

2012-04-11 13.03 The Story of the Children's Bureau, The Early Years: 1912 - 1937.wmv

Presenters: Elizabeth Mertinko; Commissioner Bryan Samuels, Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families; Pam Day, Co-Director of Child Welfare Information Gateway

**Elizabeth Mertinko:** [00:00:49] Good afternoon everyone, and welcome to the first of twelve monthly webinars celebrating the Children's Bureau Centennial Year. Today's webinar -- the Story of the Children's Bureau, the Early Years: 1912 to 1937 -- will describe conditions in the United States in the early 20th century, including the issues and challenges that led to the formation of the Children's Bureau.

Our three remaining historical webinars will take place in August and December of 2012 and March, 2013. In the remaining months, CB is officering topical webinars that focus on current trends and controversial topics. We hope that you will join us for these webinars, and will provide information on them at the conclusion of today's presentation.

Before we begin, just a few housekeeping items. First, please note that we have muted all telephone lines to minimize background noise. We will open the lines at the conclusion of the presentation to allow comments from our audience. Throughout the webinar, we invite you to test your knowledge of history with a few audience participation questions. The answers will appear on your screen shortly after each question is posted.

Also, your feedback on these webinars is important to us. We will be asking for your comments at the conclusion of the today's presentation and ask that you take a few minutes to share them with us. Finally, the price and the recording of today's presentation will be available at the Children's Bureau Centennial website at <http://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/>. We will share this information with you again at the conclusion of the today's webinar.

Now I would like to introduce Bryan Samuels, the Commissioner of the Administration on Children, Youth, and Families. Commission Samuels has spent his career formulating service delivering innovation and streaming operations in large government organizations on behalf of children, youth, and families.

Commission Samuels has spent his career formulating service delivery innovations and streamlining operations in large government organizations on behalf of Children, Youth, and Families. Prior to joining the administration, Commissioner Samuels served as Chief of Staff for Chicago Public Schools from 2007 to 2009, playing a leadership role in managing the operations of the third largest school system in the nation. From 2003 to 2007 Commission Samuels served as the director of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, the third largest child welfare system in the county. At ACYF, Commissioner Samuels has made the social and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable children and youths his top priority. He is aligning policies and funding to support healing and recovery for children and youth who have experience trauma, with an emphasis on increasing access to evidence-based intervention.

Welcome, Commissioner Samuels.

**Commissioner Bryan Samuels:** [00:03:18] Thank you, Elizabeth, and thank you all for joining us this afternoon. We really appreciate the interest and the commitment of many people around the country in this celebration of the 110th year of the Children's Bureau. We have seen this Centennial Celebration as really an opportunity to reflect on where the system has been and where it's gone, and also for an opportunity for where it should go.

This afternoon's webinar is really a discussion about where the system has been; and we think that there is a lot of valuable historical information that'll be described today, I think lots of folks with both learn some things they didn't know, as well as begin to connect some of the dots between our origin a hundred years ago and some of the very practices that are still in place today. So we think that there's a real opportunity here to really reflect on what we've learned, and certainly hope that you all will enjoy the material that will be covered.

I also just want to acknowledge that in many respects it's important to realize that the Child Welfare System has come a long way in a hundred years. And today we can say that we're a system that is getting smaller; that the demographics are changing in the system, there are a few African American children in the system; and that we have increasing capacity to get more kids home and to achieve higher rates of adoption.

So just this past year, we achieved about 20,000 more adoptions that we could ten years prior. So in many respects, we've made a ton of progress. And we're excited about building on the progress; we're excited about looking forward in to the future and really setting the course for the next hundred years; and we're just really pleased that all of the folks who have joined us here this afternoon want to be part of that journey. We want to be part of figuring out what the right pivots are, and really making sure that we're turning to the future, having learned from the past.

So thanks again for participating in this webinar, and we look forward to conversation that may occur after the formal presentation is completed this afternoon. So thanks again.

**Elizabeth Mertinko:** [00:06:04] Thank you, Commissioner Samuels. And now for today's presentation. We will start with the review of the production era, a time that is often referred to as America's Conscience. It was during this time that the Children's Bureau was created. We will review the issues that led to CB's creation, as well as it's early mission and some of the bureau's first focus areas.

From there, we will move into a discussion of the Great Depression, the New Deal, and CB's leadership role in the development of the landmark Social Security Act during the Roosevelt Administration.

Our narrator today is Pam Day. Pam is the Co-Director of Child Welfare Information Gateway, the information dissemination service of the Children's Bureau. Pam has over 30 years of experience in the Child Welfare field and has graciously volunteered to be the voice for today's presentation.

**Pam Day:** [00:06:53] Thanks, Elizabeth. The story of the Children's Bureau began in a remarkable time in our history known as the Progressive Era. The Progressive Era spanned the late 1800s to the early 1900s. During this time there was large-scale immigration to the United States, and our country culture shifted with urbanization and industrialization.

Children born during this time entered a world that threatened their very survival. High infant mortality rates, inadequate healthcare, backbreaking labor and institutionalization was the norm for many children.

There were wide disparities between children born to upper and middle classed families, and those within the working and lower classes. Neither public health nor public social service systems existed.

As we'll see over the next few slides, the Industrial Revolution, the role of progressive women, and the professionalism of social work all set the stage for creation of the Children's Bureau. At the end of the 19th Century, the Industrial Revolution provided new opportunities. Families left small farms and businesses to the city, where they took work in factories.

Two new social classes emerged from this progression: a fluent urban middle class, and a class of urban poor. In the new middle class families, fathers went to work and mothers remained at home to raise the children. For the first time in our nation's history, children were free from responsibility for helping to ensure their family's survival through work and chores.

Larger families were less of an economic necessity, and families became smaller. Families having fewer children led to a growing sentimentality toward family life in upper classes. The home was viewed as a shelter from the pressures of the outside world. Childhood came to be seen as a time of innocence to be devoted to play and education. Children's literature, toys, and published information on childrearing became more prevalent.

Life was different for the large numbers of poor and working class families who came to cities seeking a better life. These families included an influx of immigrants from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe. Between 1892 and 1900 alone, nearly three million immigrants came to the United States in search of work. Most gathered in large urban areas such as Chicago and New York.

For these families, children continued to work to help support the family, but rather than working on the family farm, children joined a factory workforce alongside of their parents. These children had little opportunity for education or play. The 1900 census showed that more than two million children between the ages of ten and fifteen, or one in six children were employed. Many believe the actual number of child laborers, including children younger than ten, was actually much higher.

Southern and rural children fared no better. Textile mills had cropped up throughout the South after the Civil War, and they were seen as a lifeline for the devastated post-war present economy. Sharecroppers and the farmers crossed [?] the mills in search of a better life.

Parents, those having no options for child care and relying on even meager additions to their income, brought children to work with them in the mills. These families were overwhelmingly white and native-born, as the South did not see the large influx of European immigrants that the urban North had experienced.

In both the North and South, weather conditions, widespread poverty, and a lack of affordable medical care led to other issues. School attendance was very low, and although no national statistics were available at the time, it was widely known that infant mortality was very high.

Estimates suggested that one in four children in 1900 died by the age of five. The number of orphaned, neglected, or abandoned children who were institutionalized in large owned [?] houses and orphanages was perhaps higher than ever. It was becoming clear that many of the so-called advances of the industrial society were achieved at the expense of children's health and wellbeing.

Difficult living conditions in American cities created difficult living conditions for families, particularly the children. In 1853, Charles Loring Brace established the Children's Aid Society to provide a better life for these vulnerable children. In cooperation with the New York Foundling Hospital, the Children's Aid Society arranged to transport orphaned or abandoned children from Eastern cities by train to new families in other parts of the country. The hope was that these children would be given a new life and a new home, where they could benefit from wholesome work and a good education, growing up to become productive citizens.

During the next 75 years, an estimated 200,000 urban children of all ages -- from infants to teens -- took part in these journeys. Some of these children were truly orphans, while others had single parents, or parents who were unable to care for them. They boarded the trains in groups, with an agent responsible for their placement. At each stop, prospective parents would meet the train to select children who suited their needs.

In the process, the siblings often were separated. Children not chosen at one station would board the train again and ride to the next stop. Many of the families who agreed to care for the children were kind and well intentioned. Unfortunately, others saw the children as a convenient and inexpensive form of labor. It would take the help of the newly-formed Federal Children's Bureau to replace the orphan trains with foster family care that promised greater safety and permanency for children.

While the Industrial Revolution allowed many middle and upper-class women to focus on raising children and managing their household, women also asserted influence outside the home through participation in women's clubs. These groups often engaged in loosely organized quote "baby saving or child saving movements," therefore it was natural that these groups would take an early role in responding to conditions resulting from the Industrial Revolution.

Progressivism was a social and political movement that sought to reform corruption and injustice through government and through the application of scientific method to social problems. Progressive Era reformers were both men and women from the new urban middle class. The reformers saw family as the cornerstone of society that must be protected and strengthened at all costs.

Within this framework, the care of children was not only seen as appropriate women's work, but as central to the progressive ideal. Progressive women joined women's clubs such as the National Congress of Mothers, which is now the National Parent/Teacher Association, and gradually became more active in politics and social action.

While early workers in this area were mostly volunteers, beginning around 1890 child welfare work became increasingly professionalized. The first higher education school of social work, the New York School of Applied Philanthropy, now the Columbia University School of Social Work, was established in 1904. The first graduate school of social work was established at the University of Chicago in 1920.

By that time the social work field was still largely the college-educated professional women. One such woman, Jane Addams, co-founded with her friend, Ellen Gates Starr, one of the largest and most famous settlement houses, Hull House in Chicago. This settlement house movement emerged in the United States in the 1880s.

In these houses, middle-class volunteers would live among and provide services to low-income neighbors. After visiting the first settlement house in England, Addams and Starr worked to create a space where all persons -- especially the growing class of largely immigrant and urban poor -- would have an equal opportunity to share in the values of American democracy. Hull House was a private neighborhood-based center of support that offered many enriching activities including educational classes, children's kindergarten, playgrounds, lectures, and concerts.

Hull House volunteers lived at the settlement house among the people being served. Many of the women who would later leave the Children's Bureau were once residents of Hull House. By 1913 there were 413 settlement houses in 32 states.

Advocacy for a federal Children's Bureau began years before the Congressional Act that created the Bureau. Reformers Lillian Wald and Florence Kelley who were both active in the settlement movement are credited with the idea of a federal government agency to collect and disseminate information concerning all children, not just those considered to be needy or vulnerable.

Kelley appears to have proposed such an idea as early as 1900 in a series of lectures eventually published in a paper entitled "Some Ethical Gains Through Legislation." However, most accounts of the Children's Bureau's origin point to a conversation between the two women in 1903 as the actual start of an idea for a federal Children's Bureau.

In 1909 James West proposed a national conference on dependent children to President Theodore Roosevelt. West had grown up in an orphanage in Washington, DC. He had suffered tuberculosis as a child and was thought to be unable to be placed out for work, so much of his youth was spent working in the sewing room with the girls. The orphanage did offer him an opportunity to get a public education, however, and he grew up to be an attorney.

President Roosevelt, a strong supporter of Progressive Reform, reviewed West's proposal and convened the first ever White House Conference on the care of the tenet's children in January, 1909. Filed votes for advocates at the conference recommended the creation of a federal bureau dedicated to child welfare. President Roosevelt took that recommendation and sent a special message to Congress to urge passage of the legislation to create the bureau.

The early quiet support from President Theodore Roosevelt and his longtime political associates, associate sociologist and labor advocate Edward T. Devine, Wald, Kelley, and Mary McBell [sp?], who was another former Hull House resident, convinced the recently-formed National Child Labor Committee to make their idea of the organization's a primary legislative

goal. The National Child Labor Committee drafted legislation for a Federal Children's Bureau that was originally introduced in Congress in 1906, but failed to gain much attention at that time.

In total, eleven bills: eight in the House and three in the Senate, were introduced between 1906 and 1912 to establish a Federal Children's Bureau. In 1910 William Howard Taft became the second President to give his endorsement to the proposal. Still, it took more than another year before the bill finally passed the Senate on January 31, 1912. After the Senate vote, the Bill easily passed the House on April 2, 1912 with Taft signing it into law on April 9, 1912.

While initially the Children's Bureau was created within the Department of Commerce and Labor, it was transferred to a newly formed Department of Labor. The legislation specified fifteen positions including the chief's and authorized a whopping budget of \$25,640.

While both Jane Addams and Louis and Wald were reportedly invited to submit their names as candidates for the Chief of the Children's Bureau, both declined for unknown reasons. However, Adams proposed Julia Lathrop, a Hull House colleague, who would become the Children's Bureau's first Chief.

Despite its very modest funding, the act of establishing the Children's Bureau gave it a very broad mission covering a wide range of concerns. Ms. Lathrop's first duty was to determine how to fulfill the mission and enumerated concerns within the allotted funding amount. She knew she needed a manageable topic. She also knew that child labor, the driving force behind the bureau's establishment, would be too controversial as a starting place.

She decided to concentrate the Bureau's efforts on reducing infant mortality. With a small budget but a grand vision, Julie Lathrop led the Children's Bureau in establishing the Child Welfare Library and collecting government data on the demographics and wellbeing of U.S. children. While child labor remained a pressing problem, this topic was considered too controversial to be the bureau's first area of focus. Lathrop instead selected infant mortality, leading activities including conducting research, advocating comprehensive birth registration, and publishing advice for parents.

Lathrop knew that addressing infant mortality would require a two-pronged approach: determining how many babies were dying, by expanding the birth registration effort; and understanding why babies die before their first birthday. The Children's Bureau's emphasis on research and investigative activities was consistent with progressive beliefs that scientific knowledge and management was a message that would lead to social reform. The Bureau's leadership also knew that national records of childbirth would aid and reform efforts to encourage school enrollment and to combat child labor.

The Children's Bureau enlisted volunteers, typically women, to investigate birth registration in areas across the country. While a national study of the causes of infant deaths was out of the question due to the bureau's small budget, Lathrop conducted a smaller study in Johnstown, Pennsylvania focused on social and environmental factors in infant death. The study revealed a vast discrepancy in mortality rates based on socioeconomic factors. Babies born to literate and native-born mothers, and those whose fathers earned higher wages, for example, fared better than those born to illiterate or foreign-born women, or those whose fathers earned less. Babies also

were more likely to survive if their mothers were married and stayed home with them during the first year. Those born to single or working mothers were at far greater risk.

Further studies conducted between 1914 and 1921 confirmed the connection between poverty and infant death, finding low paternal income to be the primary factor in high infant mortality rates.

In addition to research, the Bureau disseminated information to families at a time when the only parenting guidance available to women was wisdom passed down orally from generation to generation. These booklets were well received by the public. The first of these publications, *Prenatal Care*, was published in 1913 and was prompted by findings that more than 42 percent of infants dying in the first year did not survive even the first month of life. And nearly 70 percent of those died as a result of conditions present before birth, or as a result of accidents occurring at birth.

A second booklet, *Infant Care*, followed. Both booklets claimed to offer quote "such statements regarding hygiene and normal living, and every mother has a right to possess an interest of herself and her children." By 1961 *Infant Care* had ten editions and a total distribution of 45 million copies. Interesting to note that both publications assumed a certain level of income, as reflected by recommendations that mothers not work and that they breastfeed their children.

The Bourbon Homes were strongly recommended as quote "tenements with dark stark rooms are not fit homes for children." The booklets also offered information that could be implemented by parents regardless of their income, such as the importance of providing lots of nurturing and avoiding harsh punishment.

Through these publications, the Bureau developed a reputation as an authority on child care. In 1930 it reported receiving about 125,000 letters every year from people seeking guidance and advice. In 1937 the Children's Bureau reported receiving 400,000 letters per year; it had a correspondence section just to respond to all the letters.

[Quote from slide:]

"... can you tell me of someone who can tell me of what to fix up to amuse the child between two and three?... It is a fact that I have not had a minute's peace since he was born... He is healthy but alone, and extremely active. So much so, that I do not know how I am going to live until he gets old enough to go to school or kindergarten. Or someplace where he can have something to do and someone to do it with."

Waters on behalf of the Children's Bureau: "I've enclosed bulletins and a reading list."

"It's not necessary that a child should have someone to amuse him all the time; he should be put in a safe place to play and given a chance to amuse himself."

With increased staffing, the bureau used its birth registration campaign to establish child birth records, and records of children's' aging. The children's bureau was then able to address the issue of child labor. Between 1915 and 1930 the bureau published 31 studies on child labor.

In 1916 Congress passed the Keating-Owen Act which banned interstate shipments by businesses that employed children below a certain age, 14 or 16, depending on the industry. This act was not only significant as the first attempt to regulate child labor at the federal level, but also because the CB was charged with administering it, which was the first time it was charged with duties beyond its original mandate -- to investigate and report. Ms. Lathrop hired Grace Abbot to head the Children's Bureau's new Child Labor Division.

But the Keating-Owen Act was very controversial and was immediately challenged. It was the first of several failed attempts to regulate child labor. A second child labor law passed in 1918 was also declared unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court. An attempt to pass the Constitutional Amendment to give Congress authority to regulate child labor also failed. No Congressional attempt survived U.S. Supreme Court scrutiny until the next quarter century.

[On slide: quote by Grace Abbot, Director, Child Labor Division.]

"I have the same feeling of unreality as I read the official reports of little children working in the dark mines, harnessed to coal cars, driving through small openings; of the chimney sweep compelled to go up the chimneys by beatings, and that their [inaudible] fires were lighted when they became frightened and refused to climb, as I had about the cruelties with which the fairytales of my childhood were filled ... And yet long after these practices were exposed and after a law was passed prohibiting them, the practices continued [inaudible]."

In its early years the Bureau also conducted research and disseminated information related to mother's pensions, juvenile delinquency, and dependency. The bureau's interest in mothers aid gave it back to the first White House conference on children. The participants affirmed the importance of home life, a mother's care, and the belief that children should not be removed from their home due to poverty alone.

As early as the 1909 White House Conference on the care of dependent children, advocates expressed concern over the plight of families where children were separated due to poverty alone, and this concern was repeated in early Children's Bureau publications. However, the solutions then were no easier than they are today. Many states and localities had mothers aid laws of some sort. These typically provided assistance only to quote "deserving or fit women" with "suitable homes." Meaning not women who gave birth out of wedlock, or were otherwise thought to be improper or immoral.

The CB found a lot of variations among state and local programs, particularly the eligibility requirement for aid. In some states aid was limited to widows, there were also different residency restrictions.

[Quote from letter to Children's Bureau.]

"I'm writing to you concerning my child support. My husband died last fall leaving me with three little boys, and I am not able to work to support them as I am expected to take to my bed any day now. So I wanted to see if I could get this mother's pension, as I am in bad need with these children. As I have been trying to keep them together and hate so much to part them, but will have to do so with them pretty soon if I don't get help from somewhere pretty soon. So please answer and tell me if I could get this pension for these children's support."



In 1914 the bureau completed the first study of mother's aid, a compilation of the history and laws relating to mothers' pensions in the United States, Denmark, and New Zealand. Within the next 2 years 21 states passed some kind of mothers aid law; by 1920, 40 states had done so. The bureau then turned to examining the administration of these laws which varied widely. It soon became apparent that many mothers who needed aid were not receiving it, even when they were qualified for it under state law.

In 1921 the bureau published a study examining the administration of the Illinois Mothers Aid Program. The following year a small conference of experts on mothers aid gathered to discuss casework standards and other issues. In 1923 the bureau published the results of a study examining the reasons why mothers applied for aid. In 1926 the bureau released a bulletin summarizing the history and current state of legislation entitled *Public Aid to Mothers with Dependent Children*.

This research would help lay the groundwork for the aid to dependent children provision developed by the bureau's staff with the 1935 Social Security Act. Maternal and infant care and child labor consumed the bulk of the bureau's resources and attention during its first two decades. However, the bureau also conducted approximately 50 other studies concerning children's welfare during that period, some of which focused on juvenile delinquency.

The first Juvenile Court came into existence in Cook County, Illinois in 1899. Like other Progressive Era reformers, the Children's Bureau advocated for early intervention, services, and treatment of juveniles rather than institutionalization.

In 1923 the Children's Bureau and the National Probation Association jointly hosted a conference at which the Children's Bureau's Advisory Committee on Juvenile Court presented a set of National Standards for Juvenile Court. The bureau's written report of Standards for Juvenile Court was published that same year, and these standards have remained the field benchmarks for the next 20 years.

In 1926 the bureau began to collect the first nationwide uniform Juvenile Court statistics. These were published in annual reports starting in 1927. In her Annual Report to the Secretary of Labor for the years 1926 and 1927, Abbott lobbied unsuccessfully for additional funds to create a Division of Delinquency. She made similar requests again in 1928 and 1929.

At the heart of the bureau's interest in Juvenile Court was the belief that such courts should strive to save, and not punish, the offenders. There was an interest in discovering the causes of delinquency with the belief that greater understanding in this area could lead to an effective prevention program.

The 1920s also saw an increased focus on child welfare as states turned to the bureau for assistance in organizing and evaluating their services. Studies in 1924 and 1925 examined the organization and rebuilt a various county-based Child Welfare Services in multiple states. The Children's Bureau also conducted studies and published reports related to dependency and out-of-home care.

In 1924 the Children's Bureau published a report on the history of adoption legislation. As states began to develop their child welfare services, which included both dependency and delinquency, they turned to the Children's Bureau for technical assistance and consultation.

In June, 1936, the Children's Bureau hosted a conference on state child welfare services. At that time, 33 states and the District of Columbia had programs for child welfare services. The programs and services were offered very widely and did not cover all areas, in particular, rural areas' black public services.

In the 1930s the United States experienced the Great Depression. In the midst of this grave economic uncertainty, President Herbert Hoover issued the call in July, 1929 for a White House conference on children. Planning began immediately, and 17 committees were established across the 4 major sections of the conference: medical service; public health service and administration; education and training; and handicapped children. For the next 16 months 1200 experts gathered research and statistics to document conditions for U.S. children. In November of 1930 approximately 3,000 attendees met in Washington, DC to review the research and listen to committee reports. This conference was the first to utilize radio broadcasts to bring some proceedings to the general public.

One of the most lasting outcomes of the conference was the 19 point Children's Charter on what every child needs for his or her education, health, welfare, and protection. Although its statements are fairly general, the ideals reflected in this charter served for many years as a compass for Americans working to protect child welfare.

By 1930 the Nation began to realize the current Depression was a greater and more lasting crisis than had first been imagined. The Children's Bureau was already aware that children suffered quote "not temporary but permanent losses" during extended periods of unemployment. During this time the bureau continued to document these losses.

In 1930 the bureau completed a study documenting the need for relief and resources for meeting these needs in several coalmining communities. In 1933 the bureau completed a similar study of railway workers and their families. These studies and other bureau work helped identify the widening gap between the needs of communities and their ability to provide relief to families with children.

The plight of older youth, which also remained a concern for the Children's Bureau, one focus was the Depression's affect on juvenile delinquency. From 1932 to 1936 the bureau undertook a joint study on juvenile delinquency and probation with the University of Chicago and the Cook County Juvenile Court. Another study focused on youth who left their homes to escape poverty and unemployment. These studies revealed that in most cases conditions for youth were not much better on the road than they had been at home.

This information led Chief Abbot to propose at a Congressional hearing in 1933, Work Counts for Youth, quote "in which there is an opportunity for training in a wholesome environment, and an opportunity of vocational classes and for work release in the cities and towns." This idea was later reflected in the establishment of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the National Youth Administration.

While early relief efforts under President Hoover were denied, the tide began to turn under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. President Roosevelt appointed Francis Perkins, a secretary of labor in 1933. Secretary Perkins was the first female cabinet member, a Hull House alumna, and a long-time friend of the Children's Bureau.

In May, 1933, Congress established the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, or FERA. The Children's Bureau helped collect data for FERA, helping to determine how the program's \$500 million appropriation was spent. The Bureau worked directly with FERA to establish the Child's Health Recovery Program providing emergency food and medical care to children in greatest need. This was the Federal Government's only New Deal relief program focused on young children until the Social Security act was passed.

In June of 1934 Children's Bureau Chief Julia Abbot resigned, ill with tuberculosis. In her letter of resignation she clearly states her hope that the Bureau will continue to play an important role in New Deal programs, writing, quote " a final test of our recovery programs may well be what it does to remove the injustices from which children have suffered in the past." In November 1934 a social worker was named Chief of the Children's Bureau, Katharine Lenroot. He named Martha Elliot, a doctor, as her Assistant Chief.

Under the Roosevelt Administration and Lenroot's leadership the Children's Bureau's responsibilities expanded significantly. Lenroot helped design several key provisions of the Social Security Act, 1935, authorizing the Children's Bureau to administer millions of dollars in federal aid to the states.

Also during Lenroot's tenure at the Bureau assumed responsibility for enforcing the Child Labor Provision of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938. At the time of her retirement in 1951, Lenroot received the Federal Security Agency Distinguished Civilian Service Award for her nearly 37 years of federal service.

President Roosevelt established a Committee on Economic Security on June 29, 1934. An Advisory Committee on Child Welfare was announced on November 19 of the same year. Together with Martha Eliot and Grace Abbott, Children's Bureau Chief Lenroot drafts the Child Welfare Sections of the Social Security Bill. The bureau proposed poor section, age-dependent children, maternal and child healthcare, crippled children's services and child welfare services.

When the Bill was signed into law on August 14, 1935, the Children's Bureau received authority to administer the last three of its proposed programs. First, Aid to Dependent Children were to be administered by the newly-established Social Security Board. With the passage of the Social Security Bill the Bureau went from administering \$337, 371 in 1930, to distributing nearly \$11 million by the end of the decade. The staff grew from 143 to 438.

Maternal and Child Health Funds helped medical staff reach mothers and children in primarily rural areas, where adequate medical care was frequently not available or accessible. Funding supported prenatal and child health clinics, and when necessary, home visits. Most of the Maternal and Child Health Funds for the first few years were used to pay for preventive care and professional training, rather than directly for medical or hospital care. Funded services also included some experimental demonstration projects in the areas of maternal and infant health.

The Crippled Children's Program represented the first U.S. program of medical care providing continuing settled grants from the state. One requirement established by Congress was for states to seek out eligible children, effectively providing diagnostic services to all U.S. children. The types of conditions treated with these funds varied from state to state, but they tended to expand as funding increased over the years. In 1939, additional funds were made available for this program, in part to provide care for children with rheumatic heart disease.

While most U.S. cities had by this time voluntary or public child welfare agencies to protect and care for vulnerable children, such programs were still the exception for rural children. Most rural areas lacked trained workers and the resources to provide for children who had to be removed from their homes due to abuse, neglect, or abandonment. As a result, early Social Security Child Welfare funds focused on addressing the gap, based it off their own plans for use of the funds, but they frequently called on Children's Bureau staff for technical consultation and advice.

Because of the small amount of money available, the Bureau's Child Welfare Advisory Group determined funds to be used to employ and train staff, and/or provide services to children, rather than to maintain children in foster homes.

The Social Security Act permanently changed the nature of the bureau's activities. By the end of the first quarter century, Congress had authorized 7.8 million in the bureau just in grant and aid programs alone; 3.6 million for material and child health grants to states; 2.8 million for crippled children's services grants; and 1.4 million for Child Welfare services grants.

By 1937 the Bureau's staff had multiplied to more than 15 times its original authorization. The scope of activities had changed from investigative, research, and information dissemination, to the administration of service and research program designed to directly improve the lives of children across the country.

Our first in this series of Historical Webinars leaves the bureau in 1937. We hope that you will join us for our second Historical Webinar to learn more about the Children's Bureau's history and work from 1938 through 1960.

At this time we will open the phone lines for questions and comments.

[00:53:41]

**Operator:** If you would like to ask a question, please press Star-1. Make sure your phone is not muted, and record your name clearly. Your name will be required to introduce your question. To withdraw your request, you may press Star-2. Once again, to ask a question please press Star-1 and record your name. Just one moment for the first question. And we do have one question in queue; if you've queued up, your line is now open. Please check your mute button. Our next question comes from Vivian Dorsett, you may begin.

[00:54:32]

**Vivian Dorsett:** I noticed that the term "orphan trains" was not used; is that a term that's not recognized by the Children's Bureau?

[00:54:50]

**Response:** I'm not aware of any restrictions on using that term; I think that we just, in the course of drafting the script it maybe is a term that we didn't use. We did spend a little bit of the early slides talking about them, however, and I think that that's what they were commonly referred to at the time.

**Vivian Dorsett:** Okay, I've done some research on it, and I just noticed that you didn't use that term specifically, so I didn't know if that was something that was not used by the agency for some reason. I've seen it in a lot of publications, and a lot of it in writing.

[00:55:25]

**Speaker:** [in progress] ...and I'm the editor of the Children's Bureau's monthly news digest, the Children's Bureau Express. Our first Centennial series book examined the political and social climate leading up to the Children's Bureau. Actually mentioning the orphan trains in there, is a story in that series that highlights the train movement and the children's experience as similar to what was discussed in the webinar. So if you go to our centennial series you'll see some more information along those lines.

**Vivian Dorsett:** Okay, thank you.

**Operator:** And once again if you would like to ask a question, please press Star-1 and record your name. At this time I show no other questions. And just one moment, we have some questions coming through. A question comes from Mary Shaw. You may begin.

[00:56:38]

**Mary Shaw:** Is there any way to purchase any type of historical posters or perhaps a book about the history of the Children's Bureau? Would that be available at all this year?

[00:57:04]

**Patricia Brincefield:** We are planning to produce a book on the history of the Children's Bureau later in the Fall, but there are a number of resources -- this is Patricia Brincefield, I'm sorry, with Child Welfare Information Gateway. There are a number of resources on the Children's Bureau's Centennial site, so if you go to the Centennial site you can see throughout that site where we link to free resources, where we also link to the Child Welfare Information Gateway website, you can go to the library there and you can search through the library for resources, and the listings will take you to the information about those publishers and those titles.

**Mary Shaw:** Thank you.

[00:57:56]

**Patricia Brincefield:** [in progress] ...resources through the Children's Bureau Centennial site, and through the Child Welfare Information Gateway library. There are a lot of publications, too, that are available through the Maternal Child Health library as well. In fact they have quite a large collection of historical documents from the Children's Bureau's early years.

[00:58:23]

**Mary Shaw:** Do you know a source for historical posters at all?

**Patricia Brincefield:** There was one poster available for the Children's Year; I think that you can- I'm sorry I don't have that information on me right now. It was available I believe through the Maternal Child Health Bureau, but I'm not sure if their still distributing hard copies of the poster.

**Mary Shaw:** Okay... all right, thank you so much.

**Operator:** Our next question comes from Coleen Henry... ma-am, your line is open.

[00:58:58]

**Colleen Henry:** Hi, there. I'm not sure you'll have the information for this question, but my question is about mothers pensions. And I'm just wondering, do you know what percentage of people who applied for mothers pensions actually received them? And also, what the impact of mothers pensions were as far as what kind of poverty alleviation did they actually provide to these families. What was the impact of them on family life.

[00:59:28]

**Speaker:** This is [inaudible] of the Children's Bureau Express again. We don't have the statistical information in front of us that you're asking for; we would be happy to do some more research. I do know, however, that the Maternal Child Health Bureau has, in the website that Patricia Brincefield has been speaking about, several historical reports and publications by the Children's Bureau including information about those mothers pensions and when they came to be on a state basis... I think the first one was in 1911. And they are also referenced in the Children's Bureau of Posterity [?-phonetic]. But we don't have that statistical information in front of us right now.

**Colleen Henry:** Okay.

**Operator:** Our next question comes from Deborah... your line is now open.

[01:00:18]

**Deborah:** Hi, this is Deborah Samples, and I am noting in the presentation that you really didn't speak to the racial divide during the early 1900s, and I'm wondering what kind of impact the Children's Bureau had on African American families during that period, especially African Americans in the South. If you had that kind of information that would be helpful.

[01:00:49]

**Pam Day?:** We are very aware that there isn't a lot of documentation for that period; however, what we have been able to gather is that much of the Children's Bureau's early work was aimed at improving the conditions for all children and families, regardless of race or ethnicity. And certainly the efforts around birth registration, the efforts around reducing infant mortality and maternal mortality were all very broad-scale across the country, there was really no differentiation. Unfortunately to our knowledge there aren't many reports with- there was no study that looked at impact across different racial or ethnic groups.

There were a few that we can mention. The topic of racial differences in infant mortality rates was studied a little bit in 1912. One study was conducted in Baltimore, Maryland, another in Montclair, New Jersey. We may be able to get you information on the sources of those studies.

The Montclair study found that infant mortality rates for a ward of the city -- and this is probably not a surprise -- to the poorest and most congested area of the city, where most of the city's African American and immigrant families lived was nearly one and a half times as high as the rate for the town as a whole.

The Baltimore study found that infant mortality among African American families was again, about one and half times higher, and higher than any other group except Polish immigrants. Again, these are very selective small studies, what we have been able to find in really looking through all the literature during these periods.

And certainly the reports show that, like the other reports that we mentioned earlier, there was a significant relationship to low wages that were being earned by African American fathers, as well as the prevalence of the unemployment amount these families.

That's what we know. It's fairly scant, but certainly the effort was, from what we can gather, to address infant mortality and child rearing across all cultures. The extent to which they went to the rural communities also suggests -- and in the South -- that there was certainly an effort in this area. But not many studies.

**Operator:** I show no other questions at this time.

[01:04:00]

**Elizabeth:** Okay, well thank you all very much for joining us. Our second Historical Webinar will be in August of 2012, and if you visit <http://cb100.acf.hhs.gov/> there is a section there for the webinars, and that's where we'll post information on the next historical webinar as well as the topical webinars which will begin in May.

Thank you again for your participation today.

[end audio for webinar]