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**Washington: 1964**

Mr Pratt



MAYOR'S OFFICE.

St. Louis, January 11th 1872

New Hamilton Fish

Secretary of State Washington D. C.  
Sir

Your circular requesting information respecting the provisions for the relief of the poor in the city of St. Louis has been received, and I am directed to state in reply as follows:

In the enclosed copy of the General Statutes of Missouri respecting the provisions for the relief of the poor, will be found a statement of a general system in operation for the relief of the poor throughout the counties of the state.

The Poor House in St. Louis county erected under the statute is the only institution of the kind in the city or county of St. Louis.



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and the appropriation for its maintenance at commencement of the present fiscal year amount to \$25,000. The last semi annual report showed the following figures

Number of admissions during six months	179
"    in House at commencement of half year	<u>369</u>
Total	539
Number discharged during six months	241
"    died	<u>26</u>
Balance	272

The population of the city of St. Louis is estimated at present at about 375,000 but as the total number of destitute persons sent to the Poor House is composed only of extreme cases of pauperism, and the other means of assisting the poor are of a private character not governed by a regulated system, there are no data for



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reliable statistics showing the proportion of paupers, numerically to population, nor indeed for determining the actual number of paupers in the city.

No tax is levied in this city for the support of the poor and the great mass of the relief afforded is by private associations, but as their operations are principally during the winter months and consist of the distribution of necessaries by persons employed for that purpose it is impossible to obtain exact statistics of the total number of persons relieved. The last annual report of the Provident Association, the most important of our local organizations for the benefit of the poor, is herewith transmitted and furnishes some interesting information. This association the St Vincent & Paul society and others of a similar character are supported by voluntary contributions but —





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It has been customary each year for the County Court and the City Council to make an appropriation for the assistance of the two associations named, and may be gathered from what has been said that the system for the relief of the poor in the city of St. Louis consists of the provisions under the general statute of the state and the operations of charitable organizations.

The aim of the charitable societies is mainly to endeavor to prevent pauperism by assisting poor people to gain a position where they can make their own living and relief is distributed under careful supervision.

The City Hospital of the city of St. Louis is for the benefit of the poor of the city and in the annual report of the Board of Health herewith transmitted will be found the last annual —



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Report of the Resident physician with statistics annexed, Also reports of the other hospitals. The rules and regulations for the government of the city Hospital are also transmitted.

In the copy of the Revised city ordinances enclosed will be found the existing city laws respecting beggars and vagrants.

It may be added in reference to the relief of the poor that as a general thing the aim is to confine assistance to the poor who are bona fide residents of the city or county, and there is a penalty provided against any railroad or steamboat company who bring a pauper to the city, but its enforcement is difficult. Some of the documents enclosed furnish information on this subject. There is however no discrimination against paupers who are foreigners.



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It is hoped that the above statement with the pamphlets &c enclosed will supply all the information desired, as owing to the lack of statistics and the absence of any regular and elaborate Poor Law system categorical replies to the inquiries stated in the circular could not be satisfactorily made.

Respectfully Yours Obedt Servant  
L. H. Mearns

Secretary



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General Statute of Missouri in  
relation to Poor

1. Poor persons shall be relieved, maintained and supported by the county of which they are inhabitants
2. Aged, infirm, lame, blind or sick persons, who are unable to support themselves, and when there are no other persons required by law and able to maintain them, shall be deemed poor persons.
3. No person shall be deemed an inhabitant within the meaning of this chapter who has not resided for the space of twelve months next preceding the time of any order being made respecting such person, in the county, or who shall have removed from another county, for the purpose of imposing the burden or keeping such person on the county where he or she last resided for the time aforesaid
4. The county court in each county on the knowledge of the justices of such tribunal, or any of them, or on the information of

any justice of the peace of the county in which any person entitled to the benefit of the provisions of this chapter resides, shall from time to time and as often and for as long a time as may be necessary provided at the expense of the county for the relief maintenance and support of such persons

5 The county court shall at all times use its discretion, and grant relief to all persons, without regard to residence, who may require <sup>its</sup> assistance

6 The county court of the proper county shall allow such sum, as it shall think reasonable, for the funeral expenses of any person who shall die within the county without means to pay such funeral expenses.

7. The several county courts shall have power whenever they may think it expedient to purchase or lease, or may purchase and lease, any quantity of land in their respective counties not exceeding three hundred, and =



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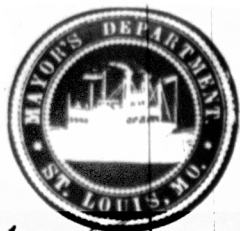
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- Twenty acres, and receive a conveyance to their county for the same
8. Such county court may cause to be erected on the land so purchased or leased a convenient poor house and cause the necessary labor to be done and repairs and improvements made and may levy upon their respective counties such sum as will be sufficient to pay the purchase money and to defray the necessary expenses
9. Whenever such poor house is erected, the county court shall have power to <sup>appoint</sup> a fit and discreet person to superintend the same, and the poor who may be kept thereat, and to allow such superintendent a reasonable compensation for his services
10. Such superintendent shall have power to cause persons kept at such poor house who are able to do useful labor to perform the same by reasonable and humane means
11. The county court shall have power to make all necessary and

proper orders and rules for the support and government of the poor kept at such poor house and for supplying them with the necessary raw materials to be converted by their labor into articles of use, and for disposing of the products of such labor and applying the proceeds thereof to the support of the institution

12. The sum levied upon the county, by virtue of the provisions of this Chapter shall be levied and collected in the same manner that county taxes are levied and collected; and the collector shall account for the same in the same manner, except that he shall pay over such sums, as (he) may have collected, at any time when demanded by the treasurer of the county

13. The treasurer of the county shall demand such funds whenever directed by the county court and his duty in relation thereto shall be the same as that prescribed by law in relation =



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to other county funds.

14. The treasurer shall keep the account of such funds separate from all other accounts.

15. The (county) court may, at any time, for good cause, remove the superintendent and appoint another to fill the vacancy.