



ArchivesSpace
a community served by ✦ LYRISIS

Roxbury, Boston, Mass. St. Mark's Social Center records, 1941-1966. RG0712

This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on March 20, 2025.
Description is written in: English.
DACS 2019.0.3

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Suite 200

Boston, MA 02108

Business Number: 617-523-0470

info@14beacon.org

URL: <http://www.CongregationalLibrary.org>

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Historical Note	3
Scope and Contents	4
Arrangement	5
Administrative Information	5
Controlled Access Headings	6
Bibliography	6
Collection Inventory	7

Summary Information

Repository:	Congregational Library & Archives
Creator:	St. Mark's Social Center (Roxbury, Boston, Mass.)
Title:	Roxbury, Boston, Mass. St. Mark's Social Center records, 1941-1966.
ID:	RG0712
Date [inclusive]:	1941-1966
Physical Description:	1.03 Cubic Feet (3 boxes)
Language of the Material:	English .
Abstract:	The St. Mark's Social Center was founded in 1941 next to the St. Mark's Congregational Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. The Social Center served as a meeting and community space primarily for the Black residents of Roxbury. After twenty-five years, the St. Mark's Social Center merged with the Ecumenical Center in 1967. This collection contains board of directors meeting minutes, treasurer records, records on the building of St. Mark's recreation center, spending reports, and financial records.

Preferred Citation

[Identification of item], in the Roxbury, Boston, Mass. St. Mark's Social Center records, 1941-1966, RG0712. The Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Historical Note

The St. Mark's Social Center was founded in 1941 next to the St. Mark's Congregational Church in Roxbury, Massachusetts. During the Social Center's creation, the pastor of the church was Reverend Samuel Leroy Laviscount. Reverend Laviscount lead the Church for over thirty years and helped in it becoming a prominent congregation. From 1941 to 1966, both the Church and

the Social Center were located on Townsend Street, where they were at the epicenter of life and learning in the local area.

The Social Center served as a meeting and community space primarily for the Black residents of Roxbury. There were many programs, events, and activities offered to youth especially, including use of St. Mark's nursery school, day camp, and recreation center and gymnasium. At the latter site, locals of all ages could swim, bowl, or play recreational sports. Whether they were children spending summers at the Social Center, teenagers attending seasonal dances, or adults participating in a variety of special interest groups, St. Mark's gave frequent opportunities for the community to come together.

During the Civil Rights Movement of the mid twentieth century, the Social Center made significant efforts to work with Boston residents. In 1964, the Social Center developed the first Freedom School in Boston under the leadership of the executive director at the time, Noel Day. Freedom Schools were created around the country to address the disparities and discrimination Black students faced in the American education system. The curriculum for Freedom School's such as the one affiliated with the St. Mark's Social Center focused on Black American history and sought to engage deeply with the students, thereby building their confidence and strengthening their voice.

On June 18, 1964, the St. Mark's Social Center served as the headquarters for a "stay-out" protesting segregation in the Boston Public School system. On this day, three thousand students, families, and friends did not attend class at the public schools of Boston but rather participated in workshops at Freedom Schools. The event was a pivotal moment in the Civil Rights Movement of Boston and aligned with the Social Center's overall practice of engaging in political, social, and cultural efforts of the surrounding area.

The running of the Social Center was not without some problems, as they faced a devastating fire in 1954 as well as occasional financial troubles. After twenty-five years of serving the people of Roxbury, the St. Mark's Social Center for Negro Boys & Girls merged with the Ecumenical Center in 1967, which was located at 25 Crawford St.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Scope and Contents

This collection contains records on St. Mark's Social Center in Roxbury, Boston, Massachusetts and includes board of directors meeting minutes, treasurer records, records on the building of St. Mark's recreation center, spending reports, and financial records.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Arrangement

Materials have been arranged by topic and then in chronological order.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Administrative Information

Publication Statement

Congregational Library & Archives

14 Beacon Street

Suite 200

Boston, MA 02108

Business Number: 617-523-0470

info@14beacon.org

URL: <http://www.CongregationalLibrary.org>

Restrictions on Access

Access to this collection is unrestricted and open to the public.

Restrictions on Use

Items in this collection are subject to U.S. Copyright Law. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine the copyright status of collection items and to secure any permissions necessary for their reproduction and publication. Requests for permission to publish material must be discussed with the archivist or librarian.

Acquisition Information

No acquisition information is available for this collection.

Processing Information

Processed by Rebecca Arabian in March 2025.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Controlled Access Headings

- Associations, institutions, etc.
- African American Congregationalists.
- Church finance.
- Civil rights -- Religious aspects
- Community Centers
- Community development -- Religious aspects -- African American churches
- Community development -- Roxbury (Boston, Mass)
- Day, Noel, 1933-
- Laviscount, Samuel L., -1979
- St. Mark's Congregational Church (Roxbury, Boston, Mass.)
- St. Mark's Social Center (Roxbury, Boston, Mass.)

Bibliography

Dwyer, Dialynn. "When Boston Students Called for Freedom." Boston.com, June 18, 2015. <https://www.boston.com/news/history/2015/06/18/when-boston-students-called-for-freedom/>.

Heath, Richard. "Washington Park Urban Renewal Program-Part I." Right Here in Roxbury Wiki. Accessed March 6, 2025. https://roxbury.fandom.com/wiki/Washington_Park_Urban_Renewal_Program-Part_I_by_Richard_Heath.

"Roxbury Timeline-1950-2005." Right Here in Roxbury Wiki. Accessed March 6, 2025. https://roxbury.fandom.com/wiki/Roxbury_Timeline-1950-2005

"Saint Mark's Congregational Church." Right Here in Roxbury Wiki. Accessed March 6, 2025. https://roxbury.fandom.com/wiki/Saint_Mark%27s_Congregational_Church.

Shelby Barthelemy. "St. Mark's Social Center." Clío: Your Guide to History. February 26, 2019. <https://theclio.com/entry/75831>.

"Wendolyn Love, 79, Was a Bookkeeper and Artist." The Vineyard Gazette, February 19, 2004. <https://vineyardgazette.com/obituaries/2004/02/20/wendolyn-love-79-was-bookkeeper-and-artist>.

[^ Return to Table of Contents](#)

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Instances	
Recreation Building correspondence, 1941	box 1	folder 1
Recreation Building papers, 1941-1942	box 3	folder 1
Recreation Building contract papers, 1941-1943	box 3	folder 2
Monthly Financial reports, 1941-1966, (1963-1966)	box 1	folder 2
Treasurer records, 1941-1948	box 3	folder 3
Treasurer records, 1949-1954	box 3	folder 4
Treasurer records, 1955-1959	box 1	folder 3
Treasurer records, 1960-1964	box 3	folder 5
Annual Financial reports, 1942-1966	box 1	folder 4
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1944-1945	box 1	folder 5
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1946-1951	box 1	folder 6
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1952-1954	box 1	folder 7
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1955-1957	box 3	folder 6
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1958-1960	box 3	folder 7
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1961-1963	box 1	folder 8
Board of Directors meeting minutes, 1964	box 1	folder 9
Financial records, 1948-1953	box 2	volume 1
Financial records, 1953-1957	box 2	volume 2
Financial records, 1957-1961	box 2	volume 3
Monthly Spending reports, 1963-1965	box 1	folder 10