020-0033.

*Processing Information:* Processing completed by Mary Stansfield on September 1, 2022.

### Historical and Biographical Notes

The Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) opened as the Missouri Institution for the Education of the Blind in 1851. Originally a private charitable institution, it was placed under state control in 1855. The name of the school changed several times, usually through legislative act but sometimes by school fiat. Laws, biennial reports, and other state documents often refer to the school by a free-flowing combination of asylum, institute or school. The name was changed for the last time in 1879.

The Missouri School for the Blind occupied several sites before moving to its current location on Magnolia Avenue in the Tower Grove neighborhood of St. Louis. The school was intended, and continues to be, a residential school, with day school options.

In addition to being the first American school to teach the Braille alphabet, the Missouri School for the Blind operated the first Braille printing press in the United States.

The Missouri School for the Blind received its first Black student, Dulcima Nelson, in 1876. Integrated education continued until 1889 when a law titled “An act to revise and amend article one, chapter 150 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri of 1879, entitled “Of Schools,” and all amendatory acts thereto” required all public schools to be racially segregated. The school remained separate enough to meet the requirements until reintegration came in 1954 after the *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court case struck down school segregation.

## Timeline

Year	Event
1851	The Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) is created by “An act providing for the Education of the Blind” as the Missouri Institute for the Education of the Blind. Approved February 27, 1851.
1855	MSB became a state institution. Approved February 24, 1855.
1859	MSB became the first school in America, and the second school globally, to teach the Braille alphabet.
1876	Dulcima Nelson, the first Black student, enrolled in November.
1879	Name changed to Missouri School for the Blind as per Revised Statutes and biennial reports.
1889	“An act to define the eleemosynary institutions of the state...” made MSB an eleemosynary institution. Effective August 22, 1889.
1889	“An act to revise and amend article one, chapter 150 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri of 1879, entitled “Of Schools,” and all amendatory acts thereto” forced racial segregation of the school. Effective August 22, 1889.
1921	House Bill 519 removed MSB from the list of eleemosynary institutions to become an independent educational institution under the management of a Board of Managers appointed by the governor. Effective June 19, 1921.
1946	Senate Bill 428 directed the State Board of Education to establish a division of special education which included the Missouri School for the Blind. Effective March 12, 1947.
1974	State Board of Education became the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education under the State Omnibus Reorganization Act. Effective May 2, 1974.

## Additional Descriptive Information

### Bibliography

“MSB History.” *History*. Accessed May 18, 2002. <https://msb.dese.mo.gov/History.html>.

Farrell, Gabriel. 1969. *The Story of Blindness*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Pollak, Simon, Jones, Jas. C. 1901. *A Story of the Blind, 1851-1901*. American Foundation for the Blind.

### Other Finding Aids

Register of Pupils, Volumes 1 and 2 are indexed here: [RG 152 Missouri School for the Blind Register of Pupils.xlsx](#). **Volume 2 is partially restricted.** See Missouri School for the Blind Access Guidelines: [MSB-MSD Access Guidelines.docx](#).

### Related Material

RG 392 Commission to Relocate the Missouri School for the Blind.

### Series

The records are organized into the following series:

Handbooks, 1967-2003

Investigation, Evaluation and Review Reports, 1967-1986

Plans, 1966-1983

Publications, 1865-2003

Register of Pupils, 1851-1984

## Investigation, Evaluation and Review Reports, 1967-1986

*Extent:* 6 folders, 3 oversize folders

*Arrangement:* Chronological

### Scope and Content

Reports of investigations, reviews and evaluations of the Missouri School for the Blind. On-Site Reviews are internal reviews.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
1	1	Handbook for the Visiting Evaluation Committee of the Missouri School for the Blind	1967
1	2	Evaluation by North Central Association Visiting Committee	1967
1	3	Initial Investigation	1981
1	4	Report of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools	1981
OB1	1-3	On-Site Review (Braille version)	1984
1	5	North Central Association Visiting Team Handbook	1986
1	6	On-Site Review	1986
1	7	On-Site Review	1986
1	8	Report of the North Central Association Review Team	1986

## Plans, 1966-1983

*Extent:* 2 folders

*Arrangement:* Chronological

### Scope and Content

Plans created for the Missouri School for the Blind. It is unclear to what extent these plans were carried out.

### Container List

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	9	Master Plan: The Francis Jefferson Coates Country Campus of the Missouri School for the Blind	1966
1	10	State Plan for Part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act as Amended by PL 94-142	FY 1981-1983

## Publications, 1865-2003

*Extent:* 1.2 cubic ft. (3 Hollinger boxes)

*Arrangement:* Alphabetical

### Scope and Content

Biennial Reports, 1852-1873, 1877-1926, 1935-1936 are also published in the Senate Journal Appendices. Missing 1<sup>st</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Biennial Reports and any biennial reports published after 1944.

### Container List

Box	Folder	Contents	Date
2	1	Biennial Report	1855-1856
2	2	12th Biennial Report	1879-1880
2	3	13th Biennial Report	1881-1882
2	4	14th Biennial Report	1883-1884
2	5	16th Biennial Report	1887-1888
2	6	17th Biennial Report	1889-1890
2	7	18th Biennial Report	1891-1892
2	8	19th Biennial Report	1893-1894
2	9	20th Biennial Report	1895-1896
2	10	21st Biennial Report	1897-1898
2	11	22nd Biennial Report	1899-1900
2	12	17th – 22nd Biennial Reports [bound]	1889-1900
2	13	23rd Biennial Report	1901-1902
2	14	24th Biennial Report	1903-1904
2	15	25th Biennial Report	1905-1906
2	16	26th Biennial Report	1907-1908
2	17	27th Biennial Report	1909-1910
2	18	28th Biennial Report	1911-1912
3	1	29th Biennial Report	1913-1914
3	2	30th Biennial Report	1915-1916
3	3	31st Biennial Report	1917-1918
3	4	32nd Biennial Report	1919-1920
3	5	33rd Biennial Report	1921-1922
3	6	34th Biennial Report	1923-1924
3	7	35th Biennial Report	1925-1926
3	8	36th Biennial Report	1927-1928
3	9	37th Biennial Report	1929-1930
3	10	38th Biennial Report	1931-1932

<b>Box</b>	<b>Folder</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Date</b>
3	11	39th Biennial Report	1933-1934
3	12	40th Biennial Report	1935-1936
3	13	41st Biennial Report	1937-1938
3	14	42nd Biennial Report	1939-1940
3	15	43rd Biennial Report	1941-1942
3	16	44th Biennial Report	1943-1944
4	1	Bylaws and Statutes	1881
4	2	Bylaws and Statutes	1890
4	3	An Historical Pageant of the Missouri School for the Blind	1926
4	4	“The Missouri School for the Blind” [informational brochure]	c1961-1965
4	5	“The Missouri School for the Blind” [informational brochure]	c1965-1973
4	6	Student/Parent/Staff Handbook	2003
4	7	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook [English and Braille]	1968-1969
4	8	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook [English and Braille]	1969-1970
4	9	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook [English and Braille]	1971-1972
4	10	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook	1987-1988
4	11	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook	1988-1989
5	1	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook	1989-1990
5	2	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook	1990-1991
5	3	<i>Mule Memories</i> Yearbook	1991-1992
5	4	<i>Missouri School for the Blind</i> Yearbook	1999-2000
5	5	<i>Missouri School for the Blind</i> Yearbook [Braille]	1999-2000

## Registers of Pupils, 1851-1984

*Extent:* 3 volumes, digital only, 6.27 GB

*Arrangement:* Chronological

### Scope and Content

Register of students enrolled at the School for the Blind from 1851 to 1984. Fields vary slightly across the three volumes, but generally include pupil number, name, age, nativity (by state or country), admission date, age when became blind, cause of blindness, degree of blindness, other disability, relatives blind, religion, address of parent or guardian, discharge date and remarks.

Volumes 2 and 3 are restricted according to the Missouri School for the Deaf Access Guidelines: [MSB-MSD Access Guidelines.docx](#).

### Container List

Volume	Contents	Date
1	Students #1-926	1851-1899
2	Students #927-2462	1899-1962
3	Students #2463-2954	1963-1984