Family Matters: Casework, Manhood, and the Bureau for Homeless Men, St. Louis, 1925-1940

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by
Doug Genens

Dr. Catherine Rymph, Thesis Supervisor
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

Family Matters: Casework, Manhood, and the Bureau for Homeless Men, St. Louis, 1925-1940

presented by Douglas Genens,

a candidate for the degree of Master of History

and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

______________________________________________
Professor Catherine Rymph

______________________________________________
Professor LeeAnn Whites

______________________________________________
Professor Jerry Frank

______________________________________________
Professor Wayne Brekhus
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Introduction

On November 11, 1924, the St. Louis police deployed a strategy used for generations to grapple with the city’s “floating population,” homeless men without families. One city newspaper reported that the police arrested two hundred of these men in a “drive against petty beggars” and “chronic loafers.” According to the newspaper, the police ordered these men to “quit begging on the streets, to find work, leave St. Louis, or end up in the City Workhouse if they are arrested on the streets again.”1 Aside from disclosing that large numbers of homeless men lurked the city’s streets, the report highlighted the meagre relief network that could be accessed by homeless men. While the homeless could receive temporary shelter care at the city’s Municipal Lodging House, expulsion from the city and hard labor made up important components of “relief” for homeless men. The report also illuminated the deviancy of “floating” men: instead of supporting families, these were men who did not work and instead loitered on the streets, earning an illegitimate income through begging. This system would begin to change in 1925 with the creation of the Bureau for Homeless Men, a private welfare agency that served homeless men. The Bureau endeavored not only to reform the way homeless men received relief, but, through professionalized casework, the individual homeless man as well.

Between 1925 and 1940, relief for homeless men in St. Louis, as well as Missouri more generally, underwent significant change. The transformations wrought by the Bureau for Homeless Men illuminate key aspects of welfare policy and state

1 “200 Street Beggars Arrested by Police: Drive Started to Clear City of Chronic Loafers”, St. Louis Globe Democrat, 12 November 1924.
development, especially as they pertain to homeless men. First, the Bureau, a private
casework agency, played the most important role in transforming the way homeless men
received relief. The Bureau consolidated the relief network for homeless men and
assumed responsibility for them, instituting a professionalized, casework program
centered at its headquarters. When the cost of relief for the homeless shifted to the federal
government with the creation of the New Deal’s Federal Transient Program in 1933, the
Bureau continued to play a prominent role. The Bureau was tapped to construct the
infrastructure for the operations in Missouri as well as administer much of the program.
Second, gender, in particular the Bureau’s vision of manhood, mattered immensely to the
structure of the policies the Bureau created, both as a private agency and when it worked
for the federal government. Taken together, these two points suggest that social workers
attempted to define and solve more problems in the 1920s and 1930s than previously
understood by historians.

The Bureau for Homeless Men’s entire agenda of reform revolved around its
casework program, and the private welfare agency’s vision of manhood guided its
casework. The Bureau’s vision of manhood reflected the prominent, albeit unfulfilled,
ideal of companionate marriage that gained greater currency with white collar or middle
class workers during the 1920s. The companionate ideal espoused above all else that
“home life was the center of everything.”

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2 Peter Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Gender Identities in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins
University Press, 1975), 155-156; Elizabeth and Joseph Pleck argue that the 1920s began the period of
“companionate providing,” which would come to define important aspects of manhood, Elizabeth and
Joseph Pleck, *The American Man* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1980), 6, 28; Anthony Rotundo argues that
companionate marriage steadily increased throughout the nineteenth century, but became especially
prevalent toward the end of the nineteenth century, Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood:
3 Filene, *Him/Her/Self*, 156.
symbolized a move away from the homosocial world of male work and play, and toward
the heterosocial world of home and family. Men would now prove their manhood in the
home by being good husbands and fathers. For the Bureau, the family was “a natural
outgrowth of the very nature of man, [and] every effort should be made toward its
preservation.” By hanging out on the city streets, in the lodging houses, and on the
nation’s roads, primarily with other men, the Bureau argued that homeless men
absconded from familial obligations and threatened the fabric of family life. Previous
attempts at helping the homeless man, through shelters or hard labor, for example,
ignored the crucial element of family as a stabilizing force in a man’s life. Far from
helping the man become a family man, the Bureau argued that this relief system and its
methods only exacerbated the man’s isolation from the heterosocial family and
encouraged him to live in the largely homosocial world of homeless men. Through
casework interviews, the Bureau hoped to make homeless men achieve the ideal of the
companionate man.

The Bureau’s use of casework therapy to help a man adjust to its vision of
companionate manhood suggests a more complicated understanding of “homeless” than
simply “having no home, shelter, or place of refuge,” as the term is now defined. Many

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6 *Casework With Homeless Men and Boys*, 8, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men, 1925-1982, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis.

of the men who visited the Bureau for help stayed in a variety of places, be it flop hotels, the Municipal Lodging House, or even apartments or houses, either in St. Louis or other cities. Not all of these forms of shelter could be considered traditional, of course, but for the Bureau this mattered less than the man’s relationship to family. Instead of seeing shelter as the man’s primary deficiency, the Bureau problematized the homeless man in terms of its vision of male gender. The Bureau succinctly defined the homeless man in this fashion as one whose “responsibilities, movements and plans are not limited by or at present concerned with family life.”

The Bureau’s understanding of homelessness as a problem of gender, and not shelter, would significantly shape its casework program and its approach to the problem of homelessness in St. Louis.

The Bureau’s use of the term “unattached” to describe homeless men is similarly problematic. The Bureau’s clients formed countless attachments to people as they worked and traveled. These men could form bonds with other men or with women. Additionally, these men might have left behind families as they traveled looking for work. For the Bureau, however, these men were simply not attached in the right way. These men lived in a primarily male world and had inconsistent, transitory, and perhaps even infrequent relationships with women. The Bureau wanted its clients to abjure life as a “single” man and all of its attendant relationships. The term “unattached,” then, does not signify a man with not friends or family whatsoever. Instead, the term unattached describes a man who is not attached to a heterosexual, sedentary family.

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8 *Casework With Homeless Men and Boys*, 1. The Bureau used a variety of terms when discussing its clients, but primarily utilized “homeless,” “non-family,” and “unattached.” This work generally uses “homeless” and “unattached.”
Although the Bureau’s understanding of manhood appears universal, racial boundaries, often unspoken, played an important limiting role. Most importantly, the caseworkers at the Bureau for Homeless Men envisioned the proper man as white. To be sure, the Bureau did provide relief to homeless black men. In fact, the primary agency for African Americans in St. Louis, the Urban League, did not provide relief to the homeless. Nonetheless, the Bureau often marginalized its black clients. The agency’s activities make clear that it often placed black men in the portions of its program populated by men the Bureau believed to be the least capable of rehabilitation. According to one of the few case records the Bureau kept on its black clients, the organization believed that “the colored people generally have less regard for family conventions…”

Although the Bureau would provide relief to homeless black men, it did not envision them as capable of becoming good fathers and husbands. In this sense, then, the caseworkers at the Bureau could not be categorized, along with some of their female colleagues in other fields of social work, as “racial liberals,” believing African Americans to be capable of conforming to the standards of white society. The Bureau’s program might be better described as embracing a “class liberalism.” For the Bureau, gender and race combined neatly to form the ideal man, whose boundaries remained open to working class men.

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9 For an overview of the Urban League’s activities in St. Louis, see Series 7, Box 1, Annual Reports, Urban League Papers, Washington University Archives, St. Louis.
10 Cases to Form Basis for Publicity by Council on Relief, Case 33, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
The Bureau’s emphasis upon manhood and casework is evident in all the aspects of its activities discussed here: its work with men at the Municipal Lodging House, the creation of a homeless men’s cafeteria, its anti-begging and boy’s programs, and the plan the Bureau created and administered for the New Deal’s Federal Transient Program in Missouri. Before the Bureau began its work in 1925, the relief setup in St. Louis consisted of few accommodations for homeless men. In 1912, the city opened its first Municipal Lodging House. The lodging house operated from November to March or April each year, serving as a home for destitute men during the cold winter months when work was often scarce.13 In the years before the city opened its lodging house, the Provident Association, a family casework agency in St. Louis, operated a lumber yard and shelter for homeless men, but promptly closed its shelter once the city opened its own.14 Aside from these bare provisions, homeless men sometimes found a night’s rest at a police station or at a privately owned cheap hotel. Especially common was the practice, which could hardly be described as relief, of passing on.15 This method involved a city or private welfare agency paying for a homeless man’s train ticket in order to “pass on” the man and his problems to the next city. In general, this system could be classified as decentralized and operating outside the bounds of professional social work. The Bureau described this entire system as inefficient because it primarily focused upon group or

14 History of the St. Louis Provident Association, 1860-1930 by Dorothy LeMond, 120, 1933, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Family and Children’s Services of Greater St. Louis, 1861-1960, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis.
mass care and allowed the individual to subsist as a homeless, unattached man. Attendants at the lodging house or the police station, according to the Bureau, paid little attention to the homeless man as an individual. In contrast, the Bureau sought to help the homeless man as an individual and on an individual, casework basis to help him adjust to family life.

This pre-1925 relief system reflected many long held assumptions about homeless, unattached men. Previous scholars have paid close attention to the way notions of class, gender, family, and community worked together in the minds of Americans to shape attitudes toward such men. These scholars have demonstrated that, although the problem presented by unattached men appears perennial, its meanings are historically constructed and reflect a larger struggle over the role men play in families, communities, and workplaces. Generally speaking, the unattached, homeless man has been described as a threat, a threat that expressed contradictory notions of gender and labor. On the one hand, he has been portrayed as too masculine or too independent because he lived on the streets and worked when it suited him. On the other, because he did not have a stable job and family life, because he begged for money, he was not masculine enough. The unattached life also opened the man to accusations of sexual deviancy, as a man to be kept away from children.¹⁶

These extremely negative perceptions of homeless men help explain why the developing profession of social work largely turned toward other populations. Although social workers primarily assisted destitute families and single mothers, historians have argued that the “modern” problem of homelessness arose simultaneously with the

emergence of modern social science and social work in the 1870s. For these newly emerging professions, the homeless man’s distance from family life appeared to many social work agencies interested in family casework as precluding the man from help. Professor Francis Wayland, for example, in a paper given to the American Social Science Association in 1877 stated that, because the unattached man lacked home and family ties, he “cut himself off from all influences which can minister to his improvement or elevation.”\textsuperscript{17} The policies of the Charity Organization Society (COS), a leader in streamlined, scientific charity formed in the U.S. in the 1870s, reflect Professor Wayland’s comment. Because of the threat the COS believed these men posed, it advocated for hard labor and even lifetime segregation in labor colonies.\textsuperscript{18} The caseworkers at the Bureau tapped into and expressed the same understanding of its clients as dangerous, deviant men. Yet the Bureau ultimately believed that hard labor and segregation merely exacerbated the problem of homelessness and emphasized helping homeless men become parts of families.

While the Bureau sought to change the way homeless, unattached men received relief, it often borrowed from these old meanings in order to situate its understanding of its clients and galvanize support for its programs. Both the Bureau’s internal documents and its publications and speeches are replete with many of the same virulent attacks against homeless men as essentially deviant, deficient men. The caseworkers at the Bureau distinguished themselves by tapping into the optimism of professional social work, that a wide array of social problems could be solved through casework, and

applying it to homeless men. The Bureau utilized these older meanings associated with homeless, unattached men in order to make the problem seem immediate and in need of solving. Of course, the Bureau could have broken not only with the old relief system, but with these older meanings as well by portraying homeless men as worthy of relief because they deserve the pity or sympathy of society, or because they performed important, even if irregular, labor. As shall become clear, the Bureau’s decision not to break with the past in this respect would have important ramifications for the shape of relief for the homeless during the New Deal and after.

Although the Bureau’s attempt to bring casework to homeless, unattached men set it apart from its colleagues, its work nonetheless followed patterns similar to other emerging professional social workers and it therefore compliments the larger story of social work professionalization. For example, the Bureau was part of the process of revitalizing the notion of individual rehabilitation while eschewing larger social reform.\(^\text{19}\) Although many of the Bureau’s clients clearly suffered from long term unemployment, the Bureau did not believe structural economic problems to be the source of the individual man’s woes. Instead, the Bureau understood its client’s problems through a rubric of gender. Like other social workers that gained prominence during the 1920s, the Bureau also supplanted religious organizations. While the Provident Association closed its lodging house and lumber yard in 1912, it still provided occasional relief to men who applied. The Salvation Army provided similar temporary relief. When the Bureau began its operations in 1925, both the Provident Association and the Salvation Army ceased

providing relief to homeless men and began sending applicants for relief to the Bureau. This centralizing move reflects many of the bureaucratic tendencies common in 1920s social work.\(^{20}\) Aside from consolidating relief, the Bureau also formed a network of internal committees and subgroups to deal with specialized tasks, such as the organization’s Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee. Finally, and most importantly, the Bureau’s work expressed the same concern about the future of the family as a social grouping as its other social work colleagues.

The Bureau’s activities also reflect the importance of gender as a motivating and structuring factor for social policy. Beginning in the late 1980s and continuing to the present, historians have argued that gender has mattered immensely to the history of welfare in the United States. As historian Regina Kunzel argued, while women who worked in religious charity organizations dedicated to helping unwed mothers rallied around their gender, professionalizing women in social work deemphasized their gender and sought to appear as objective and scientific, both masculine traits.\(^{21}\) Nonetheless, women created a “female dominion” in American reform, establishing important institutions and policies at all levels of government and society ran by professional female social workers.\(^{22}\) Many of these programs sought to help single mothers and their children.\(^{23}\) A particular understanding of women as dependent and properly belonging in the home, where they could care for children, significantly shaped the debates and implementation of mother’s pensions, the Sheppard Towner Act of 1921, and Aid to


\(^{22}\) Robyn Muncy, *Creating A Female Dominion in American Reform*.

Dependent Children (ADC), part of the omnibus welfare legislation passed during the New Deal known as the Social Security Act. Gender continued to play an important role past the New Deal era. When ADC came under attack beginning in the 1950s, many believed the program was in need of reform because it supported unworthy, mostly black, women.

Gender also mattered immensely to the work of the Bureau for Homeless Men, but the relationship between masculinity, particularly single manhood, and social policy has been less well explored by historians. Some historians have argued that the notion of the white male breadwinner shaped the Old Age Security provision of the 1935 Social Security Act. The program sought to shore up the male breadwinner ideal by providing survivor’s benefits as well a contributory pension to some retired, mostly white, men. This pension was provided as a return for services rendered, namely work, and the program was deemed an entitlement that elevated, socially and politically, the receiver.

More recently, scholars have examined the connections between expectations of male breadwinning and family courts designed to help deserted women during the Progressive Era. Nonetheless, historians have primarily written about individuals who are “attached” to someone, be it children or families, and have not fully considered masculinity as a significant factor in social policy.

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26 Gordon, *Pitted But Not Entitled*. 
By moving away from men who have dependents or are married, and by focusing upon those that certain policies have deemed “unattached,” important insights can be gained concerning the relationship between masculinity and social policy. First, it widens the framework within which historians can talk about men and welfare. A sole focus upon married men and Old Age Security elides and effaces important distinctions in masculinity and construes the gendered male subject narrowly. These differences in manhood, between married and unmarried, had important ramifications for the shape of social policy in the United States, as will be seen in the discussion here of the place of the Federal Transient Program in the New Deal. Past studies that touch on the relationship between masculinity and Old Age Security, for example, portray white men as having received the most remunerative, least stigmatizing set of benefits from the welfare state. As this work hopes to make clear, these positive benefits accrued mostly to white men with families. Unattached, homeless men did not receive the same level or type of benefit received by family men. The relief they received was, like that provided to single mothers, often paltry and came with stigmatizing, searching investigations of one’s personality and social life.

An examination of the Bureau’s work demonstrates, then, that caseworkers in the 1920s cast a much wider net than historians have previously understood. Although it was not as prevalent as casework with destitute families or single mothers, the Bureau’s existence, along with its correspondence with similar agencies across the country, suggests that social workers undertook a wider array of problems in the 1920s. St. Louis serves as an excellent location for examining this understudied aspect of social work for a number of reasons. In the 1920s, St. Louis still had a large industrial sector that drew
many men in search of jobs.\textsuperscript{27} In 1923, for example, over 150,000 men came to St. Louis for work, while there were as many as 18,000 homeless men staying in St. Louis during that winter.\textsuperscript{28} Furthermore, the attractions and entertainment of an urban environment like St. Louis drew many men searching for a respite from the agricultural labor of the summer. The railroad infrastructure of St. Louis also ensured that men heading either east or west would pass through the city. Most importantly, social workers in St. Louis attempted to bring casework to homeless men much sooner than their colleagues in other cities. Later in the 1920s and into the early 1930s, social work organizations across the country wrote to the Bureau seeking advice on how to begin performing casework with unattached men. Studying the St. Louis Bureau for Homeless Men also illuminates the way that local, private organizations influenced, municipal, state, and even federal social policy. It is clear, then, that the caseworkers at the Bureau for Homeless Men were responding to a large population that, as the introductory anecdote makes suggests, some in St. Louis found troubling.

In 1925, the initiative to expend resources on casework and therapeutic rehabilitation for homeless men rested with the St. Louis social work community. The historical record does not suggest that a broad movement of citizens in St. Louis existed that advocated for a more concerted program, in particular a casework program, to deal with homeless men on the streets. This fact is important because it suggests that, at least in St. Louis, there was not a general outpouring of interest in the problem of homeless men as, for example, there existed for problems relating to motherhood in the early


twentieth century. St. Louisans, like other Americans, probably just wished to have homeless men cleared from the streets, but expended little effort on the problem. This lack of interest in helping homeless men, along with a general feeling of hostility toward them, continued to be apparent when public funds were spent on homeless men during the period of the Federal Transient Program. Some social workers in St. Louis active in the Community Council, an organization that dispensed funds to private social work organizations, appear to have seen the problem of homelessness as an area into which social workers could expand, and then created an organization equipped to deal with homeless men.29 These social workers saw the creation of the Bureau for Homeless Men as a complimentary extension of the broader casework agenda of providing professional relief while also bolstering traditional family life.

The Bureau for Homeless Men also helps to illuminate another understudied aspect of the American welfare state, the role of men as social workers. At its highpoint in the 1920s, women made up probably ninety percent of the social work profession, yet men often played important roles in the development of professional organizations for social workers and often served in administrative or managerial capacities in various welfare organizations. Among many examples, men served as editors of two leading social work periodicals, The Family and Charities.30 This focus on upper level positions ignores men who practiced casework in social work agencies and does not help explain why men would want to join an overwhelmingly female profession. The caseworkers at

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29 Meeting Minutes of the Committee on Homeless Men and Street Begging, 20 September 1923, Folder 9, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
30 Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 46; The Family, 1 no.2 (April 1920); Gordon, Pitied But Not Entitled, 92, 312-313.
the Bureau, mostly men themselves, provided few explicit reasons for joining the profession, but the scant record can be made more explicit through reference to the historical context within which they acted. First, these men undoubtedly felt comfortable with the objective, scientific, masculine methods underpinning the professionalization of social work. Interestingly, though, in contrast to some of their female colleagues, caseworkers at the Bureau appealed to their gender and argued that male caseworkers could best help male clients. This argument was made explicit in the Bureau’s Boy’s Program, and was implicit in the Bureau’s choice to hire as many male caseworkers as possible, no doubt a tough task given the predominance of women in the profession.31

The entrance of men into the social work profession should perhaps not even be seen as an aberration. As some historians have argued, turn of the century men cultivated a “social reform manliness” that celebrated men pursuing social betterment. These reformers pursued a variety of goals, from reforming government to revitalizing manhood through the formation of sporting clubs.32 The caseworkers at the Bureau undoubtedly perceived themselves as working within this tradition. Furthermore, historians have also noted that some men in the early twentieth century found it difficult to affirm their manhood in repetitive office jobs and in the face of the social upheavals of the 1920s and 1930s represented by suffrage, women’s entrance into the workplace, the loss of individuality in a corporate and bureaucratized workplace, and the Great Depression.33

31 Like the Boy Scouts and the YMCA, the social workers at the Bureau insisted that boys’ work should be done by male workers, David Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy: The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and their Forerunners, 1870-1920* Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983), 44.
response, many turned toward their sons to redeem their manhood, while other men worked with the YMCA and the Boy Scouts. The Bureau’s emphasis upon a family centered manhood could be seen as an expression of the instability and uncertainty white collar and middle class men felt when they entered their new workplaces. The family would be the arena in which they could restore their manhood. While this is perhaps a more speculative argument, the Bureau’s work might be viewed similarly, as a way to escape office work, pursue lofty goals, and reaffirm a sense of manhood. In any case, the Bureau’s vision of manhood expressed and sought to instantiate the white collar masculinity.

Despite the novelty of its case work approach with unattached men, and the fact that its correspondence files are filled with inquiries and accolades it received from its colleagues across the country seeking to replicate its program, the Bureau for Homeless Men remains understudied. This is partially the result of the argument made by some historians that, after World War I, the problems associated with roving men that began in the 1870s disappeared because the jobs that supported them, in agriculture and railroads, were less available. The line has perhaps been drawn too sharply, and this argument nonetheless cannot explain what happened to these men after their jobs vanished. To be


35 Series 4, Correspondence, 1925-1979, Papers of the Bureau. For the other historian who has written about the Bureau see, Bonnie Stepenoff, The Dead End Kids of St. Louis: Homeless Boys and the People Who Tried to Save Them (St. Louis and London: University of Missouri Press, 2010). Stepenoff’s book mentions the Bureau’s activities with young boys in a few passages, but their work is not studied in any systematic way.

sure, one historian admitted that homelessness increased during the 1920s, yet argued, with little evidence, that people viewed the homeless man with a nostalgia influenced by the characters created by Charlie Chaplin and Jack London. Another historian echoed this point, and further argued that these cultural depictions played an important role in influencing the Federal Transient Program. By not paying closer attention to the 1920s, previous scholars have missed an important link in the development of social policy crafted for homeless, unattached men. The fear of unattached men lingered into the 1920s, and it was this fear, not nostalgia, that formed an important impetus for the Bureau’s programs. Furthermore, these programs, and not nostalgic stories and movies, would lay the groundwork for the Federal Transient Program in 1933.

The work of the Bureau for Homeless Men during the 1920s and early 1930s also reveals an important feature of the way social policies developed in the United States during this period. As many scholars of the welfare state have made clear, social workers outside of government played a crucial role in the construction of government welfare policy. Historians have called this pattern of public/private cooperation the “associative state.” The work of the Bureau reflects this form of government operation. The Bureau, ostensibly a private agency, worked closely with the municipal government of St. Louis to provide relief and care to homeless men. The city government provided the Bureau with office space for casework early on, and the two worked closely together on one of the Bureau’s important early projects, the anti-begging program. More significantly, one

37 Kusmer, Down and Out, On the Road.
38 Todd Depastino, Citizen Hobo.
might argue that the Bureau actually supplanted the city in the delivery of relief to homeless men. The Bureau played an important role in the operation of the city’s Municipal Lodging House and greatly expanded the services available for unattached, homeless men. As a private welfare agency, the Bureau acted as a policy innovator by developing and/or applying new techniques and institutions for the delivery of relief to homeless men in St. Louis.

Most importantly, the institutions created by the Bureau, and the particular vision of manhood that structured its programs, played an important role in how the Bureau developed Missouri’s transient program in 1933. This conceptual and institutional continuity has particular importance for our understanding of the Federal Transient Program. Historians often portray the transient program as a drastic departure from previous efforts at relief, as a program that “opened up radical possibilities for the structuring of American social provision.” Similarly, the transient program is discussed as if it had no precedent in welfare policy, as if it were simply a product of the federal government, whereas so many New Deal programs were based upon earlier state programs. The Federal Transient Program is also contrasted with programs like the Works Progress Administration and the Old Age Security provision of the Social Security Act. Unlike these later New Deal programs, these historians contend, the Federal Transient Program had little to do with breadwinning. Contrary to these assertions, I

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42 Canaday, *The Straight State*, 93. The primary problem with this understanding is that it cannot answer the question, “What was the goal of rehabilitation?”
argue the transient program relied heavily upon the infrastructure, bureaucracy, and casework methodologies created by agencies like the Bureau in order to operate effectively. It is therefore not exactly correct that the Federal Transient Program reflected a radical departure from previous welfare provision. Not only was the program rooted in the work of private welfare agencies that served unattached men, but its work was grounded in a traditional understanding of male gender identity. Although the Federal Transient Program served a non-breadwinning population, these men were defined by their negative relation to the ideal.

By bringing casework principles infused with a vision of manhood that stressed family life as an essential component of a man’s life, the Bureau for Homeless Men made significant alterations in the relief system established for homeless men. Chapter one examines the Bureau’s early work, between 1925 and 1931, as it sought to establish itself as a professional social work agency for homeless men. These early programs show how the Bureau transformed relief for homeless men in St. Louis from a system of mass care into one focused upon individualized casework. The Bureau’s conception of manhood both spurred these transformations and structured the shape of its new programs. The second chapter explores the Bureau’s work with boys between the ages of fourteen and twenty one. This program sought to fill a hole in St. Louis’ relief network by creating a

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43 The Bureau for Homeless Men was one of only two private agencies in the state that the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) permitted to function as a public agency in Missouri’s transient program. The FERA did not interfere with the casework of the preexisting agencies. See, McKinsey, Transient Men in Missouri, 15, 200; On the importance of casework to the Federal Transient Program generally, see, McKinsey, Transient Men in Missouri, 236. Ellery Reed, Federal Transient Program, 45, 50, 52. For FERA generally, see Arthur Schlesinger Jr., The Coming of the New Deal (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1958); Robert McElvaine, The Great Depression: America, 1929-1941 (New York: Times Books, 1984); Jason Smith, Building New Deal Liberalism: The Political Economy of Public Works, 1933-1956 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
program that would serve homeless, unattached boys that were too old to be assisted by the city’s children’s agencies. The Bureau believed that its work with boys represented its best opportunity to help its clients achieve its masculine ideal. The final chapter examines the Bureau’s role in the establishment of the New Deal’s Federal Transient Program in Missouri. This chapter seeks to demonstrate the importance of private welfare agencies to the development of the Federal Transient Program and also provide an explanation for the program’s demise. This chapter argues that the decision to defund and dismember the transient program was rooted in the assumption that married men with dependents, not unattached men, were worthy of public funding. Following the dissolution of the program in 1935, it would be much more difficult to operate as a welfare agency serving homeless, unattached men.
Chapter One: “When a Man Needs a Pilot”

Harry’s mother worked as a prostitute, and he suspected that she was attempting to introduce his fifteen year old sister Mary into the profession. “An impetuous young man,” Harry tried to save Mary. Harry broke into the room where his mother and Mary lived, a fight ensued, the police arrived, and Harry’s mother had him arrested. The police released Harry shortly after, but much to his chagrin his sister was placed in a home for delinquent girls. Estranged from his family and in need of help, Harry went to the Bureau for Homeless Men, a professional casework agency for single, unattached men. Harry told his caseworker the events of his life and how he bounced around from one job to another “dissatisfied and restless.” The caseworker surmised that Harry’s troubled youth contributed to his present situation. Harry’s caseworker arranged for him to have a medical examination, where the doctor discovered that Harry’s constant headaches resulted from improper eye wear. Harry received new glasses, which led him to break fewer dishes in the restaurant where he worked. This improved Harry’s relationship with his boss, who soon after permitted Harry to tinker with his radio, one of Harry’s interests. Harry soon began to attend a night school for radio operating and he later secured an eighteen dollar a week job at a radio shop. The Bureau found that, because of its casework, Harry became “practically self-supporting” and, with the money he earned from his new job, looked forward to the day when he could reunite with his sister.44

44 These are not the actual names listed in the case file. Furthermore, the date of the case is unknown, but Harry was a client sometime between 1925 and 1932. See, “Special Cases Submitted by Mr. Hoy Illustrating Case Work Accomplishment by the Bureau for Homeless Men, Exhibit I”, Study of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1932, Folder 93, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men, 1925-1982, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis.
For Bureau for Homeless Men to be successful helping men like Harry, it needed to professionalize relief for unattached men. For the Bureau, professionalization entailed providing individualized, casework services to clients. When the Bureau began conducting casework interviews in 1925, the links between its status as a social work agency, its understanding of manhood, and its ability to transform unattached men into family men had not been fully developed. While the Bureau entered social work at a high point in the profession’s development, little had been accomplished in applying the tenets of casework to unattached men. A contemporary sociologist observed that, because unattached men had often been denied help, they had to resort to “nefarious devices” to survive. The Bureau argued that some caseworkers found the single man “disturbing” because he “did not respond to social therapy” and he therefore symbolized an “embarrassment that they wished to dispense with.” The Charity Organization Society, for example, advocated hard labor and even lifetime segregation in labor colonies for beggars and tramps. Less harshly, lodging houses provided men with food and shelter, while others received a train ticket to the next town. The Bureau, however, argued that hard labor and segregation would not repair a man’s relationship with his family, the true root of his problems. The Bureau even felt that the attitudes of other caseworkers toward

45 For casework in St. Louis, see History of the St. Louis Provident Association, 1860-1930 by Dorothy LeMond, 1933, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Family and Children’s Services of Greater St. Louis, 1861-1960, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis.
47 Bruno, The Theory of Social Work, 347; In an article in the St. Louis Globe Democrat an anonymous social worker in St. Louis discussed the many problems that transiency posed for casework. “Problems of Social Service Discussed by Charity Worker”, St. Louis Globe Democrat, 14 February 1925.
the unattached man prevented it from becoming “an acceptable agency in the eyes of other organizations.” The Bureau for Homeless Men would forge the links between its professional abilities and its vision of manhood by transforming St. Louis’ Municipal Lodging House into a site of casework, constructing an expansive cafeteria program, and creating a casework program for beggars. Helping an unattached man discover his potential as a family man, or simply reconnecting a man estranged from his family, served as the Bureau’s primary purpose in these projects.

While the Bureau faced many challenges, the municipal government helped to at least establish a basic infrastructure within which the Bureau would eventual operate. This is particularly evident with St. Louis’ Municipal Lodging House. The city opened the lodging house in 1912 and it served as a home for destitute men during the cold winter months. Before the city opened the Municipal Lodging House, the Provident Association, a private family casework agency, operated a lodging house and lumber yard that provided men food and shelter in exchange for chopping wood. The Provident Association closed its lodging house when the city opened its own, arguing that its services were no longer needed. The Provident Association underestimated the problem. Men from “all points of the compass” flocked to the city’s lodging house soon after it opened for shelter, coffee, and a little bit of food. On one particularly cold January day, for example, over one thousand men applied. The city recognized the extent of the problem and appropriated a five thousand dollar emergency fund to supply extra food and clothing for the lodging house during particularly cold periods.

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50 Untitled History of the Bureau for Men, Folder 4, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau. Regina Kunzel argued that social workers were particularly critical of those in their own ranks over fears about professional status. Regina Kunzel, *Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 40.
Although caseworkers established the Bureau as an ostensibly private agency, the publicly funded lodging house provided it with a base of operations. When the Bureau began operating in 1925, the city provided the Bureau with free office space for caseworkers in the lodging house. The city also paid its electricity bill and the salary of one clerical worker. Most importantly, the lodging house assisted in centralizing destitute, unattached men, providing the Bureau with the perfect site to conduct casework investigations.51 Homeless men could seek shelter from a variety of places, but the size of the lodging house, the fact that a bed cost nothing, and the lure of food ensured that it would serve as a draw to the region’s transient population. In spite of the many benefits afforded the Bureau by the lodging house, the organization’s caseworkers found its patrons deficient in their manhood and in need of help.

The caseworkers at the Bureau for Homeless Men almost wholly depicted the men who stayed at the lodging house, and the men they helped generally, in terms of their remoteness from the ideal of a breadwinning family man. The Bureau defined the homeless single man as one “without home ties as well as men who are temporarily or permanently detached from their families.” To be homeless, then, was not necessarily to be without a home, just without a family. For the Bureau, it did not matter why or how a man became homeless because his alienation from family life provided the answer to those questions. Rather, the Bureau worried more about “the stage of deterioration reached”, that is, the unattached man’s distance from the family man ideal. The Bureau

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51 Clinton Rodgers Woodruff, ed. *National Municipal Review* (Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins Co., 1912), 323; To Florence Miller from Walter Hoy, 21 November 1931, Folder 50, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau; *History of the St. Louis Provident Association, 1860-1930* by Dorothy LeMond, 120, 1933, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Family and Children’s Services of Greater St. Louis; Summarized Report of the Thousand Men Cared for by the Central Bureau for Transient Men, 15 May 1925, Folder 9, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
argued that homelessness condemned a man “to an existence so inconsistent with his capacity for social relationships...as to produce an abnormal individual.” Prolonged homelessness almost precluded the promise of casework. The Bureau’s first report stated, “This characteristic of detachment is probably the most outstanding difficulty in dealing with the men. There seems to be nothing to take hold of in order to begin tying them up to a normal family existence. They have so little to live for, so little wish to change their ways.” While homelessness damaged the individual man, “the group to suffer most is the family.” Homelessness hurt the man’s existing family and, because he probably remained unmarried, he destroyed “the possibility of a home that might have been established.” These appeals to the sanctity of the family enforced the Bureau’s belief that unattached men needed casework. Not only did homelessness hurt the man almost beyond help, but it damaged the family as well. Furthermore, by appealing to the family, the Bureau could legitimize its work within the field of professional social work.52

The Bureau’s insistence upon the gendered distinction between unattached men and family men also makes visible class cleavages as well. The Bureau’s clients derived overwhelmingly from the working class. As one historian has argued, working class, unattached men developed their own ethic of manhood from their experiences on the job and on the road. In contrast, the Bureau’s persistent invocation of the family model expressed the white collar ideal of men and women forming companionate marriages. Furthermore, the college education of the caseworkers significantly distanced them socially from their clients. Frank Bruno, a caseworker at the Bureau and a social work

52 Meeting Minutes of the Committee of Functions and Interrelationships, 20 May 1926, Folder 45, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau; Bruno, The Theory of Social Work, 339, 342; Summarized Report, 15 May 1925, Folder 9, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
academic, admitted as much when he stated, “the social worker’s experience of family habits in his own circle…had given him no knowledge of it [the experience of men deserting their families].” Bruno’s depiction of his own background emphasized the harmony of middle class life in contrast to the disunity of working class families. It suggested that the working class would benefit from adopting the values and habits of the middle class. Casework served as the Bureau’s tool in this struggle to extend its values. The Bureau’s perceptions of class and gender divisions shaped the way it approached its clients. The homeless man’s difficulties derived not from problems associated with cyclical unemployment, but rather inhered in the individual homeless man and resulted from that man’s inability to achieve a particular ideal.

The Bureau’s statistical reports construct a different image of the homeless man and suggest that the men the Bureau cared for had problems at least as serious as their disengagement from their families. In other words, the statistics collected by the Bureau demonstrate some distance between the manifestations of poverty, and the Bureau’s largely gendered understanding of its origins. Assertions can only be made concerning the men at the lodging house who applied to receive casework from a Bureau social worker. Fortunately, the Bureau maintained good statistical records of the men that received its services. The Bureau characterized the first thousand men it helped at the lodging house as mostly white, native born, unskilled, and transient for at least part of

53 For a list of jobs held by the Bureau’s clients, see Annual Reports, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; Frank Tobias Higbie, “‘We Thought of Ourselves as Men after Awhile’: Mutuality, Violence, and the Apprenticeship of the Road,” in Indispensable Outcasts; For a breakdown of the education of the Bureau’s caseworkers, see, Study of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1932, Folder 93, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau; Bruno, The Theory of Social Work, 307; For an analysis of middling men in a similar situation, see Thomas Winter, Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1977-1920 (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2002); Gail Bederman, Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).
their lives. Fifty-six percent had recently worked in Missouri, while the rest had worked predominately around the Midwest. As time passed, the Bureau served more men who had been in St. Louis longer than a year. In 1926, sixty-three percent of the Bureau’s clients had been in the city less than one year, while forty-percent had been in the city less than one week. By 1930, fifty percent of their clientele lived in St. Louis longer than a year, while only twenty-seven percent had been in the city less than a week. This suggests that jobs transients traditionally performed were no longer available so men travelled less frequently, and that poverty increased in St. Louis as the 1920s progressed. Furthermore, many were old and sick: forty percent of the men who applied were over fifty. While some statistics for 1931 suggest that the Bureau began to serve a younger population, the age breakdown described above remained generally the same from 1926 through 1930. Thirty-six percent of the men were disabled in some way. If one followed the Bureau’s principles and counted each man over sixty as essentially disabled, which in this instance meant unemployable, then fifty-seven percent of the first group of men were disabled.

Although the lodging house served as an indispensable tool, the Bureau argued that the operations of the lodging house before 1925 demanded transformation because it merely perpetuated a lifestyle for unattached men that the Bureau opposed. Although the Municipal Lodging House served as an excellent base for the Bureau to begin its operations, the new social work agency would have found a number of features of the lodging house deleterious to a man’s life. As Frank Bruno complained, “lodging houses

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54 Annual Report, 1926, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; For statistics for 1931, see, Monthly Report, March 1931, Folder 22, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; for the statistics for 1926-1930, see Annual Reports, 1926-1930, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
do not make any further attempt to understand and deal with the social problems [i.e. the man’s relation to his family] of homelessness.” Even worse, the average man at the lodging had ample opportunity to consort and befriend other unattached men, forming relationships that the Bureau would have perceived as sustaining the unattached, unnatural lifestyle. Bureau caseworkers also worried about the connections between poor housing and sexual impropriety. As we shall see, the Bureau had its own concerns about sexual deviance among unattached men, fears that reflected long held associations between these men and homosexuality. Finally, the lodging house generally served food of an extremely low quality. Compounding the poor quality of the diet, men generally only consumed 750 calories per day. This system essentially necessitated that men take their meals elsewhere, which proved problematic. Given the man’s level of income, in order to supplement his meals he needed to beg, an act the Bureau condemned as unbecoming of a true men.55

Shortly after establishing itself at the lodging house, the Bureau formed a Lodging House Committee consisting of representatives from the city and the Bureau to institute reforms. The new rules manifested the connections between duty to family, health and cleanliness, and work in the Bureau’s conception of manhood. First, the committee enacted stricter registration rules. On the first night of a man’s stay, he provided his information to a clerk who would in turn give him a ticket for fumigation and a bath. To fumigate, the Bureau placed the man’s clothing in “an air-tight room” and sprayed it with

flour sulfur. This supplemented the Bureau’s use of cyanide gas to kill vermin within the lodging house. On the man’s second night, he received a vaccination, probably for tuberculosis. If a man desired to stay longer than three days, he had to visit a caseworker to determine his need. The caseworker used this interview to determine if a man had family connections to which he might turn. The Bureau repeated this process every thirty days to keep updated records of the man’s life and his progress.⁵⁶

With these new rules, the Bureau had effectively transformed the lodging house from a place where men could stay to avoid harsh weather to a site that stressed casework and rehabilitation. The new rules dictated that, if asked, a man would be required to work to continue staying at the lodging house. The caseworker conducted interviews to assess a man’s ability to work. Should he be determined as able-bodied and yet refuse to work, his stay at the lodging house would be terminated. Of the four hundred extensions granted in February 1928, able-bodied men received one hundred eight-five. To be sure, this emphasis on work was probably more rhetoric than reality, as the Bureau did not develop a work program until 1932. Finally, if a man returned to the lodging house within thirty days of his past stay, this suggested that something might be wrong with him, and the Bureau mandated a casework interview before he could be registered again. Perhaps most importantly, the new rules reveal tensions in the Bureau’s navigation between its desire to conduct casework, that is, to further its own professional goals, and meeting the needs of the men they sought to serve, ostensibly one of its other aims. The new rules demonstrate

⁵⁶ To Sydney Maestre from Walter Hoy, 18 March 1927, Folder 46, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men; To Marion LaSater from Walter Hoy, 9 March 1932, Folder 51, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
that the Bureau would help a man meet his needs only insofar as that man followed the Bureau’s casework agenda.\footnote{57 Rules and Regulations of the Municipal Lodging House, 1926, Folder 45, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau.}

Although the Bureau had at least formally transformed the lodging house into a site of casework, the social workers argued that the lodging house had a number of inadequacies that made their job difficult to perform. The lodging house would remain a crucial aspect of the Bureau’s relief network, but the social workers desired an office dedicated purely to casework that would permit them to better perform their jobs. Many caseworkers complained about the actual physical space of the lodging house itself. For example, the cramped conditions of the lodging house office often precluded privacy between the caseworker and the client, a crucial element for helping meet the individual needs of each man. Not all the caseworker’s grievances centered on their inability to do good casework at the lodging house. For example, the office had only one small bathroom, “which opens only into the main office.” This, combined with the “disagreeable odor” present in the summer and the “draft from the kitchen that…gives an unpleasant odor” in the office, made the caseworkers quite uncomfortable.\footnote{58 The Need for a Separate and Adequate Headquarters Office, ca. 1930, Folder 11, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.}

Most importantly, the new casework office provided the Bureau a place to which it could send the men who it felt could best be helped by its services, a space in which the Bureau could both cultivate and demonstrate its professional acumen. The conditions at the lodging house, and some of the men who stayed there, appear to have imperiled the reputation of the Bureau as a professional casework agency. The caseworkers argued for the necessity of a new office because many of the men who stayed at the lodging house
might “increase a sense of failure and despondency” in the Bureau’s more respectable clients, and therefore prevent the Bureau from performing effective casework. The reputation of the lodging house within the city also prevented the Bureau from interviewing and aiding all the unattached men it might have. As one board member of the Bureau complained, some in St. Louis perceived the residents of the lodging house as mere “tramps and bums” and refused to send men there who needed help. By establishing its new branch office outside of the neighborhood of the lodging house, the Bureau created a purer space, a place where casework could operate unimpeded by the unchangeable deviance and corruption of some of the men at the lodging house. This move therefore marked some men as outside the Bureau’s professional ability to help.59

By the end of 1930, the Bureau managed to establish two casework centers, one at the lodging house and one at their new office, yet the caseworkers began to notice that their clients abused their system of feeding them. The Bureau’s solution to this problem, the problem of feeding its clients, challenged it emphasis on individual casework. For most of this period, the Bureau fed its clients in two different ways. First, the Bureau used the lodging house to feed the men staying there. The Bureau’s primary feeding problems derived the Bureau’s use of contracted restaurants to provide for its clients. To do this, the Bureau purchased “meal tickets” from each restaurant, good for either one meal, an entire day’s worth of meals, or a week’s worth of meals. Caseworkers would then distribute these meal tickets to their clients.60 Walter Hoy, the Bureau’s first

59 Meeting Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1 December 1930, Folder 11, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; To Robert Beasley from Walter Hoy, 26 November 1931, Folder 50, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau.
60 To Arthur Baer from Myron Gwinner, 8 December 1932, Folder 51, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau.
executive secretary, provided the compelling logic behind this restaurant system: “The greatest value in caring for homeless men on the outside is to retain…as far as possible, the normal outlook on life…” The Bureau hoped, then, to not only provide casework services to the men, but to allow them some measure of independence that any healthy, breadwinning family man would exercise in his daily life. The results of Hoy’s noble experiment, however, would not be those that he desired.61

The Bureau stopped feeding men through the use of contracted restaurants because its clients abused the system in a multitude of ways. First, men often sold their meal tickets. The Bureau found this problematic because it brought men into its network without them first seeing a caseworker. Similarly, men often used their tickets to feed others. Part of the problem also stemmed from the restaurant owners. Some owners sold the men alcohol, a substance that the Bureau viewed as particularly dangerous for unattached men. The Bureau also blamed some restaurants that served St. Louis’ black community for artificially increasing the number of black men who visited the Bureau, men who the Bureau felt had plenty of support and therefore merely abused the system: “Naturally every [black] man…would apply for a Bureau meal ticket whether they needed one or not.” The restaurant system therefore foiled the Bureau’s attempts to turn unattached, deviant men, into virtuous breadwinning family men. To be sure, there was nothing in itself wrong about selling a meal ticket for cash, although prohibition was still in effect. Instead the problem derived from the man’s refusal to follow the dictates of his caseworker. This proved so problematic for the caseworkers because they believed they understood how respectable men should act, and to not follow their prescriptions was a

61 Discussion by Walter R. Hoy of the Survey, 4, Survey of the Bureau for Homeless Men, Ellery Reed, Folder 93, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
serious transgression. The Bureau sought to remedy this system by expanding its in-house feeding operation.62

The Bureau reached the paradoxical conclusion that, in order to assist men as individuals, it would have to abandon its efforts to treat them like individuals. To prevent men from acting unmanly, the Bureau would have to open its own cafeteria that could feed men on a mass scale. This reversion to feeding on a mass scale would seem to undermine the Bureau’s stated emphasis of using individualized casework to rehabilitate unattached men into family men. Indeed, the Bureau calculated that with its new cafeteria set-up, it would be able to pass twenty men through the kitchen line in one minute. However, the Bureau insisted that this new system actually helpful its casework efforts because it gave caseworkers “full control over all men eating at the cafeteria.” This enlarged supervision proved to be necessary in light of the rampant abuses perpetrated by the men in the old restaurant system. The Bureau gave out tickets that were good for three weeks’ worth of meals; after that the man would need to revisit his caseworker and establish his need for another ticket.63

The restaurant episode reveals that the importance of the caseworker’s prescriptions for their client’s life, that is, their professional prerogative, trumped the sense of independence that the caseworkers hoped to cultivate in their clients. In explaining this new system, Myron Gwinner, the Bureau’s executive secretary after June 1932, expressly stated that the Bureau never gave out blocks of cafeteria tickets to be distributed on the street because then the caseworkers “would not be able to follow our

62 Undated History of the Bureau, 16, ca. 1940, Folder 4, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; Meeting Minutes, 4 November 1932, Folder 11, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
63 To Arthur Baer from Myron Gwinner, 8 December 1932, Folder 51, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau.
casework procedure of careful investigation and provision of the things required by each individual man.” If a man arrived at the cafeteria seeking food without a ticket, he would be denied service until he reported to the casework office to “tell his story to one of the social workers there.” In other words, the Bureau now felt that the restaurant system provided too much independence to men, a concern that would also be evident in the Bureau’s anti-begging work.64

The creation of the Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee was the Bureau’s most important and revealing intervention into the St. Louis relief set-up for unattached men. Before the Bureau formed the Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee, police simply arrested and fined beggars and then sent them to the workhouse. The Bureau saw this method as inadequate because it merely imprisoned the beggar for a short time and did nothing to try to reconnect the man with family. The Bureau therefore grounded its anti-begging activities in the casework method. Through casework, the Bureau hoped to transform the beggar into a better man. Beggars had an incentive to utilize the services of the Bureau: by accepting casework, beggars would be allowed to forgo time in the workhouse. This was an entirely novel approach to dealing with the beggar. Observers from the field of social work such as Robert Wilson, president of the Family Welfare Association of America, lauded the anti-begging work of the Bureau as a standard for other social workers to follow.65

Caseworkers at the Bureau particularly despised begging because it symbolized a personal affront to their status as professional caseworkers. According to the Bureau,

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64 To Arthur Baer from Myron Gwinner, 8 December 1932, Folder 51, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau.

65 Wilson, *Community Planning for Homeless Men and Boys*, 73-74; Survey of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1932, Folder 93, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
begging precluded the social worker’s attempts to do their job. Instead of seeing begging as a pragmatic tool for survival, the Bureau believed that begging allowed a man to live off an illegitimate source of income that led him further toward degeneracy and away from the family man ideal. From the perspective of the man picked up by a cop or caseworker, begging could have been a legitimate tactic used to supplement a meager income. The Bureau admitted as much when it bemoaned the fact that railroad workers, while stopped over in St. Louis, occasionally begged to make extra money, even if it were only for “good times” like drinking and paying for prostitutes. Mostly, Bureau caseworkers ignored the beggar’s own justification or need for begging, and instead saw the decision to beg, made either by a first time offender or a man who quit their casework program to continue begging, as evidence of a maladjusted male.

Like the support the Bureau received from the Municipal Lodging House, a number of municipal laws also bolstered the Bureau’s attempts to professionalize work with beggars. For example, the St. Louis vagrancy law of 1879 criminalized begging. The law drew a wide circumference around the notion of a vagrant. It included any man “without any visible means of support…engaged in practicing any trick or device to procure money or other thing of value…and every able bodied married man who shall neglect or refuse to provide for the support of his family, and every person found tramping without any visible means of support.” The punishment for vagrancy in St. Louis included a twenty day jail term, a fine of twenty dollars, or both. When the Bureau began its anti-begging activities, the punishment had grown more severe: the fine increased to one hundred dollars, and if the vagrant could not pay the fine, the

67 Analysis of Fifty-Nine Beggar Cases, 1929, Folder 10, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
punishment required a thirty-three day term in the workhouse. Casework treatment could serve as a substitute for a fine and time in the workhouse. Thus, similar to the lodging house, the use of the vagrancy law to apprehend beggars in the 1920s provided the Bureau with a pool of unattached men from which to draw.  

Furthermore, a number of important city functionaries contributed to the development and enforcement of the Bureau’s anti-begging plan. St. Louis Mayor Victor Miller, the directors of the Public Welfare and Workhouse departments, a few municipal judges, and the chief of police were a few of the more notable persons who helped the Bureau develop its anti-begging program. The police department augmented the Bureau’s work significantly by supplying officers to the Bureau who specifically searched the city streets for beggars. The courts agreed to allow casework with a Bureau social worker to replace a fine and time served in the workhouse. This partnership between the Bureau for Homeless Men, the mayor’s office, and other city institutions probably served each interest well, as cooperation continued at least through 1933.

Finally, cooperation with police who patrolled the streets and arrested beggars significantly augmented the Bureau’s caseload. For the year 1932, the police supplied the Bureau with almost four hundred beggars. From the fifty nine cases analyzed in 1929, at least forty four came from the police. The Bureau’s records even suggest that police officers in plain clothes were used to arrest beggars. Until 1931 it is unclear how often this method of enforcement was used. The use of plain clothes cops appeared in 1926, but the Bureau perhaps employed this method only sporadically, particularly during times

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68 Of Vagrants, Revised State Statutes of Missouri, vol. 2, secs. 7655-6 (1879); History of the Anti-Begging Committee, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
69 To Sydney Maestre from Paul Murphey, August 7, 1933, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
when the number of beggars on the streets achieved particular heights. According to Isaac Gurman, the Bureau’s third executive secretary, the addition of a plain clothes cop “did a great deal to cut down this close cooperation with the Police Department” because the police department shifted all anti-begging work to this officer, making other officers feel like they did not need to contribute. However, this cannot be true given the extent of police cooperation that is evident in many of the reports. To be sure, Gurman could be correct if other reports could demonstrate that police cooperation accounted for an even larger amount of the Bureau’s beggar caseload before the use of the plain clothes officer. Unfortunately, these reports for the Citizen’s Anti-Begging Committee are lost.\(^{70}\)

On paper, the outline of the plan that would guide the Bureau’s anti-begging activities appeared to be fairly simple. First, the police would “arrest all those found begging upon the streets.” Next, the beggar would be fined by the courts and sent to the workhouse. The police then notified the Bureau of the new case, and a caseworker would then visit the workhouse to interview the beggar and create a treatment plan. If the beggar accepted the treatment plan he would be released from the workhouse and placed in the care of the Bureau. If the beggar failed to follow through with the treatment plan, he would simply be sent back to the workhouse.\(^{71}\)

In practice, the plan proved to be more complicated. The anti-begging plan brought the Bureau much closer to acting as an appendage of the public sphere because it essentially deputized caseworkers as patrolmen for the streets and as probation officers

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\(^{70}\) Meeting Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Central Bureau for Homeless and Transient Men, 8 January 1926, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; *Street Begging in St. Louis*, 6, Pamphlet, 1937, Box 13, Folder 332, Papers of the Bureau.

\(^{71}\) Meeting Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 18 December 1925, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
for beggars. The activities of the Bureau’s special caseworker for the anti-begging department, who walked the streets in search of beggars to bring back to the Bureau, significantly supplemented the committee’s caseload. In March 1932, for example, the caseworker brought in thirty three of the fifty eight new cases. For the entire year 1932, the caseworker apprehended two hundred sixty of the five hundred thirty six beggars. One can only imagine how the caseworker convinced the beggar to come with him to the casework office. Other times the beggar would voluntarily seek out the Bureau’s help. Furthermore, the courts rarely appear to have sent the beggar to the workhouse, choosing instead to immediately parole them to the Bureau. Not only did this help reduce the number of cases that the courts saw everyday, but it provided a legal sheen for the enforcement of a policy that existed somewhere between the correctional system and private welfare.72

The selection of caseworkers at the Anti-Begging Committee reveals the importance that the Bureau attached to having male caseworkers helping men. The Bureau’s emphasis on casework with beggars, as with all its clients, required a workforce of trained social workers. The maintenance of an all male workforce, given the popularity of social work as a career with women, would have been very difficult. As the make-up of the staff of the Anti-Begging Committee demonstrates, the Bureau attempted to have as many male caseworkers as possible. For the first three years of the anti-begging program, the Bureau utilized many caseworkers from other agencies in the city. Some of these caseworkers had undoubtedly been women. By 1928, the relief loads of the other

72 Monthly Report of the Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee, March 1932, Folder 1, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; Annual Report of the Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee, 1932, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau; Street Begging in St. Louis, 6-7, Pamphlet, 1937, Box 13, Folder 332, Papers of the Bureau.
social agencies expanded, and they could no longer afford to supply the Anti-Begging Committee with caseworkers and still adequately tend to their own caseloads. The Bureau replaced them with an “experienced caseworker who [could] devote his time to the beggar problem.” The Bureau hired a man, T.A. Hendricks, to partially fill in this position, but others would of course be needed. Hendricks graduated from the Louisville School of Social Work and practiced casework for three years before being hired by the Bureau. By 1932, the Bureau hired S.E. Albrecht, another male, as a caseworker to the Anti-Begging Committee. While Albrecht only took courses at the Washington University School of Social Work, he had experience in boy’s work with the Y.M.C.A.

The Bureau would no doubt have had a relatively easy time finding experienced female case workers, but it chose men instead. This suggests that the Bureau believed that men, albeit trained and professional, could better understand and help other men. The Bureau’s desire to hire as many men as possible also suggests the limits of its distaste for the homosocial lifestyle of unattached men. As long as these men sought help from professional men, homosocial interaction could be sanctioned.73

In order to better understand and help its clients, the Bureau developed an elaborate system to catalogue and categorize its beggar clients. The Bureau used a three tiered taxonomical system to categorize the various character types of its beggar clients: professional, occasional, and beginner. A professional “made a living by this means.” The occasional beggar “considers begging a deviation from his normal mode of living” and “has other sources of income such as odd jobs.” The beginning beggar is either a first

73 Meeting Minutes of the Executive Committee of the Central Bureau for Homeless and Transient Men, 8 January 1926, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; Walter Hoy to A.W. Swanson, 20 March 1931, Folder 50, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau; Survey of the Bureau for Homeless Men, June 1932, Folder 4, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
offender or one for whom “the habit of begging is not fixed.” The various practices employed by beggars, be they professional, occasional, or beginner, varied significantly, and would determine their place in even more specialized categories. A beggar could be picked up by the police or a Bureau caseworker for any one of the following activities: playing street music, peddling, letter writing, “mooching”, or panhandling. According to the extant records, moochers, who earned their living by asking for handouts on the street, outranked all other types of beggars treated by the Bureau. Of the two hundred thirty one begging cases handled by caseworkers from May to July in 1931, the Bureau classified fifty three percent as moochers. The annual report of the Anti-Begging Committee for 1932 showed that out of 1,771 begging cases, eighty two percent mooched.\textsuperscript{74}

The Bureau argued that the desire to deceive best characterized the beggar, regardless of his status as a moocher, peddler, or panhandler. The Bureau’s understanding of street peddlers provides an interesting example of the way that their perception of beggars as deceitful shaped its work. The primary problem with peddlers stemmed from their ostensible legitimacy. Bureau case workers or cops on the beat could not easily distinguish peddlers that lawfully used their permits from peddlers who used permits to disguise their begging lifestyle. One Bureau report stated that, “The professional peddlers are the most difficult beggars. They surround themselves with the habiliments and merchandise of honest peddlers, thus making their conviction doubtful.” The prominence

\textsuperscript{74} For another example of a taxonomical breakdown of unattached men, see, Tim Cresswell \textit{The Tramp in America} (London: Reaktion, 2001), 85; Analysis of Fifty-Nine Beggar Cases, 1929, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; The St. Louis Citizen’s Anti-Begging Committee Plan and Analysis of 231 Cases, 1931, Folder 11, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; Annual Report of the Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee 1932, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
of street peddling during the Great Depression made this particularly problematic. The Bureau certainly found troubling the publicity campaign launched by the *Globe Democrat* and St. Louis *Post Dispatch* during the winter of 1931, urging people to buy apples from street peddlers to assuage the unemployment problem. Even Mayor Miller, who helped formulate the Bureau’s anti-begging policy, proclaimed a week in February to be “apple week.” The Bureau needed to devise a test for identifying both honest peddlers and deceitful beggars. “The peddler may or may not have a license to peddle, but the test is that while displaying his wares, he does not make [an] exchange [of goods] for money received and generally confines his efforts to attempts to create pity rather than really selling his goods.” The amount of surveillance that this test would require undoubtedly prohibited it from being widely implemented, yet it nicely illustrates the point that, although the Bureau sought to help unattached men, it treated many of them with extreme suspicion.75

Bureau caseworkers also suspected that many beggars used disabilities to deceive passersby into providing alms. As we have seen already, the Bureau catalogued and discussed a wide variety of disabilities, ranging from physical disabilities to psychological maladies. Because only select records survive, it is difficult to determine exactly how many beggars had disabilities. Monthly and annual reports are sporadic, and the special reports analyzed select cases. The extant records of the Citizen’s Anti-Begging Committee are inconclusive. They show that anywhere between ten and fifty percent of its clients had disabilities. The committee’s annual report for 1932 provided the most exhaustive list of disabilities. Disabilities were catalogued with illness as well, 

75 Social Agencies News Clippings, 1931, Roll 7, Papers of Family and Children’s Services of Greater St. Louis; Analysis of Fifty-Nine Beggar Cases, 1929, Folder 10, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
and listed under the general rubric “Problems”. The Bureau counted common disabilities such as deafness and blindness, along with a more eclectic mix of problems. Problems like “mental,” “nervousness,” “hunchback,” “chronic gonorrhea,” and “right leg 1” shorter than left” illustrate the depth, breadth, and detail of the caseworker’s investigations into their client’s lives. Despite the very real material manifestations of these disabilities, the Bureau still considered it to be one aspect of the beggar’s deceitful character: “As you would expect, beggars as a group have serious mental and physical difficulties as they take very little care of themselves, often owing to the fact that this physical disability is a help in their business rather than a handicap.” This play on words demonstrates the depth of degeneration that the Bureau believed begging and the unattached lifestyle inflicted upon men. Deceit and disability reinforced one another, and the depraved transformations they elicited in men underscored the urgency and necessity of the Bureau’s anti-begging policies. Furthermore, the Bureau’s discussion of disability illuminates boundaries between its understanding of proper manhood and the illegitimate manhood of its clients.

In order to properly combat begging, the Bureau would need cooperation from the citizenry of St. Louis, those who supplied the beggars with money. In fact, the Bureau viewed the average citizen, the social worker, and the client enveloped in a triangular relationship. Frank Bruno argued that the specialization of relief led to the “dehumanization of the average man” because this average person no longer took part in the process of relief. The Bureau wanted a citizenry that not only believed in its anti-

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76 Annual Report of the Anti-Begging Committee, 1932, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
77 My italics. Analysis of Fifty-Nine Beggar Cases, 1929, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
begging policy but also assisted in the enforcement of that policy by not providing alms to street beggars and recommending them to the Bureau instead. By involving the “normal” citizen in its professionalized relief efforts, the Bureau sought to cause an adjustment in them by acquainting them with how modern, professionalized societies work.\textsuperscript{78}

To ensure the cooperation of the citizens of St. Louis, the Bureau attempted to educate them on the necessity of arresting beggars and providing them with casework services. The Bureau brought to the public its view of beggars as deceitful half-men whose lifestyle threatened family and the community, a threat that could only be stopped by submitting beggars to casework. This campaign reached its height in the winter of 1928 and 1929, when the Bureau distributed 12,000 pamphlets titled “Three Things a Policeman Doesn’t Like to Do”, and gave speeches at clubs, schools, and on the radio. The rhetoric used by the Bureau in these pamphlets and speeches is in many ways more damning than the understanding of beggars cultivated privately in reports and during meetings. In its publicity campaigns, the Bureau followed the pattern set by the tramp ethnographers of the early twentieth century who used publicly disseminated narratives to help define the contours of class and respectable manhood. The Bureau’s publicity campaign went a step further, however, and instead of merely portraying beggars and tramps as degraded men, the Bureau argued for its ability to rehabilitate these men into breadwinning, family oriented males.\textsuperscript{79}

\textsuperscript{79} Street Begging in St. Louis, 3, Pamphlet, 1937, Box 13, Folder 332, Papers of the Bureau; Meeting Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Bureau, 18 December 1928, Folder 10, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau; Frank Higbie, “Crossing Class Boundaries: Tramp Ethnographers and Narratives of Class in Progressive Era America” \textit{Social Science History} Vol. 21, No. 4 (Winter, 1997), pp. 559-592.
The pamphlet “There are Three Things a Policeman Doesn’t Like to Do” urged readers to help beggars not by giving them money, but by donating to the Community Fund, the network of private agencies to which the Bureau belonged, and the Bureau itself because, “the law and the policeman can’t cure this evil unaided.” The pamphlet stated that “Beggars will stay on our streets as long as the public makes it profitable” and that “public cooperation, by giving not where it will hurt but where it will help, will make the forces against the pitiful and demoralizing habit of begging 100 percent strong.” The Bureau’s exhortations went one step further, urging readers to help the beggar “by reporting him to the police.” To convince the reader of the pamphlet to donate, the Bureau demonized the beggar and touted its ability to provide the kind of care that beggars actually required.

This pamphlet defined the beggar as a deceitful man who feigned disability to cheat the public and it introduced the idea of a “professional” beggar working as part of an organized network. The pamphlet began by describing a policeman as he “pointed down the sidewalk to a piece of human wreckage seated alongside a building” peddling his wares. The policeman hesitated to arrest the beggar because “The last time he arrested a beggar a crowd gathered while he was awaiting the patrol wagon and insulting remarks were made.” The policeman wanted to tell the crowd that by arresting the beggar he would be doing the beggar and the community a service. “Perhaps”, the writer of the pamphlet mused, “as happened the other day in St. Louis, if the cripple had suddenly proved himself a faker by sprinting away like a college athlete, the crowd might have changed its attitude.” The Bureau argued that beggars threatened the quality of St. Louis.

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80 My italics. “There Are Three Things I Don’t Like to Do”, 1928, Folder 4, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
as a city. By donating to the Bureau “the wily professionals will be weeded out and these will be the first to depart for ‘healthier’ climes, reporting the fact that St. Louis is not the ‘easy’ place it is considered by the footloose.” Thus, the caseworker and the Bureau not only assisted the beggar, but they helped the city clean up its image as well.  

The Bureau also sought to spread its message through public speeches. Only one speech transcript has survived, but it is perhaps more alarmist than the pamphlet and presented listeners with a distilled version of the Bureau’s perception of beggars. A crucial component of the speech was providing examples of beggars unmasked by the Bureau as deceitful in order to demonstrate how begging prevented men from performing their proper duties. For example, the Bureau apparently revealed through casework one man, “Mr. Jones,” to be an owner of real estate in both St. Louis and Houston, and a descendent of a slave owner who owned “thousands of acres of land around Houston…” The Bureau presented Mr. Jones as a degenerate man whose improper habits the public supported: “Were the people who gave to Mr. Jones…helping him or were they contributing to the worry of his working wife and making it possible for him to be away from home and on the streets?” The most obnoxious fact about Mr. Jones’ life concerned his marriage to a woman who worked “in one of our largest factories.” Instead of working to support his wife, Mr. Jones’ wife worked to support him. Mr. Jones subverted almost all the roles that the Bureau believed men should fill, including the most important of all, happily supporting a family of dependents.  

More than the pamphlet, this speech described the harmful effects that providing spare change to beggars had on his manly character. The denigrations discussed by the

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81 “There Are Three Things I Don’t Like to Do”, 1928, Folder 4, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
82 Talk on Beggars, 1 December 1928, Folder 4, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
Bureau harkened back to past characterizations that had their origins in the “discovery” of the tramp in the 1870s. The list serves as a counterpoint to the Bureau’s manly ideal: “irresponsibility, idleness, independence of movement, and satisfaction that wants no interference.” Begging subverted a man’s virtuousness because “a premium is placed upon deceit.” By giving money to beggars, one only “encourages the habit and confirms them in their hope that they can make a living without work.” Furthermore, the Bureau explained the habit of begging as something that was almost hereditary: “Begging breeds its kind through example, training, and through the use of children. Wrong habits of thought and work are created; ideals of self respect and useful citizenship are destroyed. Children are kept out of school while their parents are at home…” Begging therefore not only destroyed manly character, it also imperiled women, children, and families.

Although the speech painted a bleak picture, the speaker held out hope: “For twentieth century society to assume that there is no alternative for begging…is erroneous.” The alternative, of course, was casework. The speech ended: “Public cooperation, by not giving where it will hurt, but by reporting the beggar to the police, will make the forces against the pitiful and demoralizing habit of begging 100 percent strong.”

The record of the Bureau’s anti-begging work demonstrates that the casework process required considerable interventions into the lives of unattached men. However the beggar came to be known to the Bureau, the process always began with an interview. During the interview, the caseworker sought to understand many personal details of the beggar’s life: family history, work record, physical conditions, interests, sex life, mental health, and record of vagrancy or delinquency. Caseworkers also appear to have

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83 Ringenbach, *Tramps and Reformers*; Cresswell, *The Tramp in America*; Talk on Beggars, 1 December 1928, Folder 4, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau.
conducted fairly significant psychological and physical examinations of beggars, illustrated by the following “problems” or “disabilities” some beggars displayed: “sex complex”, and “abscess of rectum”. These problems each suggest that the Bureau sought to discover any evidence of homosexuality in their clients. The Bureau perceived these problems as reinforced by the homeless man’s involvement in a largely all male environment. Like disabilities, the Bureau used evidence of male desire to demarcate the family man from the non-family man.

After interviewing the beggar, the caseworker constructed an individual plan, but the aims of the plan remained the same. Men could be returned to their families and/or provided employment. For non-residents of Missouri, the Bureau attempted to contact the beggar’s family and arrange for their return. For the cases that the Bureau deemed a success, merely returning a man to his family or helping him find a job did not fulfill the Bureau’s professional aspirations; the Bureau desired continuous contact with its clients to ensure that the man did not return to the Bureau “in the same condition.”

Narrative descriptions of the casework process in the Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee are rare, but one of the surviving statistical analyses from 1932 further demonstrates the intensity of the process for many men. While seven of the fifteen cases analyzed only met with one caseworker, the remaining eight met with as many as seven different caseworkers, suggesting that the two caseworkers hired by the Bureau specifically for anti-begging work often had their work supplemented by others. Four of the fifteen men met with caseworkers for less than a month. The majority had cases that

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last longer than two months, with two men having cases that spanned more than a year. Although the first interview was perhaps the most critical, many of the cases analyzed in this report went through a series of interviews, ranging anywhere from two to forty two. Finally, the caseworker would also make many “field visits” and contact the man’s references in order to determine the best way to ensure rehabilitation. Before the Bureau intervened in and transformed the relief network for homeless men, these beggars would have simply been arrested, fined, and then sent on their way. Now, the Bureau subjected beggars and other homeless to casework therapy. What these descriptions of the casework process at the Bureau suggest is that these caseworkers sought to be as rigid and exacting as their colleagues who conducted casework with single mothers.85

Most importantly, the Bureau’s reports show that beggars made it difficult for caseworkers to do their job. Of the two hundred thirty one beggar cases analyzed in 1931, ninety three were “unwilling to cooperate” and gave “false or insufficient information”. Railroad workers, for example, often left town too quickly to permit the caseworker to implement their treatment plan. A case file for the Citizens’ Anti-Begging Committee demonstrates this point. The police arrested the man for begging and the man served time in the workhouse while the caseworker made the initial investigation. The beggar told the case worker that he did not mind staying in the workhouse because he expected to be reemployed by the grocery store at which he previously worked. When the caseworker asked about his past in order to reconnect him with his family, the man told the caseworker he had travelled and lived around the Midwest, and that he had “been in the Army” in 1918. None of this turned out to be true upon further investigation. The

85 “Exhibit III” from Survey of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1932, Folder 93, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau.
caseworker contacted welfare agencies in Kansas City, Des Moines, and Chicago, along with the grocery store that previously employed him, but none of them had heard of this man. When the caseworker confronted the beggar with this, he admitted he lied and refused to provide any more information. Given his noncooperation, the caseworker recommended that the beggar serve the rest of his time in the workhouse. 86

By 1932, the Bureau for Homeless Men had significantly transformed the way unattached men received relief in St. Louis by expanding the reach of professional casework services to unattached, homeless men. An important characteristic of this transformation is the close cooperation between the Bureau and the city government. In other words, the Bureau’s collaboration with the city illuminates some of the contours of the associative state in the 1920s. 87 While the Bureau was formally a private welfare agency, municipal institutions created a network within which the Bureau could work. The city provided space for casework and devoted municipal resources to the apprehension of beggars. However, the relationship worked the other way as well. The Bureau’s work not only reformed some unattached men, it also reformed the city’s institutions as well. Crucially, gender and ideal notions of manhood played a motivating role in many of these transformations in the associative state. Private welfare agencies therefore not only benefited from public infrastructure, it interacted with and transformed that infrastructure.

86 Analysis of Fifty-Nine Beggar Cases, 1929, Folder 10, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau; Annual Report of the Citizen’s Anti-Begging Committee, 1932, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau; Analysis of 231 Cases, 1931, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau; Monthly Reports of the Citizen’s Anti-Begging Committee, July-August 1933, Folder 78, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau; Helen Simpson to Walter Hoy, 16 February 1926, Folder 45, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau.

Nonetheless, while Bureau social workers applied casework to unattached men, they rationalized it only through reference to the man’s serious deviation from their standard of manhood. In other words, there is still significant continuity between the Bureau’s work discussed in this chapter and previous ways of understanding the unattached man. Like its predecessors, the Bureau continued to demonize its clients, made most evident in its publicity campaigns. The Bureau tapped into ancient fears of the man who did not work to legitimate its activities. This would not have been so problematic had the Bureau also articulated a compelling case for why the unattached men deserved relief. The Bureau failed to do this. The Bureau even failed to argue that these men, who experienced extreme poverty, needed relief. Instead, the Bureau argued that what their clients needed was casework, which only they could profitably provide. The failure to rationalize its activity in terms of the man’s need or entitlement would later hurt the Bureau’s professional prospects.

Another important development wrought by the Bureau’s professionalization of relief for unattached men included bringing men into its ranks to help other men. While the Bureau disavowed homosocial relationships between unattached men, the caseworkers believed that their understanding of the proper role for men, as a family man and breadwinner, could be transmitted through casework and serve as a suitable template for unattached men. The Bureau started with two male caseworkers, and as we have seen, it added two more to its anti-begging division. By 1932, the Bureau was employing thirty-five caseworkers, twenty-three of which were men. The importance of finding suitable male caseworkers, certainly not the easiest job considering the male-female distribution
in the profession, played an especially important role in the subject of the next chapter, the Bureau’s work with unattached boys.  

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88 Summarized Report of the First 1,000 Men Cared For, 15 May 1925, Folder 9, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Survey of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1932, Folder 93, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men; In 1920, women made up 65.6 percent of the profession. By 1930, that number climbed to 79 percent. See, “Appendix I”, in Daniel J. Walkowitz, Working With Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle Class Identity (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999); Regina Kunzel stated that contemporary observers argued that “women composed up to 90 percent of all paid caseworkers.”, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 46.
Chapter Two: Boys to Breadwinners

In many ways, Geoffrey’s case resembled Harry’s. Geoffrey’s father deserted his family and, perhaps out of desperation, his mother turned to prostitution and tried to get her daughter involved as well. The authorities were alerted to this disreputable situation (although not by Geoffrey, who does not appear to be as “impetuous” as Harry) and the case record stated the “the law” broke up the family. Geoffrey, “handicapped with…[a] nervous disposition” and with no family to turn to for help, sought refuge at a number of relief agencies before being recommended to the “Boys’ Work” division of the Bureau for Homeless Men, a special committee dedicated to performing casework with “boys” between the ages of fourteen and twenty one. When the Bureau compiled the notes on Geoffrey’s case in 1932, it had been working with him for a year and half. The Bureau noted that, while Geoffrey was not yet “‘out of the woods’ in social readjustment”, the caseworker had made significant strides in Geoffrey’s case. With Geoffrey’s case in mind, the caseworker suggested that preachers who employed the metaphor of the “lost sheep” in their sermons would do well to look through the records of city casework institutions to find concrete examples of “beautiful realities of reclaims.” Reflecting the desire to be recognized as professional caseworkers, the record finished by stating that the work the Bureau did for boys like Geoffrey could provide citizens with “a new and quite attractive slant on their city’s charities.”

As with its program for unattached men, the Bureau endeavored to use professional casework grounded in a particular vision of manhood to help unattached

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89 Geoffrey is not the actual name of the client. See, Cases to Form Basis for Publicity by Council on Relief, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men, 1925-1982, State Historical Society of Missouri, St. Louis.
boys become family men. The Bureau viewed the abnormality of the unattached boy in
terms of his detachment from family life. Isaac Gurman, a caseworker at the Bureau,
contrasted the “normal boy” with its clients. A normal boy had his childhood behind him,
but could not yet accept the “mature responsibilities of manhood.” Because a healthy
family, consisting of a mother and father, reared this boy, the Bureau considered him an
“average normal boy” who would, with time, develop accordingly. Gurman continued,
“Even a cursory examination…convinces one that our young clients are not normal,
average boys because the force making for normality, the family group, had in some way
failed to function properly or did not exist long enough to fulfill its purpose.”

90 The Bureau asked, how would these boys become men? To aid in the development of these
boys, the Bureau sought to reunite them with their families. However, because family
dysfunction often prevented cohesion, and spurred the boy to become unattached, the
Bureau developed other intensive casework methods to help boys become men. The
program for unattached boys developed by the Bureau aided boys older than fourteen,
who were too old for the children’s organizations in the city, and younger than twenty
one, not quite yet adult men. Thus, while theorists like G. Stanley Hall worried about
boys this age becoming overly civilized, the Bureau worried that time spent away from
family created undeveloped men.91

To an even greater extent in its boys’ work, the Bureau tied its success as a
professional casework organization to the importance of employing male caseworkers.

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90 Case Work with Homeless Men and Boys, 32, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

91 See, Gail Bederman, “‘Teaching Our Sons to Do What We Have Been Teaching the Savages to
Avoid’: G. Stanley Hall, Racial Recapitulation, and the Neurasthenic Paradox,” in Manliness and
Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917 (Chicago: University
The Bureau viewed its work with boys as the organization’s best opportunity to
demonstrate the acumen of its professional abilities. Boys’ work presented Bureau social
workers with an opportunity to do “‘casework’ at its best” because the “possibilities for
turning ‘insolvent personalities’ into permanently solvent ones are far greater among
boys and young men than anywhere else in the total case load of the Bureau.”\textsuperscript{92} The
Bureau argued that, as men, male caseworkers naturally understood the problems of
unattached boys better than female caseworkers. In order to successfully professionalize,
the Bureau’s boys’ work program called strictly for a male presence. By insisting on male
caseworkers, the Bureau’s program for boys serves as a nice companion to the work of
other historians who have argued for the importance of female gender for social work
professionalization.\textsuperscript{93} More importantly, by emphasizing a “natural” connection between
men and boys, the Bureau’s work demonstrates that masculinity in social work
professionalization went beyond the mere insistence on “masculine” values like
objectivity, a concept often employed by female social workers as they sought
professional status. Instead, the Bureau sought to help boys become men through cross-
class and intergenerational bonds.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{92} Some Observations Concerning the Boys’ Department, February 1933, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers
of the Bureau for Men. Other boys’ work agencies like the Boy Scouts of America and the YMCA also
viewed boys this age as particularly pliable. See, David Macleod, \textit{Building Character in the American Boy:}
The Boy Scouts, YMCA, and their Forerunners, 1870-1920 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press,
1983), 97.

\textsuperscript{93} See, Robyn Muncy, \textit{Creating a Female Dominion in American Reform, 1890-1935} (New York:
(New York: Free Press, 1994); Gwendolyn Mink, \textit{The Wages of Motherhood: Inequality in the Welfare}

\textsuperscript{94} Regina Kunzel, \textit{Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization}
The economic crisis that began in 1929 appears to have served as the impetus for the Bureau’s program for boys. Of course, social workers had long concerned themselves with providing care for children and youth. Concerns over the young, particularly those cared for only by single mothers, served as an impetus for many reformers at the turn of the twentieth century. A closer analogy to the Bureau’s work with boys might be an organization like the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts used outdoor and team activities to build “character” in middle class boys. However, the Boy Scouts largely served middle class boys, and restricted lower class boys from joining. While lower class youth around the turn of the century could join “boys’ clubs,” the directors of these clubs sought to pacify the boys, and not necessarily aid in their development. As popular contemporary books like Thomas Minehan’s Boy and Girl Tramps of America made clear, the depression worsened the situation of poor youth and sent many on the road, away from their families, looking for something better. Far from being a rite of passage into manhood, as some boys perceived their tramping, the Bureau looked upon this familial breakdown with horror. Although other organizations of a religious character existed in St. Louis to provide shelter and food to boys, none had yet employed the precepts of professional social work. As more boys filtered into their network, the Bureau began to see them as a special group within the rubric of problems associated with unattached men that, through professional casework, might be reconciled.

Although the Bureau did not create a formal plan for unattached boys until 1932, caseworkers nevertheless kept valuable statistical records on the number of boys that

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95 Many scholars have examined the efforts of social workers in dealing with these problems. For some of the best examples, see, Mink. The Wages of Motherhood; Linda Gordon, Pitied But Not Entitled.
96 Macleod, Building Character in the American Boy, xii-xiii.
97 Macleod, Building Character in the American Boy, 63, 300.
wandered into the Municipal Lodging House and their casework offices. These early statistical reports allow us to gain a general understanding of the characteristics of the boys who applied to the Bureau. For example, the Bureau tracked each boy’s age, race, level of education, job history, disabilities, and hometown. Additionally, the Bureau recorded evidence of social maladjustment and the reason(s) why the boy abandoned his home. These two categories informed and reinforced one another, and revealed a host of characteristics that prevented boys from becoming men. Most importantly, these early records reveal that the Bureau thought about its boy clients in ways that mirrored its understanding of unattached men. The Bureau viewed these boys as on a developmental trajectory that terminated in the deviancy of begging and detachment from family and a healthy social life. Because of their youth, the caseworkers at the Bureau desired to prevent boys detached from their families from becoming like the multitude of men at the lodging house.

Early on in the Bureau’s history, the presence of boys appears to have been rather slight. Although the number of active cases varied each year, the number of boys always remained under ten percent of the total caseload. In 1926, only seven percent of the Bureau’s caseload consisted of individuals under twenty. In 1927, that number declined even further, falling to merely four and a half percent. In 1928, the number rose to just above five percent, only to fall back to an even five percent in 1929 and just over four percent in 1930.\textsuperscript{98} According to the extant records, during some of the spring and summer

\textsuperscript{98} Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1926, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1927, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1928, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1929, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1930, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; The annual reports for 1931 and 1932 no longer exist.
months the Bureau saw as little as two individuals under twenty.\textsuperscript{99} During the winter, for obvious reasons, the number of boys visiting the shelter did increase, but the proportions remained low.\textsuperscript{100} It is probable that these statistics do not accurately represent the number of boys that visited the Bureau. Fearing that they would be sent home if the caseworker discovered their youthful age, many boys probably tried to pass as older. These reports suggest that the Bureau’s lack of a concrete plan early on is a reflection of the relatively small number of boys that actually requested assistance.

In 1930, the Bureau reexamined one hundred case records of boys between the ages of fourteen and twenty, from the period between February 1925 and April 25, 1930. This report perhaps served as one of the first in a fact finding mission about the nature of the problem presented by unattached boys. The report suggests that the Bureau would have probably viewed the unattached boy as a problem of the white, native born family. The Bureau counted over ninety percent of the boys as both “American” and “white”. Additionally, only twenty four of the boys came from families where the parents were not divorced, separated, or widowed. Astonishingly, twenty five of the cases examined came from families where neither parent remained alive.\textsuperscript{101} This would have no doubt been of special concern to the caseworkers at the Bureau because a significant wall in their defense against unattached deviancy, the family, had been irreparably breached.

\textsuperscript{99} Monthly Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, June 1926, Folder 22, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Monthly Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, April 1930, Folder 22, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

\textsuperscript{100} Monthly Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, December 1925, Folder 22, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Monthly Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, January 1926, Folder 22, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Monthly Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, December 1926, Folder 22, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

\textsuperscript{101} Analysis of 100 Cases of Homeless Boys, 25 April 1930, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
Like their investigations into the lives of adult men, the Bureau looked for the “psycho-social” causes of the boys’ present status as unattached. The Bureau’s discoveries distinguished the normal boy from the abnormal one, and established a list of properties that must be transcended for the boy to develop normally. While unemployment made up about a third of both the problems and causes of each boy’s predicament, this is in itself quite significant. For boys to languish in unemployment, away from their families, would be to permit the formation of improper habits. Conflicts with parents caused many boys to become homeless, either because the parents abandoned the boy or the boy ran away. Repairing these broken family bonds would become a crucial goal of the Bureau’s Boy’s Work program.

Many of the psycho-social problems the caseworkers discovered in boys express the extent to which they related sexual purity and hetero-normativity to manhood. Illicit sexual activity by boys, as well as men, signified important developmental issues. Illicit sexuality manifested itself for the Bureau both physically and psychologically. For example, the Bureau tracked the sexually transmitted diseases the boys carried (syphilis was listed as a physical disability). Furthermore, the Bureau determined that some boys suffered from “sex problems” while others acted as “sex perverts”. Unfortunately, the Bureau did not elaborate on the meaning of these two terms. Given the obsessive worries many middle class people had over masturbation, the Bureau may have categorized it as a sex problem. Furthermore, because contemporaries often used “pervert” to discuss men who dressed as women and solicited sex from other men, the latter most likely signified

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homosexual behavior. In order for boys to become men, these problems and perversions had to be overcome.\textsuperscript{103}

For the Bureau, one of the most important problems plaguing boys was “wanderlust” or a sense of “adventure” that caused them to prematurely and wrong-headedly leave their homes.\textsuperscript{104} Nels Anderson, the famous hobo turned academic, defined wanderlust in his seminal 1923 text on the homeless man, \textit{The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man}. Anderson defined wanderlust as “a longing for new experience. It is the yearning to see new places, to feel the thrill of new sensations…” Wanderlust particularly affected young boys, who looked upon the traveling tramp not as a problem, but as an interesting person whose life was both heroic and enviable.\textsuperscript{105} The Bureau looked upon wanderlust as a significant problem and impediment to casework. A boy with wanderlust abnegated the traditional path to manhood in favor of a track the Bureau marked as abnormal. For boys afflicted with wanderlust, the Bureau recommended that the caseworker actually return with the boy to his home to explain the problem to the boy’s parents.\textsuperscript{106} Thus, from the Bureau’s perspective, the examinations, interviews, and investigations that it conducted into each boy’s life revealed significant hurdles to the development of a breadwinning man committed to a family of dependents.


\textsuperscript{104} Analysis of 100 Cases of Homeless Boys, 25 April 1930, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

\textsuperscript{105} Nels Anderson, \textit{The Hobo: The Sociology of the Homeless Man} (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1923), 82-83.

\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Case Work with Homeless Men and Boys}, 32, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
The 1930 report also reveals the considerable class distance between the caseworker and the boy client. First, out of the one hundred cases examined, only six boys were fourteen or fifteen. The importance of this fact is illuminated when one relates it to the education levels of the boys in the sample; only twenty nine of the boys had any education passed the eighth grade. Many of the Bureau boy clients would have therefore been older boys with little education. While this was not entirely unordinary, the caseworkers that interviewed and developed plans for these boys had college degrees. The jobs that most of these boys held reflected their level education. The boys examined worked in a variety of occupations, thirty seven different occupations in total. However, an overwhelming majority, sixty five, the Bureau listed simply as “laborers”. Furthermore, at least twenty five of the other occupations could easily be considered unskilled, making ninety percent of the boys examined part of the working class. Because no job description is appended to explain jobs like “fire-eater” and “cow puncher”, this number could be higher. Many of the boys also found employment in traditionally transient occupations. Although thirty one had recently held a job in St. Louis, only ten said that they lived in St. Louis. Nineteen boys came from other places in Missouri (the report did not say explicitly where in Missouri) and sixteen came from Illinois, while the rest hailed from locations as disparate as New York, California, and “Porto Rico”. Examining their overall transiency from another perspective, only nineteen had been in the city for one year or more, while thirty five applied to the Bureau for assistance after

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107 As late as 1920, only sixteen percent of seventeen year olds had graduated high school. See, Macleod, *Building Character in the American Boy*, 24.

108 Analysis of 100 Cases of Homeless Boys, 25 April 1930, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
being in St. Louis for only one day.\textsuperscript{109} The boys’ jobs would have probably been low paying, making it difficult to eventually support a family, while transient work meant crucial time away from one’s family.

The Bureau’s analysis of its casework with boys up to 1930 suggested to the Bureau that a proper program for boys would be needed. In some cases, the Bureau achieved measurable success: twenty five boys secured employment, two joined the army, and nineteen were reunited with their families. However, the Bureau turned seven boys over to other agencies while the status of twenty two cases was “unknown”, implying that the boy became estranged from the Bureau. Another twenty two received the ambiguous status of “made own plan” which, because the Bureau believed unattached boys needed the guidance of a professional caseworker, probably implied something negative. Furthermore, because three boys remained with the Bureau still undergoing casework treatment at the time of the report’s release, the outcome of their casework experience could not yet be judged. A handwritten note at the end of the report reveals the Bureau’s conclusions about its work with boys up to that point, “The [treatment] of these boys requires careful and sympathetic casework treatment.”\textsuperscript{110}

If the Bureau had little difficulty determining a course of action from its analysis, it is more problematic for the historian to assess the significance or success of the caseworker’s activities. First, the Bureau did not provide any explanations for the seemingly positive outcomes of its casework. The Bureau did not record what types of jobs it secured for the boys or how well they paid. In short, would the jobs that the

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\textsuperscript{109} Analysis of 100 Cases of Homeless Boys, 25 April 1930, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men. \\
\textsuperscript{110} Analysis of 100 Cases of Homeless Boys, 25 April 1930, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men. 
\end{flushright}
Bureau found for each boy allow that boy to develop into a normal man? Furthermore, one should also question the Bureau’s success in reuniting boys with their families. Because of problematic family dynamics, many boys left their homes. Could casework truly reconcile family differences? Moreover, did the Bureau exercise good judgment in deciding whether or not to return a boy to a home in which he might be in danger? For the caseworkers at the Bureau, the answer had to be affirmative.

Although the results of the 1930 report made clear that unattached boys faced myriad problems that prevented them from developing normally, the Bureau did not immediately develop a formal plan. In the meantime, the Bureau for Homeless Men still treated the boys who found themselves under its care. Although the Bureau began to see boys as special problems that deserved their own type of care, from the foregoing section it becomes clear that Bureau caseworkers applied the same knowledge and standards to the boys who needed their help that they used in providing assistance to older unattached men. Thus, the importance of family (as a socializing force), work (so that one might be a breadwinner), and adherence to certain sexual norms also found expression in the Bureau’s work with boys. The goal of providing assistance to these boys, as it was with the men, was to overcome these problems. Between 1930 and the creation of the Boys’ Lodge in April 1933, the Bureau would continue to define the contours of a concerted program.

The Bureau for Homeless Men did not develop a formal casework plan for boys in isolation. As with the other aspects of its work, the Bureau participated in a national community interested in providing social services to unattached individuals. For example, the Bureau frequently discussed tactics with the Central Bureau for Homeless and
Transient Men in Cleveland, Ohio. In one exchange in 1931, Walter Hoy, the St. Louis Bureau’s first executive secretary and caseworker, mused on what he called “one of our most difficult case work problems”, the unattached boy. Hoy cited approvingly the work being done in Los Angeles. The Los Angeles transient agency began by supplying dormitory care only, while outsourcing the casework to other social welfare agencies. Eventually, the Los Angeles agency moved all their services in-house with seemingly positive results. The Bureau would eventually adopt a similar all inclusive plan for its boys’ work program.

Hoy and the caseworkers at the Central Bureau in Cleveland also discussed appropriate age ranges for a program that served homeless boys. The concern over age revolved around the question of the appropriate amount of homosocial interaction among boys. Hoy argued for establishing a minimum age of fourteen for agencies for unattached men that also sought to help unattached boys. Hoy believed that individuals younger than fourteen should be placed in children’s agencies or foster homes which, because they provided “as near to a normal home life as possible”, could benefit these boys before they became too susceptible to corruption. In this instance, the Bureau connected the corruption of boys with its fears of the degradation and de-socialization caused by frequent homosocial contact. Hoy elaborated upon this sentiment when he stated that boys younger than fourteen should not be cared for with older boys, “especially in groups such as are placed in boy’s hotels.” Older, more seasoned boys might tempt and corrupt younger boys. Hoy also provided a rationale for placing boys older than fourteen in

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111 To Fred Zappolo from Walter Hoy, 5 March 1931, Folder 50, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
112 To Fred Zappolo from Walter Hoy, 5 March 1931, Folder 50, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
private homes. Because many of the Bureau’s boy clients came from broken homes, Hoy argued that a home environment, even if the relationship between parent and child was not biological, would be beneficial because it would remove the boy from an all-male environment. These discussions that the Bureau had with other casework agencies not only reveal a national community interested in the problems of unattached men and boys, but also something approaching a consensus on the importance of casework in helping them.

The Bureau also had to contend with other local relief efforts while formulating its boys’ program. Like many private social agencies during the depression, the Bureau faced reduced funding levels. As in countless cities across the United States, the depression severely strained the private welfare organizations in St. Louis. By 1930, the predicament became so dire that, in October of that year, the mayor formed the Citizens’ Committee on Relief and Employment, an umbrella organization that distributed city funds to private relief agencies. It was within this context that the Bureau released forty case studies to what it called the “Council on Relief.” The purpose of this move appears to have been to demonstrate the necessity of a program for boys (and the Bureau’s need for city funds to create the program). The cases chosen by the Bureau illuminate its nexus of concerns surrounding the breadwinner ideal and the potential of a maladjusted boy, strained by an economic recession, to eventually attain manhood. These case studies also demonstrate that the Bureau conducted significant, probing, historical and psychological

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113 Charlotte Ring Fusz, “Origin and Development of the Saint Louis Relief Administration, 1929-1937” (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, St. Louis University, 1938), 9-10

114 Fusz shows that, while new relief agencies were not created, the city formed an Executive Committee and a Technical Committee to deliberate upon how funds should be distributed Fusz, “Origin and Development of the Saint Louis Relief Administration, 1929-1937”, 10-13a.
investigations into its client’s lives. Most importantly, the Bureau undoubtedly chose many of the cases to demonstrate its ability to rehabilitate boys who came from extreme depravity. Even the cases that are less shocking or less successful serve to make the same point: boys who live outside of the family, boys who face unemployment, needed the assistance that could only be provided by properly trained social workers.

While the Bureau often placed blame upon the choices made by individual homeless men, the caseworkers investigating each boy’s life did not always attribute the boy’s maladjustment to his own decisions and actions. In many of the cases examined, the social worker told the story of the boy’s life in such a way that placed significant blame on his mother and father. These cases reveal the Bureau’s assumptions not only about proper boyhood, but also the contours and boundaries of respectable parenthood. Two cases illustrate this point well. In the first case, the boy was left fatherless after his father passed away. Before he passed away, however, the Bureau remarked that he left indelibly damaging marks upon his son’s life. The record stated plainly that, “[Boy] is confirmed masturbator. Taught practice by father who had been bootlegger before his death. Father cohabited with women in boy’s presence.”115 After the father’s death, the mother remarried, but went “romancing with ‘boy friend’ in hideaway.” With his sister unable to care for the family, the boy went “bumming” and eventually sought relief from the Bureau. After the initial investigations into the boy’s life, the caseworker stated that the Bureau paid for the boy to join a club (costing the Bureau $3.00 per week) and that he found a job and soon became self-supporting.116 This case, while ostensibly a successful

115 “Case 1”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
116 “Case 1”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
one, nonetheless illustrates the limits of the Bureau’s insistence that families must be
united for a boy to properly develop.

The second boy endured perhaps an even more stormy life than the first. This boy
had already been a client of the Provident Association, a private family welfare agency in
the city. However, because the boy found himself estranged from his family, the
Provident Association passed him on to the Bureau. Like the last boy, this boy’s family
history proved to be unsavory. The boy’s family appears to have been embroiled in a life
of crime: his grandfather died in prison; his mother was a “dope fiend”; and his father, a
“proud” criminal, called his son a fool during the caseworker’s interview with him for
having been “caught.”\textsuperscript{117} The Bureau found that the boy was “a sex pervert, woman
impersonator. Known as a ‘ pancres’.” After a physical, the doctor conducting the
examination recommended that the boy receive a circumcision to cure him of his
perversion. While it is unclear if the Bureau actually subjected the boy to the
circumcision, the caseworker did in fact send the boy to an unspecified farm. The Bureau
believed that rural environments, separated from the temptations offered by city life,
helped “sex perverts” make adjustments to a normal life.\textsuperscript{118} On the farm, the boy learned
to raise his own chickens and, according to the Bureau, he began to show signs of
improvement. In this case, the Bureau measured success in a surprising way, suggesting
that is was particularly interested in demonstrating its casework skill to the Council on
Relief. According to the report, the boy took an interest in physical exercise “for

\textsuperscript{117} “Case 2”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4,
Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\textsuperscript{118} Case Work with Homeless Men and Boys, 36, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
‘muscles’”, and wanted to learn interior decorating. Furthermore, sending the boy to the farm required completely separating him from his family, however noxious it might have been.

The Bureau did not find success with all of its clients. Although the two previous boys came from abject circumstances, the Bureau undoubtedly found success with them through no small effort on the part of the boy. When the Bureau met with failure, it did not place blame on its shortcomings as a professional social worker agency or with the casework methodology generally. Instead, the Bureau often attributed the failure of casework to character flaws within the boy. “Case 3” is a striking example. In many ways, the background and familial circumstances of this case with the previous two share remarkable similarities. The Bureau attributed the “bitterness and hatred of society” displayed by Case 3 to the treatment that the boy received from his father. The Bureau noted that the boy lived as a petty criminal and, along with his brother, also a client of the Bureau, followed “the gangster’s codes and use[d] the lingo.” After a psychological and physical examination, the doctors found that the boy had gonorrhea and a bedwetting problem. To cure the latter, a doctor recommended that the boy be circumcised. The record noted that the caseworker made little progress on the case, primarily because the boy “was just plain lazy.” The caseworker contrasted the lack of progress he made with Case 3 with the gains made with his brother. The record stated about the latter that

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119 “Case 2”, Cases to form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

120 “Case 4”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

121 “Case 3”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
he differed from his brother “chiefly in that he will work more or less.”

Perhaps in an effort to make up for its inability to help Case 3, the Bureau’s record stated that the doctors who examined the boy found the Bureau’s work to be worthwhile, and recommended that it continue.

In order to combat the inevitable conclusion that it only helped sexually impure, lazy boys, the Bureau also used the case studies submitted to the relief council to highlight the worthiness of some of its clients. “Case 37” illustrates the sort of worthy, virtuous boy that the Bureau could help with city funds. The caseworker glowingly reviewed the boy, stating emphatically that he symbolized “the unconquerable American boy.” Although his father and sisters deserted, and his mother died, he nonetheless educated himself and by the age of sixteen or eighteen (the caseworker could not determine the boy’s age), had found a good trade. “And what’s not to be minimized”, the caseworker continued, “he keeps himself morally, sexually clean.” The boy sought out relief only because of the economic crisis, and the caseworker argued that the boy would undoubtedly become self supporting again soon. Unfortunately, the Bureau made few of these sorts of glowing overtures to the sturdiness and respectability of its clients.

By the end of 1932, the Bureau for Homeless Men no longer formally ignored the problems presented by homeless boys in the midst of a depression. The Bureau envisioned the problem of the unattached boy in near apocalyptic terms. “The seriousness of the problem is obvious. We have a small army of boys scattered from coast to coast.

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122 “Case 4”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
123 “Case 3”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
124 “Case 37”, Cases to Form Basis of Publicity by Council on Relief, 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
who have broken with home and community.” Instead of receiving nourishment and security from within the family, unattached boys received their education from criminals and “hardened men of the road,” men that would recruit these boys into their dangerous, deviant lifestyle. Most problematically for the Bureau, as boys spent more time on the road, “the value of home means less.” Thus, as the Bureau formulated a partially publicly financed program for unattached boys, its primary concerns and motivations revolved around the inviolability of the family and the possibility for unattached boys to develop properly.

The Bureau outlined a formal theory and agenda for a program dedicated to boys’ work that contextualized the need for a program within a worsening economic depression. “As the period of economic depression continues”, its thinking went, “the personal problems of boys and young men are going to be increasingly difficult to handle and the ‘case turnover’ will be less rapid.” As a result of the depression, boys increasingly faced exacerbated mental stress related to unemployment, inducements to transiency, and an increase in family conflict likely to result in the dissolution of the family. Furthermore, the Bureau surmised that boys who took to the road might face an existential crisis if they discarded “old axioms and standards…without any new philosophy of life to take the place of the old.” While the Bureau often located an individual’s maladjustment within himself or his family, it admitted that, with the collapse of the economy, it was “no longer just a question of helping a boy…get adjusted

125 To Eleanor Myers from Walter Hoy, 23 March 1932, Folder 51, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
126 Some Observations Concerning the Boys’ Department, 2, 15 February 1933, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
127 Some Observations Concerning the Boys’ Department, 2, 15 February 1933, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
to his social environment. We are confronted by a social and economic environment that is ‘out of joint’…”\textsuperscript{128} The Bureau would need to enact drastic measures to ensure that its boy clients not lose confidence in their ability to become men.

The Bureau did not, however, offer any radical plan to solve the country’s problems, or even suggest economic redistribution within the bounds of capitalism. Instead, the Bureau turned inward and argued that clients could most effectively be readjusted by inspiring leadership from social workers “who are equal to the demands of a new day.” The Bureau’s prescriptions for this type of social worker revolved around its vision of professional casework. The Bureau emphatically argued that the employees of the Boys’ Department, two caseworkers and a supervisor, should be men themselves. First, the Bureau argued, male employees could “sense the problem of this group [boys] more directly and win their confidence more quickly than a woman.” Moreover, the caseworkers themselves needed guidance from a supervisor to whom they could relate. “For this to be possible”, the Bureau argued, “it is necessary to have a spirit of camaraderie and a frank ‘give and take’ between supervisor and workers that does not obtain so easily where a woman is trying to lead a staff otherwise entirely composed of men.”\textsuperscript{129} Although the Bureau disavowed homosocial bonding among homeless men, male bonding among caseworkers and between caseworkers and clients became a necessary component of its plan to help boys.

\textsuperscript{128} Some Observations Concerning the Boys’ Department, 2, 15 February 1933, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

\textsuperscript{129} Some Observations Concerning the Boys’ Department, 7, 15 February 1933, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
The Bureau’s insistence on exclusively employing male caseworkers is particularly interesting because its reasoning for this arrangement so oddly harkens back to the days when non-professional female visitors argued that they could best serve troubled mothers because of their innate female compassion. Of course, men often held elevated positions or served in management in social work agencies, but the Bureau grounded its success in casework with boys by mixing its professional aptitude with innate manly sensibilities. In a field dominated by women, the manly sensibilities of its caseworkers would set the Bureau apart. Furthermore, the Bureau’s argument for a male only staff not only assumed that individual male caseworkers had important gendered characteristics, but that an important gendered connection existed between professional male caseworkers. While the Bureau viewed the homosocial relationships between unattached men as problematic and dangerous, homosocial relationships between caseworkers performed a crucial function in their jobs. These male connections allowed caseworkers to get along better amongst one another, while also helping them relate to the problems faced by their clients. The Bureau’s arguments for a male only workforce should not be interpreted as an attempt to undermine women in the profession because of a fear that a female dominated profession would undermine its professional legitimacy. On the contrary, these arguments instead suggest that the Bureau sought to carve out a professional sphere for men that could serve as a companion to the casework performed by women.

130 For the volunteer social worker’s sense of feminine identity, Kunzel, Fallen Women, Problem Girls, 2.
131 For the prevalence of men in management positions in social work bureaucracies, see Daniel Walkowitz, Working with Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle Class Identity (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 89.
As the Bureau began to implement its casework program for boys, housing emerged as the group’s first concern. The Boys’ Work committee invoked the persistent problem of homosocial contact among homeless men and boys and found its present housing options undesirable because they would place men and boys in close proximity. As Nels Anderson described in *The Hobo*, homeless men and boys engaged in intercourse, sometimes consensual, other times forced. In either case, this relationship imperiled the boy’s development. The committee’s opposition to the use of the YMCA expressed these sentiments: “the housing of boys and men should not be combined as proper supervision is impossible in a men’s dormitory.” Similarly, the committee worried about mixing boys newly on the road with seasoned boys. The representative from the Juvenile Court, “Mr. Taft”, argued that it would be entirely undesirable to house non-delinquent homeless boys at his facility because mixing them with the delinquents might corrupt the otherwise worthy boys. Eventually, the Bureau agreed to find a separate housing facility for boys that would provide full casework services that would be supplemented by a recreation program designed by the YMCA.

Finding a domicile that would aid in the development of the boy into manhood proved to be a difficult task for the Bureau to accomplish. Before the creation of the Boys’ Department, the Bureau housed boys in a manner similar to the way it housed its older clients. Some stayed in the Municipal Lodging House while the Bureau helped

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134 Meeting Minutes of the Executives of Boys’ Work Agencies, 30 December 1932, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
others pay for rooms in various hotels around the city. The caseworkers at the Bureau viewed this method as problematic. It did not recreate what the Bureau thought of as the “natural surroundings” for a boy. As the Bureau sullenly remarked, “too many boys are being sent to rooming houses and flop hotels. It is too early in the lives of most of these boy clients for us to accept the flop hotel...as their natural surroundings.”135 The Bureau also found problems with foster care. In theory, the Bureau believed that the foster home situation seemed ideal. A private home away from the temptations of street life seemed congruent with the Bureau’s agenda. After some consideration, the Bureau concluded that the relationship between the foster parent (they assumed it only to be a mother) and the child was too artificial and that the mother rarely provided assistance for the boy beyond room and board. Most significantly, “it is too often found that she [the foster mother] does not understand the problem of boys.”136 If it seemed that the boy might actually benefit from a foster institution, the Bureau suggested that the potential foster mother be thoroughly interviewed to determine her moral qualities. The Bureau also stressed that the boy be placed in a home that did not exceed a certain standard of living so that if the boy found a job, he would “be able to maintain the same standard” without yearning for more.137

Ultimately, these facilities lacked central oversight by a male caseworker. Toward this end, the Bureau established a separate lodge primarily for transient boys in April

135 Some Observations Concerning the Boys’ Department, 4, 15 February 1933, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
136 Case Work with Homeless Men and Boys, 35, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
137 Case Work with Homeless Men and Boys, 36, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men; See also, Foster Homes, March 1933, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
1933.\textsuperscript{138} The Bureau placed any white transient boy who applied to the organization for services in its boys’ lodge. The boys’ lodge provided its inhabitants with food, shelter, and work. Most importantly, the lodge served as a site of rehabilitation for transient boys. Through casework and recreation, the Bureau sought to make an adjustment in its clients at the lodge. After a boy applied to the Bureau, a caseworker briefly interviewed him and then allowed him to rest for the remaining day. In the following morning a more intensive interview would take place. The boys stayed in a spacious room that measured about 30 x 55 feet. Adjacent to this main sleeping area was a reading room, shower, and office. On the floor above them was a room dedicated to recreational activities.\textsuperscript{139} The Bureau, like many others involved in boys’ work, found in recreation for boys an antidote to many problems plaguing urban boys.\textsuperscript{140} The Bureau also supplied the boys with work at the lodge, but the parameters of the work they performed remained undefined. The point of this work, recreation, and casework, the Bureau stated, was to ensure that the boys “have no time to spare”, presumably to keep them from getting into trouble. The Bureau considered its work with these transient boys a success if it returned the boy to his home.\textsuperscript{141}

The lodge allowed the Bureau to maintain almost complete supervision over its boy clients. By housing all its transient boys in one place, it minimized the possibility that the boy would be able to sneak away undetected. This supervision had its limitations. With minimal funds to establish a boys’ lodge in a separate building, the Bureau opened

\textsuperscript{138} To Alida Bowler from Myron Gwinner, 26 August 1933, Folder 52, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau for Men.  
\textsuperscript{139} To J. Harrison Stein from Myron Gwinner, 29 July 1933, Folder 52, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau for Men.  
\textsuperscript{140} For another example of this, see Macleod, \textit{Building Character in the American Boy}, 32.  
\textsuperscript{141} To Alida Bowler from Myron Gwinner, 26 August 1933, Folder 52, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
its lodge on the floor above its cafeteria. This presented certain problems because boys and older men would be in close proximity if they ate together. The Bureau sensed the problems that could have arisen from this situation and prevented boys from eating with the older men below them. In order to feed the boys, the Bureau brought to them separate meals three times a day (the older men received only two meals). Another limitation to the Bureau’s ability to supervise was its lack of legal authority to hold the boys at the lodge. Because of this, many boys simply left the lodge whenever they desired. Most boys stayed at the lodge for nine or ten days before moving on, either to their hometown or to their next destination as transients. The Bureau estimated that, out of every three boys who stayed at the lodge, they successfully returned one of them home. Given these statistics, it would be difficult to assert the success of the Bureau’s activities.\footnote{142 To J. Harrison Stein from Myron Gwinner, 29 July 1933, Folder 52, Box 3, Papers of the Bureau for Men.}

While the boys’ home provided important services for the urban homeless, the caseworkers at the Bureau believed that the urban environment potentially corrupted boys. In order to provide a more wholesome experience, the Bureau opened a work camp at the Gray Summit location of the Missouri Botanical Gardens, established in 1934 with funding from the Federal Emergence Relief Administration (FERA). The same themes of supervision, recreation, and casework pervaded the Bureau’s work camp. The Bureau laid out two explicit goals that it sought to achieve through this work camp that reflected its overall desire to cultivate a proper manhood within its boy clients. Like the lodge, the camp enabled caseworkers to supervise the boys twenty four hours a day for as long as the boy stayed at the camp. Caseworkers could then always provide assistance and guidance to the boy and prevent improper behavior from occurring. Furthermore, camp
life prevented the boys from “spending most of their time loafing around the city streets.” Most importantly, camps permitted “man to man” interaction between the caseworker and the boy.\textsuperscript{143} The Bureau also envisioned the camp as a place where it could “teach a boy what it meant to put in a full day’s work and where we could also give him three square meals a day along with helpful camp life.”\textsuperscript{144} The Bureau also used the camp to provide the boys with education and healthy recreation. To this end, the Bureau brought in a local high school teacher to teach classes two evenings a week, and educated the boys in subjects pertaining to nature and camp life, and played movies once a week.\textsuperscript{145} Not all the goals of the camp should be seen as purely altruistic. The camp also served an economic function for the Missouri Botanical Gardens. The Bureau supplied labor for the projects of the Botanical Gardens, as it had “no available funds”, but had projects that needed to be finished.\textsuperscript{146} The boys brought in by the Bureau built roads, trails, and cleared obstructed lands.\textsuperscript{147}

Although the Bureau often found that the camp operated under capacity and suffered from labor shortages, this did not stop the agency from ejecting boys from the program for engaging in behavior that transgressed the boundaries of proper manhood. This would not be the first time that the Bureau removed boys from its programs for not following its prescriptions. One survey of the Bureau’s work with boys before 1933 listed

\textsuperscript{143} Case Work with Homeless Men and Boys, 21, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\textsuperscript{144} Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 15, 1934, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\textsuperscript{145} Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 16, 1934, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\textsuperscript{146} Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 15, 1934, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\textsuperscript{147} To Caroline Bedford from Myron Gwinner, 18 June 1935, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
a number of reasons why a set of cases was closed. Some of these were positive, such as familial reconciliation or gainful employment, while other outcomes were decidedly negative. Out of 274 boys, Bureau caseworkers removed five boys from its rolls because they went to jail, two were kicked off the rolls because they refused to work, and one boy’s case was closed because he was sent through the juvenile system. At the Botanical Gardens camp, the Bureau seemed to invite the boys to act like delinquents. The Bureau allowed all the boys at camp to be free from work from Saturday afternoon until Sunday night. While the boys only made fifty cents per week, the Bureau permitted the boys to visit neighboring towns on the weekend as long as they returned before nightfall. In spite of these lenient rules, the Bureau only discussed dismissing four boys for delinquent behavior (the exact behavior was not defined), while six boys were counted as A.W.O.L. These numbers are admittedly low, but it is probable that other cases went unreported. In any case, the Bureau’s banishment of some boys reinforces the fact that it tied the acceptance of its vision of manhood to basic relief.

In some sense, the Bureau’s camp at Gray Summit operated as a work camp for boys who did not qualify for work through the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC operated at a higher, more respectable level than the Bureau’s camps. As historian Margot Canaday argued, government officials and the public alike held a positive view of the CCC because helped either respectable boys with families or boys who could easily identity a person or persons as dependent upon their labor. Many contrasted the CCC to the Federal Transient Program, which aided unattached men whom many found to be

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148 Non-Family Boys on Relief, Pamphlet, 33, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
149 To Caroline Bedford from Myron Gwinner, 18 June 1935, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
deviant and dangerous.\textsuperscript{150} The point is perhaps even more relevant when one compares
the CCC with the Bureau’s camp at the Botanical Gardens because each program aided
boys. Similar to the Transient Program, which the Bureau actually administered in
Missouri, the Bureau’s camp at the Botanical Gardens received FERA funding and
provided relief to unattached boys.\textsuperscript{151} While requirements for what could constitute a
dependent were lax, they existed nonetheless and restricted unattached boys from
receiving a job through the CCC. Although the CCC did not accept unattached boys, the
Bureau did accept boys with families on occasion, but they were boys who were not
eligible for the CCC for reasons beyond family life.\textsuperscript{152} For example, the Bureau’s camp
accepted boys under 18, parolees, boys who could not pass the physical examination
required by the CCC, and “many other miscellaneous groups that would not normally be
eligible for the CCC.”\textsuperscript{153} When the federal government cut off aid to FERA in favor of
programs like the Works Progress Administration (also designed to aid men with
families) and the CCC, the Bureau’s camp at the Botanical Gardens was forced to
close.\textsuperscript{154}

Although a lack of adequate funding forced the Bureau to close down its
Botanical Gardens camp, work with unattached boys became a special concern of the

\textsuperscript{150} Canaday, \textit{Straight State}, 117-119; “Outline of President’s Program to Aid Youth”, 26 June
1935, \textit{St. Louis Post Dispatch}.

\textsuperscript{151} The Bureau’s administration of the transient program in Missouri will be the subject of the next
chapter.

\textsuperscript{152} To Caroline Bedford from Myron Gwinner, 18 June 1935, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the
Bureau for Men.

\textsuperscript{153} To Caroline Bedford from Myron Gwinner, 18 June 1935, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the
Bureau for Men.

\textsuperscript{154} Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1935, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau
for Men.
Bureau after the end of FERA and its resumption of social work as a private agency.\footnote{155 Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1935, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.} As with its pre-New Deal era work, and its work during the New Deal, the Bureau continued to structure its welfare program for unattached boys around the idea that they should be a part of a family and be aspiring breadwinners. In this way, the Bureau reflected what Andrew Morris called the “New Alignment”, the informal agreement that developed in the midst of the New Deal between public and private welfare agencies. The New Alignment held that the private agencies would focus on fewer, more specialized problem sectors of the population, while the public programs would create a broader relief net.\footnote{156 Andrew Morris, \textit{The Limits of Voluntarism: Charity and Welfare from the New Deal through the Great Society} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).}

The “New Alignment” would, of course, not instantly develop, and caseworkers at the Bureau seem to have worried that work with unattached boys would be enveloped and administered by family casework agencies. Isaac Gurman, a caseworker at the Bureau and the organization’s assistant secretary after 1935, noted that many family agencies began to perform this work and wondered whether these groups would “subordinate the attention and thought given to him [the unattached boy].” Gurman argued that agencies like his had separated from family agencies for good reason; the work that agencies like the Bureau performed demonstrated the efficacy of specialized work with unattached men and boys. In outlining the Bureau’s new program for boys, Gurman stated that the organization would focus on providing efficient, professional casework: “We will stress professional service rather than [just] maintenance care…we will limit our case load to the extent that we can watch everything we try.” Although the removal of federal funding may have temporarily checked the aspirations of the Bureau’s
caseworkers, they turned with an increasing emphasis toward boys as a way to reestablish and assert their professional aspirations.

In order to demonstrate the practicality of its work with boys, the Bureau began what it called “a program of apprenticeship training.” Through this training program, the Bureau endeavored to prevent unattached boys from taking the sort of jobs normally available to them – jobs in flop houses and pool halls. The Bureau feared that if unattached boys took jobs such as these, “the work of many years may be spoiled by the poor environment these jobs offered.” Yet the jobs in which the Bureau sought to place unattached boys would have made it difficult to easily attain the breadwinning, family man ideal. Only in exceptional cases, the Bureau argued, should a boy “be taught a skilled trade… the caseworker must be sure of his material [the unattached boy] since an additional failure in a life already replete with failures is exceedingly harmful…and may be the final straw which will preclude further social and economic progress.” The Bureau suggested that the best tactic may be to place boys in jobs where they can be kitchen helpers or porters. The Bureau’s contacts with employers bear this out. The Bureau contacted department stores, cafeterias, and the Missouri Pacific railroad, among others. In this way, the Bureau’s work program functioned similarly to the mother’s pensions. These pensions, designed with the intent to allow mothers to abstain from work and dedicate their time to raising children, rarely, if ever, attained their goals.

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158 To Aaron Fuller from Isaac Gurman, 17 June 1936, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
159 Case Work with Homeless Men and Boys, 38, Folder 332, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
160 For example, see, To Myron Gwinner from W.J. Wheeler, 26 June 1936, Folder 84, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
Furthermore, the amount of the pension rarely allowed a comfortable life to be lived. Similarly, the assistance and guidance provided by the Bureau to its boy clients was insufficient to the task of raising the boys to becoming family men.

While in St. Louis, either as residents or transients, many homeless and transient boys went to the Bureau when they needed help. Although the Bureau offered them some of the help they needed, it did so from the perspective of professional social workers and as adult men who saw in their beliefs about manhood its true formulation. In addition to supplying boys with relief assistance like food and shelter, the Bureau also sought to place the boys on the track to becoming breadwinning, family males. Because these boys were separated from their families and often unemployed, the Bureau understood them to be boys that, without help, could not become men. Thus, the Bureau tied basic necessities of life to the adoption of this standard of manhood. However, the Bureau never questioned whether its boy clients actually needed casework, or perhaps something else. Sure of their abilities to help homeless boys become family men, the caseworkers at the Bureau never really formulated a rationale for why society should provide professional assistance to homeless boys. Unfortunately, because the Bureau did not keep the record of the names of its boy clients, it is impossible to follow up on their lives in order to determine if they ever became breadwinners. Although they counted some cases as successes, and others as failures, the actual impact that the Bureau had on its boy client’s lives is unknown. Nonetheless, by 1940 the Bureau largely abandoned its work with homeless men and boys. But why did the Bureau feel it necessary, after 1935, to redouble its efforts on casework with unattached boys? To answer this question, we must turn to
the development of the Bureau first as a state funded, and then a federally funded, welfare agency.
Chapter Three: The Private Origins of a Public Program: The Federal Transient Program in Missouri

While the Bureau for Homeless Men transformed the way homeless, unattached men and boys received relief in St. Louis, the organization itself also underwent changes as it received increasing amounts of public funding. The stock market crash of October 1929 and the ensuing economic collapse strained the abilities of private welfare agencies in St. Louis to adequately conduct their casework. Private funds were less available and relief loads expanded. In October of 1930, St. Louis Mayor Victor Miller created the Citizens’ Committee on Relief and Employment. The Citizens’ Committee served as a conduit through which city funds could be administered to a select group of agencies, which included the Bureau. The Bureau’s transformation into a publicly funded welfare agency reached its peak with the creation of the New Deal’s Federal Transient Program in 1933, a relief program designed primarily for unattached men. The Bureau played a leading role in its development and administration in Missouri, and its vision of the family man continued to structure its work with homeless, unattached men. Myron Gwinner, the Bureau’s executive secretary, was appointed the director of Unit F, the new public division of the Bureau that served as the St. Louis arm of the Federal Transient Program. By being accepted to receive funds from the Citizens Committee and develop and administer the Federal Transient Program in Missouri, the Bureau’s success as professional social workers seemed assured. This chapter seeks to provide a case study in the development of the Federal Transient Program through an examination of the program’s operations in Missouri.\footnote{Charlotte Ring Fusz, “Origin and Development of the Saint Louis Relief Administration, 1929-1937” (Unpublished Master’s Thesis, St. Louis University, 1938), 9-10; By July 1933, city funds financed}
While public monies enabled agencies like the Bureau to survive, the stream of public funds was finite, and its disbursement placed the agencies receiving those funds within a welfare hierarchy that supplied more and better funding to groups that provided relief to men with families, as opposed to unattached men. This pattern was evident during the Bureau’s time as an agency under the Citizens’ Committee and as the administrator for the Federal Transient Program in Missouri. The Bureau’s ideal vision of a man happily committed to his family of dependents continued to structure its programs with unattached men as a publicly funded agency. This vision marked these men, because of their perceived distance from that ideal, as deviant and abnormal. This conceptual continuity had important effects upon the Bureau’s development as a public agency. In other words, the Bureau’s status as a well funded welfare agency was bound up with the unattached men it both stigmatized and assisted. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the agency that supplied funds for the transient program, was seen as a temporary relief measure, and the unpopularity of the Federal Transient Program did not bode well for continued funding of the program. With a shift in policy emphasis in the federal government from relief to security beginning in 1935, embodied in programs like Old Age Security, policymakers found only those men who were already breadwinners to be entitled to federal benefits. Because of the obliteration of private funding that resulted from economic depression, the federal government’s decision to end the Federal Transient Program in 1935 nearly destroyed the Bureau.\textsuperscript{162}

The Bureau for Homeless Men’s transition into a public agency began with the creation of the Citizens’ Committee on Relief and Employment. The Citizens’ Committee did not supply funds to every welfare agency in St. Louis. Instead, the Citizens’ Committee only admitted family welfare agencies that provided relief in addition to specialized, professional services based upon the particular needs of each client. The Citizens’ Committee also provided funds to agencies that worked with unattached individuals as long as that agency worked with these men “on a casework basis.” While the exigencies of the depression placed great stress upon the abilities of casework agencies to actually perform casework, the Citizens’ Committee required that each agency had to be in its “structure and practice adaptable to emergency conditions on a professional basis.” In laying out these guidelines, the Citizens’ Committee actually named the Bureau for Homeless Men as an agency that exemplified the sort of professional service for which its funds could be used. Although the Bureau worried about its professional prospects when it began in 1925, discussed in Chapter One, its admission to the Citizens’ Committee seemingly confirmed its attitude that homeless men could be helped with professional casework.163

The creation of the Citizens’ Committee serves as a further example of the Bureau’s developing relationship with governmental agencies. As the Bureau’s early work demonstrated, the city essentially contracted the Bureau, and the caseworkers at the Bureau played an important role in transforming municipal services for homeless men. Now city funds would flow directly to these private organizations and a new executive

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board formed to harmonize relief efforts. Aside from serving as a vehicle for funding, the Citizens’ Committee also sought to: coordinate the relief efforts of the private relief agencies in St. Louis with national and state level welfare work; accelerate the process through which city bonds could be utilized for relief; examine all possibilities of employment in “the business field”; and finally, “ascertain the exact condition of unemployment.” Under the Citizens’ Committee, cooperation on employment and relief issues, along with reinforcement from the city’s coffers, and not a large federal program, were viewed as the best possible methods to solve the country’s economic problems. Indeed, by using the existing network of private relief agencies, the Citizens’ Committee hoped to avoid an “undue centralization” of relief efforts. The Citizens’ Committee left the casework departments and the day to day operations of each private agency undisturbed. Furthermore, local relief experts comprised the leadership of the executive committee of the Citizens’ Committee.

The formation of the Citizens’ Committee and the fiscal stimulus provided by publicly financed relief came at a crucial time for the Bureau for Homeless Men. With the onset of the market collapse, the relief rolls of the Bureau significantly expanded. In 1930, the Bureau assisted 1,760 resident unattached men and 1,176 transient unattached men, for a total of 2,936 clients. The numbers of men visiting the Bureau grew drastically in the following years. In 1931 the Bureau served 9,207 men (including 1,826 non-resident transients) and by 1933, the year federal government instituted the FERA and the

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165 Aside from Mayor Miller and the chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, the presidents of the Catholic Charities, the Jewish Federation, the Community Fund and Community Council, the Lutheran Charities Association, and the “chairmen of other private relief giving agencies” formed the main executive body. Fusz, “Origin and Development,” 10-11.
transient program, the Bureau served 28,474 men, 9,012 of which were transients. This over eight hundred percent increase in the relief population placed considerable strain upon the abilities of the private relief network in St. Louis to effectively carry out the work it had done before 1929.166

The Bureau’s relief rolls did not merely expand in overall aggregate. The racial makeup of its clientele transformed during the early years of the depression as well. Specifically, the number of unattached black men made up an increasingly large portion of the Bureau’s overall relief load. Between 1925 and 1929, black men made up only between four percent and sixteen percent of the overall total, although for most months, black men made up fewer than ten percent of the total case load. By 1930, the average number of unattached black men in the Bureau was just under thirteen percent, and by 1931 the average was forty four percent. During 1932 and 1933, the monthly amount was sometimes as high as seventy seven percent of the overall total.167 The standard historical interpretation of transients suggests that their racial makeup skewed almost entirely white. Historian Todd Depastino argued for this point by demonstrating that white transients viewed the road as a domain of white privilege. As the statistics of the Bureau suggest, while white transient men believed that the road belonged to them alone and

166 The Bureau attributed some of the increase in its caseload to the fact that in April of 1933, they assumed control of the city’s Municipal Lodging House, which mostly provided physical, overnight relief to single men. Adequate records for the Municipal Lodging House are difficult to find, but one report created by the Bureau in 1929 stated that 6,260 men were registered for 1928, although a year before 7,499 men registered. Thus, even accounting for the assumption of responsibility for the Municipal Lodging House, the Bureau’s non-lodging house clientele exploded during the first years of the depression. See, Annual Report, 1934, 21, Folder 5, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; The Effect of the Three Night Rule, Folder 88, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
167 “Statistical Analysis of Non-Family Men of Relief” (St. Louis: Bureau for Men, 1937), 27-29.
used this attitude to threaten black men, the statistics of the Bureau suggest that black transient may have been more prevalent than previously considered.  

While the road may have been contested, the Bureau also worked to keep its caseload predominately white. The Bureau’s reaction to the increase in the number of black clients beginning in 1931 suggests that, at a time when its professional prospects appeared strongest, the presence of black men threatened the gains the organization made. As discussed in the first chapter, the Bureau opened an office dedicated purely to casework in 1931 in order to help men that it believed stood the best chance of making adjustments to family life. The Bureau’s casework office at the Municipal Lodging House, the mass care shelter operated by the city, continued to operate, but the Bureau funneled less desirable men to that location. The Bureau understood unattached black men as better suited to the lodging house. For example, when discussing the amount of men visiting the Bureau’s casework office, one Bureau committee member, Sydney Maestre, raised the problem posed by the “large increase in the number of colored men” visiting the Bureau. Maestre proposed that the Bureau send these men to the lodging house. The Bureau did have much success in drastically reducing the amount of black men in its case load; by 1934 and 1935, the numbers decreased from a high of seventy seven percent, but still hovered around thirty five to forty percent. In spite of its failure to reduce the number of black men, the Bureau revealed that its vision of manhood was a vision open only to whites.

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169 “Statistical Analysis of Non-Family Men of Relief,” 27-29. Another piece of evidence from the Bureau’s files suggest that a startling number of black men, and perhaps women and children, took to the road to seek help in St. Louis, both from within Missouri and from other states. In October of 1931, a large number of African-Americans, around 2,000, travelled north from southern Missouri and Northern Arkansas to seek relief. Relief agencies, alarmed by the large increase in the black relief population, immediately began to work with cotton growers in Pemiscott County in southeast Missouri to try to
In response to the rapid expansion in the case load, the Bureau and the Citizens’ Committee jointly developed a work program between 1932 and 1933. The programs highlight the way the Bureau’s ideal vision of manhood shaped the way it constructed its work program. The Bureau and the Citizens’ Committee designed each program to deal with a heavier relief load, yet the programs functioned much differently. One of the primary distinctions between the work programs, aside from the quality of the work given, was that resident men with families were provided non-stigmatizing work as relief, that is to say, a job that paid cash, while non-family men were expected to work off the relief (clothing, shelter, and food) that the Bureau provided them. The Citizens’ Committee privileged the work program for family men by providing it with ample city funds. In contrast, the Bureau had to finance its work program with its privately raised funds. The “work-test” for unattached men and the separate funding sources had the effect of establishing two distinct relief tracks for men.\footnote{Budget Analysis, 1929-1933, Folder 88, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.}

The Bureau’s perception of unattached men as abnormal seemingly legitimized these distinctions in the work programs. As discussed in the first chapter, the Bureau never really developed a functioning work program. In fact, the Bureau found the harsh work requirements demanded by the Charity Organization Society to be counterproductive. Professional casework with the goal of helping an unattached man realize his role as family provider appeared to the Bureau to be the best method for dealing with this group. It is perhaps surprising that, as we shall soon see, the Bureau so enthusiastically adopted the new work program. To be sure, enacting a work program

\footnote{Meeting Minutes of CCRE Technical Committee, 16 October 1931, Folder 113, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Meeting Minutes of CCRE Technical Committee, 22 October 1931, Folder 113, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.}
may have been a requirement to receive city funds. Nonetheless, the Bureau’s understanding of unattached men as deviant and “less than” a man with a family, a view point that it actively promoted, undergirded the organization’s less privileged status in the Citizens’ Committee work program hierarchy.

The program created by the Citizens’ Committee stressed that its clients should be chosen based “on the family need.”\(^{171}\) The program made space for women, but, as other historians have demonstrated, work programs often filled open slots with men with families before giving those same positions to women. In order to qualify, the applicant had to have at least “three dependents all living in the same household” and must be a “bona fide citizens of St. Louis”, therefore barring even intrastate transients with families from applying. For their efforts, each worker would be compensated according to the prevailing wage for that particular job, but they could make no more than fifty dollars per month.\(^{172}\) The Citizens’ Committee hoped to attract “a certain amount of skilled labor, technicians and members of the white collar group” with its work program.\(^{173}\) As an example of the work provided, the Citizens’ Committee employed seven hundred men on street and sewer work throughout 1933. To be sure, it is unclear if this was skilled labor or merely cleaning work. What is important, however, is that the Citizens’ Committee provided this work to breadwinning family men under the assumption that, besides unemployment, they had nothing wrong with them.\(^{174}\)

\(^{171}\) Work Relief program of the Citizens Committee on Relief and Employment, Folder 114, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.


\(^{173}\) Work Relief program of the Citizens Committee on Relief and Employment, Folder 114, Box 4, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

\(^{174}\) Meeting Minutes of the CCRE Technical Committee, 6 April 1933, Folder 114, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
While the Citizens’ Committee provided its workers with a weekly pay check, the men in the Bureau’s program had to “work out their entire relief,” meaning that relief was provided as payment for work. This policy reflected the assumption of deviance on the part of non-family men. Unlike the men with families, men in the Bureau’s work program also had to undergo casework treatment. The stated aims of the Bureau’s work program, which it felt it had fulfilled, were twofold. First, the Bureau desired “to get rid of the men receiving help who were too lazy and shiftless to work or who did not need it badly enough to work for it…” Second, the Bureau hoped to improve the morale of the “better class” by helping them to feel that they had worked for their relief and had not merely taken a hand out. The Bureau placed its clients into two different work relief categories depending upon the type of services the client needed. The Bureau assigned men needing only temporary relief, often clothing, to the work department and gave them certain tasks around the Bureau’s offices at the rate of forty cents per hour. When the man had worked off the amount of relief provided to him, he would be given the relief he needed. The Bureau’s caseworkers congratulated themselves on the fact that, after the first month, they reduced the rate at which men refused work for their relief from twenty to seven percent. To the Bureau, this appeared as if its casework methods were creating positive, manlier, changes in its client’s character.

The Bureau designed a second grouping for men who needed more than simply a set of clothing or who visited the Bureau more than once during a month. At the end of each month, every man in this second group would be given a bill that totaled the amount of relief expended upon them along with a letter telling them when and where to report

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176 Annual Report of the Bureau for Men, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
for work. Men employed in this group were given a three dollar credit toward their relief for each full day worked along with twenty-five cents for spending money. Most of the men appear to have been placed at a farm organized by the Bureau in St. Louis County that actually grew all the vegetables used in the Bureau’s cafeteria. The Bureau transported the men each day by truck to the seventy-acre farm. The men also constructed a local community garden, built a playground for a settlement house, remodeled the Chestnut Lodge (a lodging house operated by the Bureau), and worked on a city plaza until the Civil Works Administration took over operations. At that point, Bureau clients could no longer work on the plaza because the Civil Works Administration only provided work to men with families.

Thus, as the welfare agencies of St. Louis reacted to the depression, they categorized and relieved men differently according to their relationship to the ideal of a breadwinning family man. Men working on the projects of the Citizens’ Committee, or the Civil Works Administration, received priority on jobs and better pay. Men on the Bureau’s jobs program had to undergo a work test and only received relief, not cash, for the work they performed. This division was rooted in the perception of unattached men as deviant and less worthy than a man with a family, a perception that the Bureau cultivated since its inception in 1925. This gendered distinction continued to manifest itself during the Bureau’s time as a publicly funded welfare agency.

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177 Again, because of sketchy statistical reporting, it is difficult to determine how much relief would be equal to work for one day at a rate of three dollars. For 1933, the average relief cost per month was between four and five dollars, but because that number isn’t broken down further, it is hard to say if four dollars of relief would have been expended upon a man over the course of one day, one week, or one month. “Statistical Analysis of Non-Family Men on Relief,” 25.

178 Annual Report of the Bureau for Men, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Rose, *Put to Work*, 47.
Although the injection of city funds through the Citizens’ Committee no doubt helped to shore up the private relief agencies in St. Louis, the Depression continued to worsen throughout the early 1930s and the agencies quickly spent the city funds made available. In addition to more men and women simply seeking relief, the work program of the Citizens’ Committee burdened the city’s funds by allowing men with families to work five and a half days instead of the originally prescribed four. By January 1932, the welfare agencies in St. Louis nearly depleted the funds made available by the city, threatening relief for an estimated 60,000 people. In June of 1932, the Board of Alderman for St. Louis threatened the Citizens’ Committee that it would withhold city funds unless it ceased to provide relief for nonresidents of St. Louis, a move that members of the Citizens’ Committee vehemently opposed. This move by the Alderman would have especially effected the Bureau because non-residents composed a significant portion of its caseload. By July 1932, an overstretched budget necessitated that between 8,000 and 10,000 people be dropped from the relief rolls, a move that stunned those individuals who had been receiving that relief.\footnote{Meeting Minutes of the CCRE Technical Committee, 6 April 1933, Folder 114, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men; To Victor Miller from Tom K. Smith, 29 January 1932, Folder 114, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Meeting Minutes of the CCRE Technical Committee, 22 June 1932, Folder 114, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.}

The reaction of unattached men to these cuts is perhaps the only example of organized resistance against the Bureau, and it suggests that the unattached men were not merely empty receptacles for the knowledge held by the caseworkers at the Bureau. According to the Citizens’ Committee, of all those who had been dropped from the relief rolls, single men expressed the most resentment over the cuts. In response to the cuts, these men requested begging permits more frequently. Furthermore, rumors of the cuts
appear to have sparked organized agitation on the part of the men under the care of the Bureau. By the end of 1932, both the St. Louis *Post Dispatch* and the St. Louis *Globe Democrat* reported on a number of organized disturbances that occurred at the Bureau’s cafeteria.\(^{180}\) The Bureau’s clients also organized against the Bureau’s work program. A watercolor flyer distributed by the “Single Men’s Council” stated “Organize – Men Refuse to Work Unless You Get Decent Wages.” Another flyer advertised a meeting that would discuss “the forced labor plan that [the] Bureau [for] Homeless Men will try on us[.] [C]ome on men don[’]t wait till they make slav[e]s out of you.”\(^{181}\) What these meetings, flyers, and protests suggest is that single men during this period not only organized as men, but that they had some gendered conception of themselves as single men.

By dispersing federal funds, the creation of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in May 1933 ultimately allowed the agencies of the Citizens’ Committee to continue operating and weather the stormy protests. However, like with the arrival of the Citizens’ Committee, the actual structure of the Bureau remained relatively unchanged. The primary stipulation that came with the use of FERA funds that would have affected the Bureau concerned the Bureau’s status as a nominally private agency. The FERA required that any agency that sought to use FERA funds had to be a public agency. While the Citizens’ Committee, which included Myron Gwinner, lodged a formal complaint against the “rules and regulations” issued by FERA, the particular problems

\(^{180}\) Meeting Minutes of the CCRE Technical Committee, 7 July 1932, Folder 114, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Call for Meeting of the Single Men of Community Kitchen and Municipal Lodging House, 25 January 1932, Volume 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men; “15 Arrested in Free Food Disturbance”, 16 December 1932, St. Louis *Globe Democrat*; “15 Arrested in Row at Café for Jobless”, 15 December 1932, St. Louis *Post Dispatch*.

the committee had remain unknown and, in any case, compliance with the rules came swiftly, probably because becoming a public agency did not require a radical reorganization of any of the agencies. In the Bureau’s annual report for 1933, Gwinner wrote that the Citizens’ Committee took over almost the entire caseload of the Bureau, but that this changed very little: although the Bureau was now known as “Unit F,” the Bureau’s office remained in the same location and was staffed by the same social workers and clerical workers. Leadership at Unit F did not change either, as Gwinner now oversaw the activities of the new public unit. On September 1, 1933, the Bureau reorganized to meet the demands of the FERA.

The arrival of FERA funds for the Bureau further reinforces the notion that the New Deal often operated through state and local governments when possible. Although FERA was nominally federal, policymakers in Washington relied upon individuals in the private sector, and in city and state government to develop and administer programs and funds. This held true for the Federal Transient Program, which the federal government created under FERA. Wallace Crossley, the director of the Missouri Relief and Reconstruction Commission, the state organization that distributed federal funds, stated that the Missouri state conference on the transient program had convened to create a state program “pursuant to instructions from the Federal Relief Administration.” Along with Myron Gwinner, a panoply of religious organizations, private welfare groups, representatives from city relief boards, and state administrators interested in the problem

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182 To CCRE Agencies from E.G. Steger, 18 August 1933, Folder 111, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Meeting Minutes of the CCRE Technical Committee, 27 July 1933, Folder 114, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1933, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

183 This was a state agency created in January 1933 to administer what federal funds were available at the time. Emergency Relief in Missouri, vol. 1, 2.
of unattached men comprised the group that would develop the transient program in Missouri. However, the FERA and its subsidiary programs operated through the states and would have had to rely upon the experience or expertise of people and organizations in the states. The Federal Transient Program, then, at least in Missouri, should not be seen as a creature entirely of the federal government, or as an entirely new program, as it was constructed by individuals and groups with at least some experience working with this particular group of men.\textsuperscript{184}

The Federal Transient Program, as it developed in Missouri, expressed significant conceptual and methodological continuity with the Bureau’s work as a private agency. The most obvious manifestation of the Bureau’s influence on the Federal Transient Program in Missouri is revealed in the fact that, at the first conference on the formation of a state transient program, those present nominated Myron Gwinner, the Bureau’s executive secretary, to chair the committee responsible for the development of the program. Gwinner had a pervasive influence upon the plan, most evident in the central importance of casework to the program, along with the assumption that non-family men deviated from the male breadwinner ideal. As the committee’s plan stated, “any carefully planned program” should have as its goal the prevention of transiency. Critical to this task was casework, which “should be made available to each individual and any plan developed [for the individual] should be based on casework.”\textsuperscript{185} One observer wrote that the purpose of casework in the transient program was “to provide the possibility of treatment of personal and psychological problems which were often fundamental to

\textsuperscript{184} State Conference on Transients, 13 September 1933, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\textsuperscript{185} A Tentative Program for the Care of Non-Residents of the State of Missouri, 19 September 1933, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
social or economic rehabilitation of the transients.” The casework plan served as a sort of revolving door for the Federal Transient Program. Similar to the Bureau’s operation as a private agency, the willingness to be interviewed by a social worker permitted the man entrance into the Bureau’s program. If the man refused “to cooperate in any available plan of stabilization” he would be dismissed from it. The importance of casework to the program was even initially endorse by Harry Hopkins, administrator of FERA, who echoed many of Gwinner’s ideas when he stated that the Federal Transient Program would provide “a new chance in life” for transients.

While the Federal Transient Program relied upon the foundations established by the Bureau, the entrance of the federal government into relief for unattached men did disrupt certain elements of the relief process. For example, the transient program made some significant alterations in the geography of relief distribution. The program established reference centers, treatment centers, and, by the end of 1933, a network of work camps throughout the state. No longer would men receive relief solely from urban casework offices like that of the Bureau, although city centers would form a critical piece of the relief network. Many men’s first experience with the transient program would be at the reference centers, which were established in various mostly rural localities throughout the state. The reference centers were designed to prevent men from traveling on their own plans. Instead, these centers sought to funnel men in to the transient program’s network.

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186 Ellery Reed, *Federal Transient Program*, 45; John McKinsey also stressed the importance of rehabilitation to the program. “Implicit all through the various forms of material aid was the idea of rehabilitation, expressed in the formal purpose as prevention of continued mobility.” John McKinsey, “Transient Men in Missouri: A Descriptive Analysis of Transient Men and of the Activities of Agencies Dealing With Them” (PhD diss., University of Missouri, 1940), 233.

187 A Tentative Program for the Care of Non-Residents of the State of Missouri, 19 September 1933, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

188 St. Louis *Globe Democrat*, “U.S. Maps Drive to Remove Tramps from City Streets”, 24 September 1933.
The reference center provided immediate, physical relief to the man and arranged for his transportation to a treatment center, where he would undergo casework. If the man’s non-residency was established, he would perform some type of work to pay for his transportation to a treatment center. The committee designing the transient program in Missouri established three treatment centers in the state; in St. Louis, Kansas City, and St. Joseph.\textsuperscript{189}

The treatment centers embodied the Bureau’s dedication to the casework method. Like the reference centers, the treatment centers also provided physical relief to unattached men, but the main priority was to provide casework with the goal of the “rehabilitation of these men stabilized in the local community.”\textsuperscript{190} In St. Louis, the offices of the Bureau for Homeless Men, under the direction of Myron Gwinner, served as the transient treatment center. Although the relief network greatly expanded under the Federal Transient Program, the core casework principles that the Bureau applied in its pre-1933 activities remained central in its work with transients at the treatment centers. The purpose of the caseworker at the Bureau’s transient treatment center was to divine the man’s “various personal characteristics, his residence status, his family connections, the reason he was traveling, and any specific problem which was contributing to his unadjustment [sic].” Once the caseworker made the “intelligent diagnosis of the unadjustment,” the caseworker then engaged in “social therapy in order to effect a speedy

\textsuperscript{189} A Tentative Program for the Care of Non-Residents of the State of Missouri, 19 September 1933, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.

\textsuperscript{190} A Tentative Program for the Care of Non-Residents of the State of Missouri, 19 September 1933, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
readjustment.” By performing this crucial function, the shelter “soon came to be an integral part of the transient bureau.”\footnote{McKinsey, “Transient Men in Missouri,” 236-237.}

Prior to 1933, the Bureau cared for transient and resident men in the same offices, but the transient program ostensibly altered the organizational structure that supported the care and relief of unattached men. Compliance with FERA regulations transformed most of the Bureau into a public agency known as Unit F, and operations with transient unattached men were separated from those with the resident unattached. In practice, however, little seems to have changed. Bureau caseworkers, along with their executive secretary, oversaw the care of both types of men. The federal portion of the program that handled interstate transients established its offices in the Bureau’s building and “worked very closely” with them.\footnote{To Lois Tillett from Isaac Gurman, 25 July 1934, Folder 112, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.} To be sure, the Bureau now often referred transient men to the newly created work camps, but it treated resident men as it did prior to 1933. Indeed, the Bureau maintained its own privately funded casework department that handled intensive resident cases. While the intensive cases went to the private department, other resident men received either outdoor relief or institutional care in one of the Bureau’s shelters. In the cases of those men receiving outdoor relief, the Bureau continued to visit their homes to determine if conditions were satisfactory, and interviews were required for both outdoor and institutional relief.\footnote{To Grace Shopera from Myron Gwinner, 19 January 1934, Folder 53, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men; Annual Report of the Bureau for Men, 1934, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.} In spite of the increased workload the Bureau received, the organization nonetheless continued to work with unattached men on an individualized
basis, believing this to be the best way to instill the family man ideal in the unattached man.

Transformations in the financial setup of the Bureau’s work reflected and accompanied those taking place within the organizational structure. As a private agency, the Bureau for Homeless Men used one funding pool to pay for the care of both transient and resident unattached men. Even under the Citizens’ Committee on Relief and Employment, the Bureau seems to have made little practical distinction between transient and resident men. With the advent of the Federal Transient Program, however, transient men would no longer be supported by state or local funds; instead, federal funds would be used to provide for their care. Although this decision would be reversed by 1935, for a short period of time federal funds were used to support transient, single men. While the transient program cared for some intrastate transient Missourians, residents of Missouri continued to be mostly supported by state and local funds. One should not exaggerate the significance of these facts; while transients were the only individuals in the Bureau’s network to be fully provided for by federal funds, federal funds were also used to prop up the functions of the Bureau that provided care to resident unattached men. Simply stated, without federal funds, local and state homeless men would not have received relief. Despite the confusing and overlapping nature of the transformations in the Bureau’s organization and funding sources, certain programmatic distinctions remained, like the intrastate transient program, which can be attributed entirely to the Bureau, while the construction and camp programs reflect a joint venture between the FTP and the Bureau.\(^{194}\)

\(^{194}\) In December 1933, for example, the Bureau for Men registered 412 transients from almost every state in the Union. Out of these 412 transients, seventeen were from Missouri. Transients Newly
The Bureau designed its intrastate transient program in the spring of 1934 in order to not only achieve its usual goal of reuniting men with their families through casework, but also to seal off eastward movement out of St. Louis in an attempt to reduce interstate transiency. St. Louis served as an important destination for men seeking work as it was connected by rail to points east. Many of the intrastate transients departed east from Jackson County, the state’s second largest industrial section. A second contingent travelled from southeast Missouri, which had recently suffered agricultural losses and which the Bureau termed as Missouri’s “blighted cotton counties.” Much of the Bureau’s black clientele derived from these devastated agricultural communities.\textsuperscript{195} The Bureau used casework interviews to determine why these men left their homes. Most men stated that they left home to look for work, a reason that should have been believable given the economic depression. However, the Bureau surmised that, “there is generally some other contributing factor which furnishes the final incentive for leaving. Consequently we always try to go behind the reason given and find the real one.”\textsuperscript{196} For the Bureau, then, outward, explicit statements of economic distress merely concealed deeper individual maladjustments that prevented men from being content in their families.

The Bureau touted the overall success of its intrastate transient program, especially as it compared to similar efforts made by the federal government. The Bureau argued that an intrastate transient program needed to be established because it felt the


\textsuperscript{196}“Missourians on the Move,” 17.
federal government was doing a poor job in preventing intrastate transiency. Without providing the basis for it, the Bureau calculated that the federal government only returned one percent of the transients it helped, both intrastate and interstate. In contrast, the Bureau boasted that, “we were actually preventing the break-up of families and perhaps re-uniting families…” During the one year that the Bureau ran the program, sixty four percent of the counties from which the transients left authorized their return, although only twenty seven percent actually returned home as a direct result of the Bureau’s casework interventions. As the program progressed, however, the caseworker’s success rate declined, which the Bureau attributed to a change in its clientele. At the beginning of the program, the Bureau argued, the men it helped had been on the road for a shorter period of time and were therefore more likely to return home. In the program’s later period, the opposite was true, and the men were consequently less likely to return home. Published in 1938, the Bureau’s report on its intrastate program revealed a tension between it and the federal government two that would develop between 1933 and 1935.

Race played a considerable role in the Bureau’s success in returning its clients home. For example, eighty percent of the white boys and sixty five percent of the adult white men in the intrastate program received authorization to return home, while only forty seven percent of the adult black men, over eighty percent of whom were single, were permitted to return home. This suggests that the various relief agencies the Bureau

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197 “Missourians on the Move,” 1.
198 “Missourians on the Move,” 7.
199 “Missourians on the Move,” 16.
200 “Missourians on the Move,” 20-21; Only 27.5% of the men returned to their homes because of the program, however. An additional 6.5% of the men returned home of their own accord. Missourians on the Move, 21.
201 “Missourians on the Move,” 7.
202 “Missourians on the Move,” 45.
contacted were happy to receive their young white boys back, but they missed their single black men less. In light of this discrimination, the Bureau’s casework success rate with black men was considerably lower than the success rate for whites. The success rate for white men and boys was thirty seven percent, while the success rate for black men and boys was only twenty two percent. While the Bureau’s racial policies have been rightfully questioned here, its low casework success rate, in this instance, should mostly be attributed to the apparent racism on the part of smaller communities in Missouri.

While the Bureau’s records for its intrastate program often express disapproval of the federal government, certain programs, like the construction work projects, relied upon a greater degree of cooperation not only between the state and federal portions of the transient program, but also a wider array of state agencies. The construction work program was predicated “on the fact that all normal men everywhere prefer to work for a living.” Early on in the history of the FTP in Missouri, for example, members of the State Highway Commission and the highway engineers for St. Louis and Jackson Counties, lobbied the transient program’s advisory committee to advance road construction projects through the transient program. The construction interests proposed to “colonize transients receiving federal aid in localities where landscaping work may be supplied by the highway commission.” The program, deemed “highway beautification as a work project”, would begin in St. Louis and Jackson County and extend to other areas in the state if successful. Transient men from a St. Louis County camp were also used

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203 “Missourians on the Move,” 22.
204 Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1934, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
205 Meeting Minutes of the Committee on Care for Transients, 4 October 1933, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
in order to beautify an underprivileged boys’ camp established by the YMCA in Eureka, south of St. Louis. The construction programs reveal the extent to which the Federal Transient Program required the cooperation of local, state, and private agencies. This cooperation would also be evident in the transient program’s work camps.\textsuperscript{206}

While the transient program’s work camps are perhaps its most memorable aspect, or at least the part most often written about by historians, the therapeutic dimension of the program has been ignored. Transient administrators envisioned the camps as companions to the therapeutic program found in the urban treatment centers. Program administrators hoped that the construction of the camps, performed almost entirely by the transients, would help men feel “they were building themselves a home.”\textsuperscript{207} The camps established in Missouri and throughout the nation served simultaneously as homes, sites of work, and centers of rehabilitation for transient men. Although the camps undoubtedly acted as homes, a crucial aspect of the home was missing, and this emptiness revealed a conceptual hole in the fabric of the plan: the camps had no “family” or “dependents” with which the man could interact and realize his manhood. As with the lodging houses discussed in the first chapter, the camps seemed to encourage the lifestyle of the homeless man. Nonetheless, by February 1934, Missouri was scheduled to have eight transient camps constructed in the state in St. Louis, Kansas City, Joplin, Springfield, and St. Joseph.\textsuperscript{208}

\textsuperscript{206} To Myron Gwinner from George Simmons, 13 February 1934, Folder 311, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.  
\textsuperscript{207} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 244.  
\textsuperscript{208} Meeting Minutes of the Transient Advisory Committee, 17 November 1933, Folder 311, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
The transient camps, although seeking to rehabilitate and relieve non-family men, simultaneously reinforced the distinctions between welfare programs designed for breadwinners and non-breadwinners. The first work program the Bureau participated in with the Citizens’ Committee, described above, provided family men with work that remunerated in cash, not relief, and also gave more opportunities for work as well. For the most part, the state constructed camps where the caseloads of transient men existed and they served no practical economic value. Instead, the camps served a strictly rehabilitative. Although program administrators discussed building camps along roadways for beautification projects, this was more of an exception than a rule. The reason the transient camps only served a rehabilitative and non-economic function was to avoid competition with the “regular” work relief projects like the Civil Works Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. These projects provided economic stimulus to men with families and dependents. A directive released by the Missouri State Social Security Commission succinctly and directly summarized this policy perspective: “In general, it is intended that Transient projects should not compete with relief work projects or projects undertaken by the C.C.C. Camps.” That is to say, the camps were constructed so as to prevent transient men from taking away valuable work from programs designed for men and boys with families.

The everyday life and work at the transient camps also reflected the same gendered divisions found between the work programs designed by the Citizens’ Committee and the Bureau in the early 1930s. Again, what constituted this dissimilar treatment between men was the notion held by social workers that non-family men were

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abnormal, untrustworthy, and in need of rehabilitative care. As with the Bureau’s work program, men mostly received direct relief at camps as an exchange for their labor. This was conceived both as a work test, to determine if men would work for their relief, and to help effect a personal readjustment in the man. Also like the Bureau’s earlier work program, which used men to do maintenance work at its offices and grow food at a farm for use in the cafeteria, the work provided to the transients was largely designed to make the camps self sustaining. While men apparently took great interest in the initial construction of the camps, according to an early commentator on the program, maintenance did not promote a similar sense of “personal achievement and self interest.” Some cash allowances were distributed, however, and the amount was determined by whether the man provided skilled, semi-skilled, or unskilled labor. By providing these allowances, administrators hoped to quell street begging and integrate the man economically, at least in a small way, with the surrounding community and acclimatize him to a more normal existence. Yet the pay was much lower than that provided to men in the “regular” programs. Eventually, some transient men in the camps refused to do skilled work when the WPA wage scale was widely released, which showed that unskilled WPA workers received a higher pay rate than the skilled laborers at transient camps.

Although the structure of New Deal relief placed unmarried men in a lower category of assistance, the men at camp routinely flouted the rules and gender norms of

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210 McKinsey, Transient Men in Missouri, 243-244.
211 McKinsey, Transient Men in Missouri, 246.
212 McKinsey, Transient Men in Missouri, 245.
213 Skilled men received three dollars a week, semi-skilled two dollars a week, unskilled one dollar a week. McKinsey, Transient Men in Missouri, 231.
214 McKinsey, Transient Men in Missouri, 247.
camp life. This becomes obvious when one examines the turnover rate at Missouri camps, a rate that was astonishingly high. Most men did not stick around at the camps long enough to provide labor of any sort, and it is surprising that many of the camps were even constructed. Throughout the two year existence of the Federal Transient Program in Missouri, seventy percent of the men placed in camps stayed in camp less than one week.\textsuperscript{215} Furthermore, this high turnover rate forced many caseworkers to close their cases prematurely: ninety-four percent of the social worker’s cases were closed because men “left of their own accord.” As an interesting point of comparison, social workers closed three percent of their cases because their clients secured employment.\textsuperscript{216} Part of the men’s transiency can be explained by a liberal relief policy at the camps; men arriving at a camp were given relief for three days without being required to work.\textsuperscript{217} Perhaps more important were camp conditions. First, if many men left their homes in search of work, they would have found that the transient camps were not good places to find it, as the statistic above demonstrates. In response to a questionnaire concerning camp “morale” delivered to all transient directors from Harry Hopkins, Gwinner stated that, “Prospects of any appreciable number of our men securing employment in the next six months is very poor.” Gwinner further stated that the physical condition of the men was low “principally due to [a] long period of time on limited rations…”\textsuperscript{218} One food report showed that the camp was primarily being fed on seven-hundred pounds of potatoes.\textsuperscript{219} Finally, Gwinner offered a bleak assessment “from the standpoint of morale” for

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\textsuperscript{215} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 238.
\textsuperscript{216} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 242.
\textsuperscript{217} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 243.
\textsuperscript{218} To Peter Kasius from Myron Gwinner, 31 October 1934, Folder 111, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\textsuperscript{219} Food Report from Transient Camp 1, 4-10 January 1934, Folder 311, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
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unattached men. The group, he said, can be divided in two, “those who accept their present condition which after all is not much worse…than that to which they were accustomed; and those who are rather confused, discouraged, and see no hope for the future.”

If camp offered little personal hope, why stay?

The intransigent transiency of unattached men was not the only thing causing problems at the camps. The incompetency of some of the transient bureau staff made operation of the camps difficult. One camp director in particular, Rufus Garland of the camp in Ballwin, a suburb west of St. Louis, created significant problems for the transient program. Issues with Garland began early in 1934, when Garland seems to have made purchases and decisions for the camp without first consulting Gwinner. Furthermore, when Richard Gebhardt, assistant director of the Missouri transient operation, visited Garland’s camp in February, Gebhardt noted the obvious drunkenness of Garland. This, Gebhardt felt, set a bad example for the unattached men under Garland’s care. Two weeks later, Garland, who had been “drinking steadily for [the] last week”, began a fight with another social worker and a feeling of restlessness swept over the camp. Garland resigned in August, and a story in the Sedalia Herald published his side of the story. According to Garland, he resigned because of the immense graft and corruption that occurred within the ranks of the program. Garland stated that all administrators were given “purchase books” that provided them free reign to buy what they like. Garland charged one camp director, D.D. England, with using these books to purchase golf clubs.

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220 To Peter Kasius from Myron Gwinner, 31 October 1934, Folder 111, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
221 To Rufus Garland from Richard Gebhardt, 19 February 1934, Folder 311, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
222 To Richard Gebhardt from Myron Gwinner, 9 March 1934, Folder 311, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
and a truck for his father’s farm. He further charged that relief funds were used to buy
wrist watches and clothing for relief administrators.\textsuperscript{223}

Whether Garland trumped these charges up, or whether he was guilty of them as
well, is, in the end, less important than the negative image these controversies created for
the Federal Transient Program. Margot Canaday has already argued that the perceived
homosexuality of transients severely tarnished the image of the Federal Transient
Program, making it difficult for proponents to argue for its continued validity. These
incidences of alcohol abuse and corruption merely made matters worse. This image, plus
the combination of high turnover and the failure of casework, led to new policy directives
from Washington that would create dissent among Myron Gwinner and proponents of
casework in the Missouri transient program.

The new policy initiatives represented a break from the conceptual and
institutional framework established by the Bureau. In early April 1934, Hopkins
convened a meeting in Washington D.C. of transient administrators to set new rules and
standards for the state transient programs. Central to the rules presented by Hopkins was
a view of unattached men at odds with the long held assumptions of the Bureau’s social
workers. First, though, Hopkins admonished the program administrators for not selling
the program better to local communities, many of whom complained that transients
received better relief than they did, which is perhaps unlikely given the description of
camp life made above. Politicians in Washington, according to Hopkins, similarly
worried that transients received better care, which demonstrates that even in the highest
reaches of government, many expressed skepticism about providing relief to the

\textsuperscript{223} Copy of Article from Sedalia \textit{Herald}, 16 August 1934, Folder 311, Box 5, Papers of the Bureau
for Men.
homeless. Hopkins stated that Roosevelt was also losing confidence in the program, and that his interests were shifting to the C.C.C. To try to save the program, Hopkins first did away with a rule that prohibited men from applying to more than three transient camps. Hopkins reasoned that because men took to the road in search of something, they should be allowed to make that journey unimpeded. Because casework only slowed this journey down, the abandonment of casework for all but the most serious cases formed a crucial part of the rule change.\textsuperscript{224} Hopkins also stated that social workers should no longer try to send men back to their communities. By sending men home, the men would merely compete for jobs with those individuals who never abandoned their communities and therefore deserved the work. Surprisingly, Hopkins also told the administrators that they could not prevent men from drinking in the camp, as the camp was now the unattached man’s home and administrators had no right to tell a man how to behave in his home. Unsurprisingly, when Gebhardt relayed these new rules to the individuals involved in the Missouri program, many were upset, Myron Gwinner included.\textsuperscript{225}

Opposition to the new rules first coalesced around the decision to do away with the decision that abandoned the rule barring men from applying to more than three camps. In opposition to this directive, the Bureau redeployed the arguments about public largesse it made against the public’s support of street beggars discussed in the first chapter. The committee members now argued that, by allowing unlimited applications, men could “travel all over the country in a much more luxurious way than ever before.” Gwinner added that the original purpose of the transient program was to be so successful

\textsuperscript{224} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 239-240.
\textsuperscript{225} Meeting Minutes of the Committee on Care for Transients, 26 April 1934, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
that there would no longer need to be a transient program. By allowing the new policies to stand, Gwinner warned that the program would “continue to increase rather than diminish.” At stake, here, was the Bureau’s long held assumptions about the deviancy of unattached men and how best to help them. Gwinner and the others rightly worried that the new rules sent from Washington would destroy the rehabilitative, casework aspect of the program, and that transient men would stay transient indefinitely. 226

In opposition to Hopkins’ new rules, the committee, probably led by Gwinner, drafted and voted upon its own set of principles that they believed would bring the transient program the success it needed. The new plan expressed the desires of social work professionals. First, the committee voted for the eventual elimination of the transient program through successful casework. By providing excellent casework to its clients, the committee believed that the transient program could eliminate transiency altogether. The committee also voted to strengthen local programs for homeless men, which it viewed as serving on the front lines. If local programs could work effectively, men would not need to leave their homes in the first place. Furthermore, regional work camps were to be established that would be open to homeless men throughout that region. 227

The principles established by the disgruntled committee members were of course not binding, the initiatives proclaimed by Hopkins took precedent, and the tensions present in this meeting would flare up two months later. Nonetheless, cleavages between local and national, public and private, which were built into the structure of the transient program, began to become increasingly visible.

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226 Meeting Minutes of the Committee on Care for Transients, 26 April 1934, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
227 Meeting Minutes of the Committee on Care for Transients, 26 April 1934, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
Although the arguments that erupted over the program in June 1934 again centered upon the role of casework and mobility among the men, the power struggles between different elements within a federalized program became visible as well. Some committee members expressed discontent with the transient program’s operations because national officials did not work closely enough with local communities, who they felt had established a satisfactory program for unattached men prior to 1933. Casework with unattached men was of course a central element of these programs. It is safe to assume that Gwinner, with his long history at the Bureau, was the source of this pronouncement. In reply, Gebhardt reaffirmed that, while local officials have some decision making power, “certain policies and plans are to be carried out according to instructions from Washington.” Some members fired back that those new rules from Washington would “overthrow the policy of social work” in the camps. One committee member sympathetic to the Washington line reaffirmed the independence of all men to move about as they pleased. According to this official, a man had the “privilege of going from one center to another until he could find something that suited him.” Gebhardt also restated with more clarity why unattached transients should not be sent home: “The [unattached] man is to be kept out of competition in his particular community, leaving the job open to a man who has a family.”

Officials in Washington and Missouri ultimately clashed because they held different interpretations of manhood, in particular, whether it was possible to make breadwinning family men out of unattached men. As the Bureau’s work makes clear, Gwinner, the Bureau for Homeless Men, and others sympathetic to the social work

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228 Meeting Minutes of the Committee on Care for Transients, 25 June 1934, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
perspective viewed unattached men as dependent, incapable of solving their own problems, and, thus, as socially maladjusted individuals. The Bureau’s professional concerns were inseparable from this perspective. Gwinner and the others viewed their profession as uniquely capable of rehabilitating unattached men. The new policies from Washington threatened not only their professional expertise, but also the existence of their job. Washington officials no doubt also viewed unattached and transient men as socially maladjusted individuals. The differences derived from the fact that they were less sanguine about the ability of the transient program to “adjust” these men to society. At the root of this position was the understanding that all men, breadwinner or not, were independent. Men were perceived to be free to make their own decisions, and free to deal with the bad ones, and their consequences, on their own. Because of this, officials in Washington came to disagree that federally funded casework would not be the solution to the unattached man’s problem. More importantly, they perceived the transient program to be taking away time, energy, and resources from assisting men with families. The decision not to renew the transient program in September 1935 reflected these beliefs. While the program continued in Missouri after June 1934, the tensions that erupted in that month signaled its decline.

Soon after the controversies of the summer of 1934, Myron Gwinner resigned from his post as chairman of the advisory committee. The record shows that, at least since February of that year, not yet six months since the start of the program, Gwinner had tried to resign from the advisory committee. The exact nature of Gwinner’s desire to resign is unclear, but it seems as though differences between Gwinner and other members
of the committee over policy questions was the primary reason.\textsuperscript{229} Indeed, before and during the controversies of the summer, Gwinner privately discussed those problems with Robert Wilson of the Family Welfare Association and other members of the advisory committee.\textsuperscript{230} In each case, Gwinner argued, from the position of a private social worker, for the primacy of local responsibility, again revealing the tensions of a federalized program. To one member of the advisory committee Gwinner wrote that if there was “any relief organization in the town or county…it should be handled by them rather than a separate state set up.”\textsuperscript{231} By July 1934 Gwinner finally resigned, but he continued to direct all the activities of the transient program in St. Louis for the next year.\textsuperscript{232} In August of 1935, the St. Louis Relief Administration, successor to the Citizens’ Committee on Relief and Employment, effected the separation between the public and private agencies that Gwinner had long desired. According to Gwinner, though, the Relief Administration and transient officials in Jefferson City had yet to make definite plans for the state program following the termination of federal support.

For the most part, Gwinner’s assessment of the public division’s lack of planning for the post-Federal Transient Program period proved to be correct. The primary plan of the new “Men’s Unit” was to discontinue the unit as rapidly as possible. This should be distinguished from Gwinner’s proclamations of a transient program working itself out of existence. Men’s Unit officials hoped to deplete the caseload not through capable

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  \item \textsuperscript{229} To Myron Gwinner from Richard Gebhardt, 22 February 1934, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
  \item \textsuperscript{230} To Robert Wilson from Myron Gwinner, 19 April 1934, Folder 53, Box 2, Papers of the Bureau for Men; To Loa Howard from Myron Gwinner, 13 June 1934, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
  \item \textsuperscript{231} To Loa Howard from Myron Gwinner, 13 June 1934, Folder 313, Box 13, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
  \item \textsuperscript{232} Annual Report of the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1935, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\end{itemize}
casework, but by shifting the burden of the case load to the WPA, getting some of the older men on pensions, and hoping that the economy would improve. While it is unclear how many men would go on to receive pensions, the other two prongs of the program failed to meet the objectives. First, the economy continued to remain sluggish with unemployment still high. Furthermore, because the WPA sought to provide jobs first to local family men, unattached and transient men rarely made it on WPA projects. Because of heavy relief burdens in Missouri, and no doubt elsewhere, “the WPA decided rather naturally to care for the local cases first.” The WPA’s selection policies serve as a sort of culmination to policies developed throughout the New Deal in ways that significantly privileged men with families.

One report from August of 1935, just before the Federal Transient Program would be disbanded, illuminates the difficulty unattached men would soon face. The report, issued by the St. Louis Relief Administration, revealed that one single man had been placed either in the CCC or a “Veteran’s Camp,” while one other man found refuge in a WPA camp. This left 5,372 men in Missouri transient camps after September 1935 that no longer had a place to go. Within three months, the load had dropped to 2,639 men. This precipitous drop did not happen because these men found jobs. Only about 500 received either private employment or had managed to make it on to a WPA project. Unfortunately, further delineation on that statistic is not provided. To deal with this crisis, transient administrators in Missouri moved men into vacated CCC camps placed

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233 A Plan of Reorganization of the Men’s Unit, 15 October 1935, Folder 5, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
235 Monthly Statistical Report of the St. Louis Relief Administration, Folder 23, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
under the authority of the WPA. Although the WPA oversaw these camps, they did not receive the same level of support received by the regular WPA projects. Instead, the camps were mostly “subsistence camps,” and they made available a labor supply to work on projects for the National Park Service, Forestry Service, and the Resettlement Administration. However, the camps were established only to deal with the present relief population. That is, camps were not permitted to take on any new men, their purpose being “to take care of the surplus population left in the transient centers...”\textsuperscript{237} According to one transient administrator in Missouri, the WPA intended “to put everyone else to work first.”\textsuperscript{238} By the end of August 1936, the Forestry Service liquidated all its camps and by 1937 the National Park Service did the same to all but two of its camps.\textsuperscript{239} By 1939, the National Park Service closed its last camps and, with that, public support for transients ended, leaving only the Bureau for Homeless Men to care for unattached men.

The most significant aspect of the end of the Federal Transient Program for the Bureau was that the organization was, for the first time, a totally private agency. From 1925 to 1933, the Bureau had always received some support from a public source, and from 1933 to 1935, the Bureau operated almost entirely as a public agency. In each era, its work operated as a function of the total welfare system, albeit a function that was always subordinated to welfare programs that helped people deemed more deserving. Now, though, Gwinner and the Community Council considered shutting down the Bureau at the end of 1935 because funds for its support reached such low levels.\textsuperscript{240} The case load

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\item \textsuperscript{237} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 263.
\item \textsuperscript{238} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 192.
\item \textsuperscript{239} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 264.
\item \textsuperscript{240} Annual Report for the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1935, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
\end{itemize}
of the Bureau between 1935 and 1940 reflected this diminished budget. While the records are scarce, in the first six months of 1938, for example, 598 men applied to the Bureau, but only twenty one received care.\textsuperscript{241} With the end of the transient program, the Bureau was, not unlike the men it served, “living alone.”\textsuperscript{242}

\textsuperscript{241} McKinsey, \textit{Transient Men in Missouri}, 194.

\textsuperscript{242} Annual Report for the Bureau for Homeless Men, 1935, Folder 16, Box 1, Papers of the Bureau for Men.
Conclusion

With the collapse of the Federal Transient Program, and the return of the Bureau for Homeless Men to the status of a private agency, the relief situation for homeless, unattached men seemingly returned to the years before the Bureau began its operations in 1925. In 1938, Myron Gwinner, the executive secretary of the Bureau stated frankly that “At the present time relief to transients in St. Louis is very much disorganized.” While it does appear as if a local, publicly financed shelter opened sometime after 1935, it only provided relief to unattached men and boys on an emergency, temporary basis and Gwinner found it to be lacking. Gwinner, in response to an inquiry from the St. Louis police department concerning shelters to which it could send the roughly two hundred homeless men that visited its office per night, stated that these shelters did not often serve any food to the men who received relief. Furthermore, the Bureau faced its own financial problems resulting from the fallout of the transient program’s demise. Private funds could no longer support the Bureau’s caseloads as they had in the past. Because of the Bureau’s reduced capacities, homeless men again began to seek out relief from organizations like the Salvation Army, which that Bureau had actually supplanted in 1925. By 1940, unable to secure funding for its work, the Bureau would turn away from the relief of homeless men and toward casework with paroled prisoners. Homeless men, it seems, would have to work out solutions to their own problems.243

In spite of the apparent circularity of the career of the Bureau for Homeless Men between 1925 and 1940, the agency’s activities illuminate many important aspects of welfare policy and state development, including the role of gender, the importance of

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243 To Charles Dodd from Myron Gwinner, 18 August 1938; To Bureau for Men from Albert Lambert, 21 January 1938; To Sydney Maestre from Myron Gwinner, 14 July 1938.
private social workers, and the broader purview of social work in the interwar period. First, the Bureau’s programs demonstrate the crucial importance of gender as a factor in social policy. The social workers at the Bureau for Homeless Men sought to instill a particular vision of manhood through casework. This vision stressed the importance of family life as critical element of one’s manhood. Men who existed outside traditional family networks, and who operated in relationships that were primarily homosocial, like homeless men, were perceived as deviant. The Bureau argued that its client’s problems derived from his remoteness from this gender ideal, and not from any economic factors related to the inequalities produced by capitalist production. When a man sought relief from the Bureau, in the form of food, shelter, clothing, or assistance in finding a job, the relief was not simply provided as a matter of course. Instead, the Bureau tied relief to the man’s acceptance of a casework regimen. The primary goal of the Bureau’s casework agenda was to adjust the homeless man to the ideal of the family man.

The Bureau for Homeless Men shared this interest in preserving an idealized conception of the family with its social work colleagues and its activities suggest that the purview of social work was much broader in the 1920s than previously considered by historians. In the past, historians have primarily focused upon social workers who assisted single mothers or families. This has limited our understanding of the role of social work in American history. The work of the Bureau shows that a particular group of men, those who were homeless and unattached, also received assistance from social workers interested in the preservation of the family. Indeed, these men’s agencies might be conceived of as “companions” to agencies that primarily helped women and children. The Bureau’s correspondence, along with social work magazines like *The Family*,...
suggest that the organization was not alone. Although social workers interested in homeless, unattached men were slightly marginalized in the profession, the Bureau shows that these social workers had an important impact on the development of the welfare state. The Bureau’s activities with homeless, unattached men played an important role in transforming the relief setup in St. Louis, and it laid the groundwork for a federally funded transient program in Missouri. This fact raises questions as to who is deserving of relief in the United States, and under what conditions. The Bureau’s eventual demise suggests that homeless, unattached men were not regarded as worthy of receiving publicly funded relief, the implications of which would impact future policies crafted for the homeless.

As a private welfare agency ostensibly outside the realm of government, the actions of the Bureau for Homeless Men were crucial in the transformation of city and state policies toward unattached men. Prior to the founding of the Bureau, homeless men received very little relief, and were often ignored by the family casework agencies of the city. Although the Bureau perceived these men as deviants, the organization nonetheless sought improvements in the relief setup and expanded and created programs for homeless men. In many cases, such as the anti-begging program, cooperation with public institutions like the city government and the police force were critical elements of the Bureau’s activities. The programs of the Bureau, and the gendered conceptions of manhood that provoked and shaped those programs, laid the groundwork for the operation of the Federal Transient Program in Missouri. As the most experienced and accomplished agency working for homeless men in Missouri, the Bureau was chosen to help develop and administer the program’s activities in Missouri.
If gender played an important role in stimulating the formation of new policies and institutions, it also undermined attempts to establish those networks and policies as part of the fabric of the welfare state enhanced by New Deal policies because they privileged only men who supported families. Although the Federal Transient Program operated throughout the United States, the program was not continued once the Federal Emergency Relief Administration was disbanded and replaced by the Social Security Act and the Works Progress Administration. To be sure, it is not as though attempts were not made to salvage the program. A Labor Department survey in 1936, in which the Bureau for Homeless Men participated, sought to portray to policymakers the extent to which homeless, unattached men still needed assistance. Furthermore, the Trammell and Wilcox bills, debated throughout 1936, sought to amend the Social Security Act to include a federally supported transient program. The bill went nowhere. Although further research in this is needed, the Bureau’s experience under the transient program suggests that unattached, homeless men were not seen as worthy of receiving relief because they failed to conform to certain standards of manhood. When the Federal Transient Program dissolved, homeless men would once again have to seek assistance from increasingly stretched private agencies, meager city and state programs, and from each other.

Unlike advocates for single mothers and the elderly, the Bureau for Homeless Men should also be seen as complicit in the failure to inscribe relief for unattached men into the higher echelons of the welfare state. Although the Bureau did much to increase the relief available to homeless men, its records are noticeably silent concerning why public funds, or any funds at all, should be expended on these men. Contrary to the advocates for old age pensions or mother’s pensions, the Bureau never argued for the
worthiness of its clients. Quite the opposite, the Bureau spent much of its time, both in its publications and in private meetings, discussing the deviance of unattached men and the danger they posed to family life and society. Instead of advocating for its clients, the Bureau for Homeless Men argued for its ability as a professional casework agency to help make adjustments in the lives of its clients. The caseworkers sought to cultivate a professional aura and portray themselves as gatekeepers of a knowledge that only they could properly utilize. The Bureau believed that their professional abilities were reason enough for the continued support of its agency. In the end, the Bureau’s desire for professionalism, and its failure to make the case for the public support and for the worthiness of homeless men, almost completely undermined its existence as a casework agency. When the Federal Transient Program was disbanded, the Bureau was barely able to survive on the dearth of private funds available and even considered shutting down altogether.

The success of the Bureau’s programs also relied to some extent upon the cooperation of the proposed clients, homeless men. Problematically for the Bureau for Homeless Men, its clients were not empty receptacles for the agency’s ideal gender type. Many clients simply left in the middle of their casework treatment, thereby foiling the Bureau’s casework agenda. This transiency made itself painfully felt during the Bureau’s period as an agency under the Federal Transient Program. Most men who visited a transient camp, for example, left the camp in under three days, just before they would have been required to work and undergo casework. Other men utilized the Bureau’s services to their own advantage. This tactic was most evident in the Bureau’s decision to develop its own cafeteria program for its clients when it was discovered that men sold
their meal tickets for cash, alcohol, or whatever services they might have needed to survive. Finally, some men outright resisted the Bureau’s casework program and formed single men’s councils to protest the poor conditions of the Bureau’s shelters.

Since the demise of the Federal Transient Program in 1935, the United States government has not created a large, federally supported program for the homeless, and support for this group continues to languish down to the present. While more research needs to be done in this area, there appears to be a connection between contemporary conditions for the homeless and the experience of the Bureau for Homeless Men during the 1920s and 1930s. A study conducted in St. Louis in 1983 and 1984 reveals the dire situation faced by the urban homeless. Like the clients of the Bureau for Homeless Men, almost all the homeless individuals studied were single, widowed, or divorced.244 Furthermore, homeless men in this study received very little support in terms of adequate shelter, food, clothing, or medical treatment from public or private sources. In fact, the men in this study spent on average one fourth of their nights sleeping not in a shelter, but on the streets.245 Although almost all the homeless individuals in the study desired permanent housing, affordable housing was simply not made available for an overwhelming number.246 Contrary to the Bureau, however, this study discovered, or at least finally recognized, that homelessness was more than simply a detachment from a family unit, and that homelessness affected a broader spectrum of the population beyond white men. Homeless women comprised half the study, and two thirds of all the homeless in the study were racial minorities, mostly African American. To be sure, white women

244 Homeless People in St. Louis, ES-1.
245 Homeless People in St. Louis, 71, 72.
246 Homeless People in St. Louis, ES-4.
and racial minorities always comprised a broader portion of the Bureau’s caseloads than it liked to admit. With the demise of the Federal Transient Program, a unified effort to further explore these dimensions of homelessness was effectively cut off.

Current approaches to understanding unattached men also mirror those of the Bureau. In a recent study conducted by the Institute for Family Studies titled, “Why Working Class Men are Falling Behind,” author Michael Jindra points to alienation from family life as a primary cause of male poverty. Quoting a sociologist from the University of Pennsylvania, Jindra writes that a man disconnected from family life lives “without attachments and by the time they are forty or fifty years old, the things that kept these men from falling away – family and community life – are gone.” According to Jindra, men who become detached from family life seek out relationships and friendships with other men to replace family life. Disconnecting from families and seeking fulfilment in all male groups “contributes to a widening gulf between those more connected to family, work, and society” and prevents these men from being successful. The connections the author makes between a man’s lack of heterosocial family ties and his abundance of homosocial friendships points clearly back toward the assumptions of the Bureau, and reveals that the economic problems faced by vulnerable men are often understood through the language of family and gender.

While many of the perceptions of unattached men today mirror those of Bureau, the relief networks for these men have arguably diminished from the 1920s and 1930s. In fact, St. Louis has provided few services for the homeless until the past twenty to thirty

248 “Why Working Class Men are Falling Behind.”
years. Since then, the city has constructed about 1,400 housing units for the “chronically homeless.” Unfortunately, this technical term only designates those who have been on the street more than a year and who have a disability. Ironically, the city’s focus on permanent housing has caused the number of emergency beds in the city to decrease. While the city hoped to pair a focus on permanent housing with an expansion of shelters, this has not happened in either the city or St. Louis County because of opposition from residents.249

The situation for the homeless could deteriorate further if the largest shelter in St. Louis, the New Life Evangelistic Center, operated by the Reverend Larry Rice, succumbs to a petition signed by downtown residents to close it down. Rice’s shelter opened in 1976 and is the city’s largest homeless shelter. Like the Bureau, Rice perceives the homeless through his own particular lens, which in this case is religion. For Rice, the New Life Evangelistic Center is about evangelism first, and a shelter second. Indeed, the “shelter is simply a function of worship.”250 Rice’s shelter not only serves the homeless of downtown, but also men and women who have traveled from around the region from cities and states with fewer services for the homeless. However, the shelter is in the center of downtown, at 14th and Locust streets, and is surrounded by an increasingly gentrified neighborhood. In September 2013, residents of the high end lofts surrounding the shelter have filed petitions to close it down, citing lewd behavior in the streets such as drinking and drug abuse. While the petitioners have cited two instances of people moving away from downtown in reaction to the shelter, they have nonetheless conceded that the population of downtown continues to grow in spite of the shelter. Furthermore, many

problems related to public disorder are also the result of the increased number of bars and clubs in the neighborhood, which serve the wealthy loft residents. Larry Rice is of course not without blame – he is reported to have a worth in the tens of millions of dollars, while the shelter appears dilapidated – but even the smaller shelters in the city say that if Rice’s shelter did not exist, conditions for the homeless in St. Louis would continue to deteriorate. Faye Abram, a professor of social work at St. Louis University nicely sums up the case for keeping the shelter open: “The evidence suggests that it’s unlikely that the nuisance behaviors occurring outside New Life Evangelistic Center would be eliminated or alleviated if the center was closed.”

When one considers the possible solutions to the problem of homelessness in the United States, hope might not be the first feeling to arise. The long term unemployment and mental health issues faced by many precludes hopeful prospects for employment even in the low wage sector of a postindustrial economy. However, Phoenix, Arizona might provide a template for future policy. As of December 2013, Phoenix, through a combination of local, federal, and private sector funds, has placed all of its homeless veterans, over two hundred in all, in subsidized housing, effectively ending homelessness among veterans. Admittedly, homeless veterans make up only ten percent of the total homeless, but Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton plans to extend this program to the city’s other nonveteran homeless residents. While policymakers and those individuals interested in the problem of homelessness should follow this lead, they will undoubtedly face stiff political resistance because social provisions are not frequently made for those who do

not or cannot work and are otherwise not the recipients of widespread sympathy. What is needed then, and what Phoenix’s plan begins to express, is a rationale for relief and assistance that transcends the individual’s worth in a capitalist economy and advocates for a broader conception of worth and citizenship.
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