



Mrs. Jeanette M. Lyons
Probate Officer



Eva Karpinski
Probation Officer



Dan A. McGaffey
Judge of Probate



Frank S. Jackson
County Agent



Kenneth McVittie
Juvenile Probation Officer



The Probate Court

THE greater part of the work of the Probate Court has to do with settling the 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 fifteen to twenty millions of dollars. This is rapidly increasing. The Inheritance Tax which has been in effect in Michigan for about twenty years shows this great increase. In five years from 1914 to 1919, the value of property passing through the office was approximately four and one-half million dollars, and the Inheritance Tax collected through the office amounted to approximately three thousand dollars. In the last year the Inheritance Tax figured to one hundred forty thousand eight hundred fifty dollars.

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, twenty-six hundred and fifty-five cases were handled. Last year thirteen hundred fifty-eight cases were entered in the estate docket alone, which shows the great increase in the business of estates alone, and the other matters coming before the Probate Court have increased accordingly.

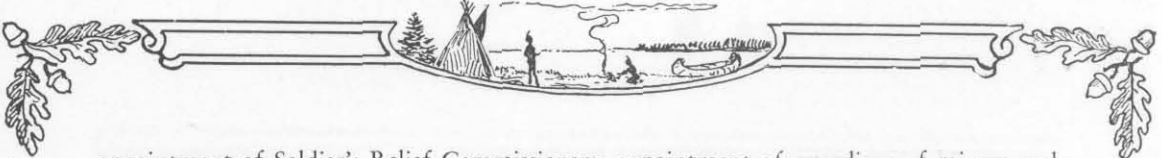
In addition to the settlement of estates, the Probate Court commits patients to the State Hospital for the Insane, Michigan Home and Training School for Feeble Minded, Michigan Farm Colony at Wahjamega for Epileptics, and approves applications for admission to the Michigan State Sanatorium at Howell.

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 provide treatment for them. The State gives these children the best of care without expense to the individual or to the County, and during the last year Oakland County has sent over four hundred cases under this Act.

The Probate Court appointed Commissioners for the condemnation of land when the State or County is obliged to take the same for public highway purposes, and many cases of this kind are being handled now, notably the condemnation cases for the widening of Woodward Avenue and the Telegraph Road. Commissioners are also appointed for the determination of the necessity for drains under the Drain Law, and also the appointments of Boards of Review to review the assessments made for benefits made by the Drain Commissioner.

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. The Out-Clinic meets once a month in an office furnished by the County and the different welfare workers can take anyone they desire before the Clinic 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 Soldier's Relief Commissioners; appointment of guardians of minors and incompetent persons, and also trustees.

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 confinement of children in jails with adult persons charged with crimes. It is now unlawful to confine any juvenile with adult prisoners.

Under the present system no complaint is filed against a child, 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 Girls' 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 is allowed a certain sum per week and the family is supervised by the Mother's Pension Department. During the fiscal year ending June 30th, sixty-two thousand eighty-three dollars was expended by the Mother's Pension Department, this amount was paid to one hundred fifty-five mothers for the benefit of five hundred one children, which is an average expense of two dollars and thirty-eight cents per child per week.

In granting the Mother's Pensions, a very careful investigation is made, and the case is taken up with the Supervisor of the Township in which the family lives and with the Superintendents of the Poor. The splendid cooperation 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 Department.

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 department.

The construction of an adequate Juvenile Home for the Juvenile Court of Oakland County, which is greatly needed in our County, is now under way.

The number of cases handled in the Juvenile Division of the Probate Court in the ten years from 1907 to 1917 was three hundred thirty-six. During the last year a total of four hundred forty-nine petitions were filed, six hundred two case hearings were held, a portion of which were rehearings for which new petitions were not necessary.

The work of the Probate Court is being carried on by Dan A. McGaffey, Judge of Probate; Miss Ruth Immick, Probate Register, who has been with the office eleven years; Mrs. Florence Doty, with the office eight years; and Miss Mildred Trerice, Stenographer; James S. Butler, who has general supervision of all the Juvenile Court work; Mrs. Jeanette M. Lyons, who has charge of the Mother's Pension Department; Miss Eva Karpinski, Girls' Probation Officer; Mr. Kenneth McVittie, Boys' Probation Officer; Mrs. Dora Maynard, Chief Clerk and Stenographer for the Juvenile Court and Probation Officers; Mr. Frank S. Jackson, who is Oakland County Agent for the State Board of Corrections and Charities and assists in the Juvenile work; Miss Gertrude Townsend, Stenographer, and Mrs. Edna Best, Matron of the Detention Home.

JUVENILE DIVISION

The following is the report of the Juvenile Division of the Probate Court for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1928:



JUVENILE DETENTION HOME



VAULT, PROBATE COURT

Number of Petitions for Mother's Pension	106
Number of Petitions for Delinquent Boys	148
Number of Petitions for Delinquent Girls	43
Number of Petitions for Dependent and Neglected Children	152

Total number of petitions 449

Number of boys committed to Boys' Vocational School, Lansing	29
Number of girls committed to Girls' Training School, Adrian	5
Number of boys committed to Ford Republic, Farmington	7
Number of boys committed to Starr Commonwealth, Albion	4
Number of children committed to Michigan State Public School, Coldwater	50
Number of children committed to the American Legion Billet, Otter Lake	2
Number of children committed to Denominational Institutions	6
Number of children supervised by the Michigan Children's Aid Society	9
Number of cases dismissed	90
Number of children on probation	57
Number of children made wards of the Court	40
Number of cases pending	19
Number of cases continued	51

Total number of children involved 1205

County is paying board for 59 dependent children, 23 of these children are State Wards, pending admittance to State Institutions.

We believe the Juvenile Court is one of the most important agencies for the jurisdiction of crime and the development of good citizenship. It endeavors to administer the law faithfully and conscientiously, but at the same time its emphasis will be laid more and more on the exercising of Social Justice by which alone children who come before it may be readjusted, safeguarded, and developed into future assets for the State. We bespeak for the Court of Oakland County the support of all who have the public welfare at heart, in the improvement of its almost indispensable services to the community.

DAN A. MCGAFFEY,
Judge of Probate.