



ROSS STOCKWELL
Judge of Probate



DAN A. MCGAFFEY
Register of Probate



JEANETTE M. LYONS
Girls' Probation Officer



L. J. DRYER
Boys' Probation Officer



CHILDREN'S DETENTION HOME
Under Supervision of the Probate Court

The Probate Court



THE greater part of the work in the Probate Court has to do with settling of estates of deceased persons.

The records are complete for a period of about one hundred years and it is interesting to note the great growth in wealth of estates in the County. A few years ago a man who had an estate of a few thousand dollars was considered independent, and now we have many estates running into millions of dollars.

The average total value of estates passing through the Probate Court per year at the present time is about twelve and one-half million dollars. This is steadily increasing. The Inheritance Tax which has been in effect in Michigan for approximately twenty years shows this great increase. In five years from 1914 to 1919, the value of property passing through the office was four and one-half million dollars and the inheritance tax figured by the office amounted to \$43,329.00. The last year the amount of tax figured by the office was \$163,453.00.

The number of estates settled in the last ten years is greater than the total number of estates settled during the first seventy-five years in the office, and during the ten years from 1906 to 1916, the number of estates settled amounted to 2,655. In the last ten years, 7,776 cases were handled and at the present time over one thousand cases a year are handled.

In addition to the settlement of estates, the Probate Court commits patients to the State Hospital for the Insane, Michigan Home and Training School at Lapeer for feeble minded; Michigan Farm Colony at Wahpamega for epileptics; and approves applications for the Michigan State Sanitarium at Howell.

Duties have been constantly added to the Probate Court from time to time and one of the progressive laws of Michigan was an act passed by the Legislature in 1913, allowing juveniles to be sent to the University Hospital at Ann Arbor for treatment, in cases where the parents are unable to care for them. The State gives all of these children wonderful care without expense to the individual or to the County, and during the last year Oakland County sent over three hundred children under this act.

The Probate Court also appoints Commissioners for the condemnation of land when the State or County is to take land for public highway purposes, and many cases of this kind have been handled during the last few years, notably the condemnation cases for the widening of Woodward Avenue. Commissioners are also appointed for the determination of the necessity for Drains under the County Drain Law, and also the appointments of Boards of Review to review the assessments made for damages by Drain Commissioners.

In the Spring of 1925 the Pontiac State Hospital established what is known as an Out-Clinic and the work as carried on by the Clinic has been very closely allied to the work of the different County offices.

It has been a great aid to the work especially of the Circuit Court and Probate Courts, and also other departments of the County and City of Pontiac. This work has been done by the State without expense to anyone. The Out-Clinic meets once a month in an office furnished by the County and the different

workers can take anyone they desire for mental examination. The Hospital furnishes a report on each case and advises as to the Institutions to which the patient should be committed or the special care required. Miss Sadie C. Devitt, who is Director of Social Service for the State Hospital, has charge of this work. The work of the Clinic is to be commended.

A few of the other duties of the Probate Court are the approval of Adoptions and Change of Name of minors, and also of adults; the handling of Recall elections; Appointment of the Soldier's Relief Commissioners; appointment of guardians of minors and incompetent persons, and also trustees, and many other duties.

In 1907 at a special session of the Legislature the Juvenile Court was established as a part of the Probate Court, applying to all children under the age of seventeen years.

The law divides the children into three classes, delinquent, dependent and neglected. The law was a gradual outgrowth of a condition which had existed for many years, that is, the locking up of children in jails with adult persons charged with crimes.

Under the present system no complaint is filed against a juvenile, but a petition for investigation is filed, which, if a boy, is investigated by the Boys' Probation Officer; if the petition is filed in regard to a girl the same is investigated by the Woman's Probation Officer and children are not brought into Court unless it is found upon the investigation to be absolutely necessary.

In 1913 the Legislature passed an Amendment to the Juvenile Law allowing Probate Courts to grant an allowance to widowed mothers and others for the support of their children. The old system of handling children of this kind was either to break up the family and send the children to State Institutions, or have them supported by the County Poor Commissioners. Under the present system the mother gets a stated allowance per week and the family is supervised by the Woman's Probation Officer. For the year 1925 the Supervisors appropriated \$33,000.00 for this work, and sixty-three mothers with two hundred and three children are now being cared for at an average cost of \$3.21 per child per week.

In granting the Mother's Pension, so-called, a very careful investigation is made and is taken up by the Probation Officer with the Supervisor of the Township where the family lives, or with the Superintendents of the Poor. The splendid co-operation given us by the members of the Board of Supervisors, the County Auditors and the Superintendents of the Poor has helped very much in handling this fund.

For the cases handled in the different branches of the Juvenile Court the reports of the Boys' and Girls' Probation Officers (in connection with this report) will show the volume of work done in the Juvenile Court.

Recently the Board of Supervisors submitted to a vote of the people the proposition of raising a certain amount of money by taxation to build a County Infirmary, Contagious Disease Hospital, Tuberculosis Hospital and County Detention Home for children. The County Infirmary and the Contagious Disease Hospital are completed and the Tuberculosis Hospital is now under construction. The Detention Home is the only one of these buildings not yet started. During the last year we have used a temporary building furnished by the Board of Supervisors on Auburn Avenue in Pontiac, and have had as many as eighteen

children at one time on different occasions, with an average of eleven. They have one room for girls and two for boys on the second floor and it has been impossible to properly segregate them. While the building is clean and well conducted, it is not fireproof. It will be but a short time, however, before this new building is completed. The expense of caring for Juveniles in the Detention Home will be cut considerably with a proper building and facilities.

The number of cases handled in the Juvenile Division of the Probate Court in the ten years from 1907 to 1917 was 336. From 1917 to 1922, five years, 443 cases were handled. During the last four years 1,087 cases have been handled making 308 cases more the last four years than the first fifteen years. During the last year a total of 238 cases have been brought into Court and 480 cases investigated that were not brought into Court, making a total of 718 cases disposed of in one year.

The work of the Probate Court is being carried on by Ross Stockwell, Judge of Probate; Dan A. McGaffey, Register of Probate, and also Register of the Juvenile Court, who has been with the office six years; Miss Ruth Immick, Deputy Probate Register, with the office eleven years; and Mrs. Florence Doty, Deputy Probate Register, with the office eight years; Mrs. Jeanette M. Lyons, Girls' Probation Officer; Mr. L. J. Dryer, Boys' Probation Officer; Mrs. Dora Maynad, who acts as Stenographer for the Probate Officers; Mr. Frank L. Jackson, who is Oakland County Agent for the State Board of Corrections and Charities, and assists in some parts of the Juvenile work; Miss Florence Minnick, who is the Stenographer taking testimony on all hearings. She also acts as Stenographer for the Justice Courts and for the Coroners. Mrs. Edna Best is matron of the Woman's Detention Home.

ROSS STOCKWELL.

Report of Juvenile Probation Officer

REPORT of JUVENILE PROBATION OFFICER L. J. DRYER

THE Boys' Division of the Juvenile Court was established March 1st, 1926. Therefore, report covers a period of five months.

The work in the department deals with Delinquent Boys, Dependent and Neglected Children, except in the cases of older girls and they are taken care of by Woman's Probation Officer.

A number of cases are referred to this office and upon investigation it is found that a little friendly assistance is all that is needed. Judge Harpster, of the Justice Court, has referred a number of cases to this office for investigation and also asked that these cases be followed up. The Judge has given splendid co-operation in every way.

No. of new petitions filed	180
No. of cases investigated where no petition was filed	260
No. of homes visited	604
No. of summons served	191
No. of active cases	88
No. of closed cases	92
No. of boys on probation	61
No. of uninvestigated cases	8

No. of children committed to State Public School, Coldwater.....	12
No. of positions obtained for fathers of neglected children.....	33
No. of delinquent boys and neglected and dependent children in the De- tention Home during this period (49 delinquent boys).....	132
Approximate number of miles driven.....	11,500

The majority of complaints for delinquency covers, truancy from home or from school, breaking and entering, and theft of automobiles. We also have considerable trouble with boys taking articles from the Five and Ten-Cent stores and we must realize that it is a great temptation to boys where their parents are unable to provide these little luxuries. We had one little lad, nine years of age, whose father is dead and mother is working hard to earn a living for a large family, who was boarding in a licensed boarding home in the southern part of the county, that stole \$20.00 from the boarding mother. Instead of spending this money foolishly, he invested it in a new suit, shoes, hose and a cap. Also some golf balls, so that he could caddy on the golf links. He wanted to look nice and thought he would be more likely to get employment on the links. When questioned, the boy was very repentant and willing to give up the balance of the money he had not spent.

In cases where petitions are filed, an investigation is made of the home and circumstances surrounding the case. If found necessary, summons are issued and parents or guardian of a child are brought into court. Child is usually placed on probation. Every boy is given his chance to make good. When on probation he is required to follow closely the instructions of his Probation Officer and is to report regularly. We endeavor to keep all probationers employed, is possible.

Boys love adventure and often start out with only a few cents in their pockets to see the world. We had one boy, who had heard of "that big hospital" at Ann Arbor. He caught rides from car to car to get there, and thought of nothing else only to visit that hospital. These adventurous boys are invariably picked up by police officers in different cities, some as far away as southern Ohio. Probation Officer is notified and boys detained until he can come for them.

Medical and mental examinations are given to all children, who are need of this service, and if necessary hospital care is provided. The health of these children has great bearing upon their future conduct.



Probation Department--Female

REPORT of PROBATION OFFICER JEANETTE M. LYONS
(From January 1 to August 1, 1926)



This Office has jurisdiction over cases involving Dependent Children in Mothers' Pension families, Delinquent Girls under seventeen years of age and Neglected and Dependent older girls.

Cases requiring special investigation for adoption, appointment of guardians, attendance at Mental Clinic, or friendly assistance, in the cases which are beneficiaries of the Rowland Aid Fund, and for agencies in other cities.

MOTHERS' PENSION DEPARTMENT

No. of Mothers' Pension applications.....	40
No. of pensions granted.....	17

No. of pensions discontinued	18
No. of pensions uninvestigated and pending	34
No. of families drawing pensions August 1st	62
No. of children in pension families	203
Amount spent for Mothers' Pensions from 1-1-'26 to 8-1-'26	\$17,892.00
Average per week per child	3.15

In order to safeguard the expenditure of money, careful investigations are made in all cases. Allowances are granted according to an estimated budget. Bi-monthly they receive their expenses and other income, if any. These families are supervised in a friendly way, and pensions are increased or decreased according to conditions. It is the aim of this department, not to encourage dependence, or to pauperize, but to assist these unfortunate and dependent children and mothers to help themselves.

DELINQUENT GIRLS

No. of petitions filed	25
No. of girls placed on probation	13
No. of girls committed to Institutions	10
4 girls committed to Adrian; 2 to the House of Good Shepherd; 1 to the State Public School, Coldwater; 1 to the Williams House, Detroit; 1 to the Training School at Lapeer, and 1 to the Meth- odist Children's Home, Farmington.	
No. of Cases uninvestigated and pending	6
Total number of girls on probation	22

DEPENDENT and NEGLECT DEPARTMENT

No. of petitions filed	15
No. of children made wards of the Court	13
No. of children placed for adoption	4
2 were committed to State Public School, Coldwater; 1 with the Mich- igan Children's Aid Society and another in a private home.	
Total number of children under supervision of this office	46

After a petition has been filed, the Probation Officer makes an investigation of all stated facts and conditions bearing upon the case. If investigation shows that court action is unnecessary, a recommendation to the Court is made that matter be dismissed. If a suitable adjustment can be made without formal court hearing, the matter is taken care of informally.

The health of the Delinquent girls and children in all departments must receive attention. Provision is made for attendance at Health clinics and treatments by specialists secured when necessary. Hospital care is provided when physicians advise.

We have had three girls, who were guilty of forging checks and another for theft of money from her employer. The Judge ordered that complete restitution be made in all of these cases. The girls are saving a small sum each week and paying toward their account. This money is paid to the complainant. This helps to impress upon the minds of these girls the fact that they cannot obtain money unlawfully without paying the penalty.

Every effort is made to secure employment for girls of working age and suitable homes for the children, who are living outside of their own home.

Probation Officer assists probationer in every possible way to avoid repeating past offenses; and to establish better habits of conduct for the future.