
Guide to the Travelers Aid Society of San Diego Records

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Guide to the Travelers Aid Society of San Diego Records 1914/1976

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Overview of the Collection

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Historical Note:

The Travelers Aid Society of San Diego was formed in 1914 as a non-sectarian, protective organization incorporated under the laws of the State of California to safeguard travelers, particularly women, girls, and boys, who by reason of inexperience, ignorance, illness, infirmity, or other disability, are in need of assistance while traveling. At the time of its founding, its aim was to provide information, advice, guidance, and protection to all travelers irrespective of age, race, creed, class, or sex. Women workers knowing multiple languages were employed by the Society to meet trains and steamers coming into the city to aid and conduct inexperienced or confused travelers at any hour of the day or night to their destination within the city, or to find transportation to other points. When necessary, the Society provided temporarily for the traveler through an investigated list of homes, institutions, boarding houses, and hotels. This mission continues unchanged to the present day; further modes of travel are accommodated, and general enhanced social service referral is also practiced.

The Travelers Aid was founded to deal with the great influx of people into the city of San Diego in 1914. These travelers, drawn by the Panama-California Exposition of 1915-1916, came for pleasure or to find work in the booming town of San Diego. Emigrants to the city continued to pour in after the Exposition, and San Diego saw more and more tourist and traveler activity through World War I and the Great Depression. During and after World War II, San Diego's permanent and visitor population swelled. Originally part of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), the Travelers Aid Society was part of the USO and provided significant services for armed services officers and their families. Travelers Aid was also associated with San Diego Community Chest as a social service agency.

Access Terms

This collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Corporate Name:

Travelers Aid Society of San Diego -- Archives

Travelers Aid Society of San Diego -- History -- Sources

United Service Organizations (U.S.) -- California -- San Diego

Young Women's Christian Association -- California -- San Diego

Genre/Form of Material:

Organizational Records

Topical Term:

Travelers' aid societies -- California -- San Diego

Accruals:

1977

Conditions Governing Use:

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Identification of item, folder title, box number, Travelers Aid Society of San Diego Records, Special Collections and University Archives, Library and Information Access, San Diego State University.

Related Materials:

Young Women's Christian Association Records

Arrangement of Materials:

- I. Office Files
- II. Public Relations
- III. Case Records and Reports
- IV. Volunteer Files
- V. Board of Directors Files
- VI. Conferences and Conventions
- VII. Financial Records
- VIII. Scrapbooks

Scope and Contents

The *Travelers Aid Society of San Diego Records* document the branch's activities and service to travelers arriving in and passing through San Diego via automobiles, trains, boats, and planes. Though there is steady coverage from 1914 through 1976, there is somewhat more material from the late 1960s and early 1970s. Materials from the early 1920s are somewhat lacking. The collection consists of newspaper clippings, promotional materials, correspondence, office records, reports, case histories, photographs, and scrapbooks.

The Office Files series dates from 1946 to 1973 and documents basic office activities, primarily from the 1960s and 1970s. Included here are employment applications, daily logs for Society officers and case workers, and reference files for community organizations which include flyers, brochures, and pamphlets. Membership correspondence is also included here.

The Public Relations series documents the chapter's efforts at promoting awareness of Travelers Aid functions and services, and provides evidence of the success of those efforts. Mainly newsclippings, this series also includes educational radio spots, news releases, and photographs. Some of these photographs date from very early in the chapter's history and show travelers and wayward children being helped at the 1915 Exposition in Balboa Park.

The Case Records and Reports series provides the most rich historical information about the Travelers Aid Society of San Diego. It includes monthly statistical reports from the very early years to the 1960s. These reports give detailed statistical information about how many trains, boats, or buses were met during a particular month or year, the number and nationality of persons assisted, and a tally of the methods by which these cases were resolved. Many reports include narratives of particularly troublesome or interesting cases, and provide details about what types of travelers were arriving in San Diego, and their reasons for coming to the city. This series has several highlights, but chief among them are the case histories and dock reports of 1915 and 1916, which give detailed individual pictures of tourists and workers arriving for the 1915 Exposition and the troubles they run into. Many of these case histories detail situations where Travelers Aid comes to the service of women who are potential victims of crime in the booming city, or who have already become victims of crime and need help. The reports of the 1930s are notable for accounts of desperate travelers arriving in San Diego during the Great Depression and around the 1935-1936 Exposition. Narrative reports around WWII provide significant information about the great populations of soldiers in the armed forces in the city and issues surrounding their transportation.

The Volunteer Files series consists of materials related to volunteer activities, including policies, forms, and training manuals. Of note in this series are the tally sheets of the hostess desk at the airport, which document the reasons travelers are coming to the agency for aid at that access point.

The Board of Directors series includes minutes and official files. This series documents the decision-making involved in the activities of the chapter, and interactions with the National Travelers Aid Society.

The Conferences and Conventions series includes unpublished reports and copies of addresses given at biennial and other conventions on topics in social welfare and travelers aid.

The Financial Records series includes receipts, bank statements, and petty cash logs, and document the flow of money from donors and other supporters into the chapter and the disbursement of small amounts of money to needy parties.

The Scrapbook and Ephemera series consists of five scrapbooks. The earliest is from the 1940s and contains photographs, clippings, and ephemera related to the Society's role in the United Service Organizations (USO) in San Diego during World War II. Others are from the 1950s and 1960s and include clippings, invitations, thank-you notes, and news releases. Three pieces of ephemera are in this series: two badges, and a vinyl record of a documentary produced by the National Travelers Aid Society called *People on the Move*.

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