

# Patricia Persse collection on the Savannah Health Center

## Descriptive Summary

<b>Repository:</b>	Georgia Historical Society
<b>Creator:</b>	Persse, Patricia, b. 1926.
<b>Title:</b>	Patricia Persse collection on the Savannah Health Center
<b>Dates:</b>	1920s-1980s
<b>Extent:</b>	1.0 cubic feet (2 boxes)
<b>Identification:</b>	MS 1478

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## Biographical/Historical Note

Patricia Persse (b. 1926) was born in Savannah, Georgia. At the age of 18, she entered a five-year program operated by Providence Hospital and Catholic University in Washington, D.C., from which she earned her BSN. After graduating in 1949, she became an industrial health nurse in Savannah; she then worked for the Chatham County Health Department in its Mary McLean Visiting Nurse Service. She returned to Washington, D.C., where she completed an MSN with a major in public health. After completing graduate school, Persse returned to Savannah and became Chief Nurse of the Public Health Department.

The Savannah Health Center was one of the first public health nursing services in the South. It was formed in 1920 to "coordinate public and private health activities of Savannah" as well as to promote the health and welfare of Chatham County. Ten agencies formed the initial organization of the Center with a Central Committee, which consisted of representatives from each of the participating groups, coordinated activities. The activities performed by these groups included a wide range of welfare services, from nursing care, operation of medical and dental clinics to the operation of a milk depot for undernourished children and health education programs for disadvantaged families. tuberculosis and venereal disease were two of the main targets of the Center's services. The main organizations associated with the Center were the Mary Maclean Visiting Nurses Association, the Colored Federation of Women's Clubs, the Louisa Porter Home Board, and the Margaret Bottome Circle of King's Daughters. the number of associated organizations in the Health Center continued to grow, numbering 29 during the 1950s.

In 1925, the Savannah Health Center merged its services with the City Health Department; in 1931, the Health Center became incorporated. In 1944, the name of the Savannah Health Center officially changed to the Chatham-Savannah health Council. In 1950, the Health Council became one of the founding organizations of the United Community Services, which took over control of the Health Council's planning functions. In 1954, a County Board of Health was established. The county's nursing services were concerned primarily with the prevention of disease through education, and the Health Council's nursing services continued to provide care to the sick and needy at home. In 1969, the Chatham-Savannah Health Council was renamed the Combined Public Health Nursing Services, Incorporated. During the 1970s the group reorganized and became a United Way Agency; in 1984 it was renamed the Mary Maclean Health Association, Inc.

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## Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of papers relating to the Savannah Health Center's long history in the public health field. The folders include several histories of the Health Center and its related organizations, by-laws, correspondence, reports, news clippings, and brochures about the organization and home health care. Also included in the collection are minutes and reports of the Mary Maclean Milk Depot and Visiting Nurses Association, 1958-1961, as well as some information on the United Community Services organization, 1959-1960. Also included are a scrapbook of the Savannah Health Center during the 1920s, some loose photographs and negatives, and a color slide presentation on public health in Savannah. the scrapbook has newspaper clippings, photographs, brochures, and other publicity items pasted in it. The photographs in the collection were used for publicity and are black and white. They consist mostly of public health nurses in action and some date to the 1930s. The final photograph is pasted on a loose page, and it depicts a Savannah Health Department advertisement from the 1920s. The caption describes the efforts of the Health Department in decreasing infant deaths in

the city through the promotion of maternal and infant hygiene. There are also a group of negatives depicting public health staff from the 1980s, and two copies of the Mary Maclean Association logo, which is a visiting nurse in silhouette. The slide presentation appears to date from the 1980s and consists of 86 slides taken at various times. The slides are numbered consecutively, but some numbers are missing.

The box containing visual materials is noted as "VM" in the collection inventory.

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## Index Terms

Administrative records.  
African American midwives--Georgia--Savannah.  
African American nurses--Georgia--Savannah.  
Annual reports.  
Brochures.  
Bylaws (administrative records)  
Chatham County (Ga.). Dept. of Health.  
Chatham-Savannah Health Council (Ga.)  
Child welfare--Georgia--Savannah.  
Clippings (information artifacts)  
Colored Federation of Women's Clubs (Savannah, Ga.)  
Combined Public Health Nursing Services (Savannah, Ga.)  
Community health nursing--Georgia--Savannah.  
Community health services--Georgia--Savannah.  
Dental clinics.  
Family social work--Georgia--Savannah.  
Health education--Georgia--Savannah.  
Home care services--Georgia--Savannah.  
Letters (correspondence)  
Local histories.  
Louisa Porter Home (Savannah, Ga.)  
Mary Maclean Association (Savannah, Ga.)  
Mary Maclean Milk Depot (Savannah, Ga.)  
Mary Maclean Visiting Nurses Association (Savannah, Ga.)  
Maternal health services--Georgia--Savannah.  
Midwives--Georgia--Savannah.  
Milk depots--Georgia--Savannah  
Minorities in nursing--Georgia--Savannah.  
Monthly reports.  
Nurses--Georgia--Savannah.  
Nursing services--Georgia--Savannah.  
Persse, Patricia, b. 1926.  
Photographs.  
Public health nurses--Georgia--Savannah.  
Public welfare--Georgia--Savannah.  
Savannah Health Center (Ga.)  
School nursing--Georgia--Savannah.  
Scrapbooks.  
Sexually transmitted diseases.  
Slides (photographs)  
Social service.  
Tuberculosis--Prevention.  
United Community Services (Savannah, Ga.)  
Visiting nurses--Georgia--Savannah.

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## Administrative Information

### Custodial History

Material was acquired from collector.

### **Preferred Citation**

[item identification], Patricia Persse collection on the Savannah Health Center, MS 1478, Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.

### **Acquisition Information**

Gift of Patricia Persse, 1991.

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### **Restrictions**

#### **Access Restrictions**

Collection is open for research.

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### **Sponsorship**

Encoding funded by a 2012 Documenting Democracy grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

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### **Container List**

#### **Box Fldr**

- 1 1 Histories of Savannah Health Center and Association Organizations
  
- 2 Order of Incorporation, by-laws, and name-change resolution, 1931-1944
  
- 3 Correspondence
  
- 4 Savannah Health Center, annual reports, 1935-1939
  
- 5 Mary Maclean Association, annual reports, 1925 and 1927; other reports of Chatham-Savannah Health Council, 1941 and 1945
  
- 6 Minutes of the monthly meetings of the Mary Maclean Milk Depot and Visiting Nurses Association, 1958 October - 1960 January

7-9 Mary Maclean Association, annual reports, 1958-1962

10 United Community Services, 1959-1960

11 Mary Maclean Association, news clippings, 1920s

12 Savannah Health Center and Mary Maclean Association, news clippings, 1940s-1980s

13 News clippings and brochures on Home Health Care, 1980

14 Brochures and miscellaneous, Savannah Health Center

**vm\_box Fldr**

1 1 Photographs and negatives ( 36.0 items. )

**vm\_box Fldr**

1 2 Slide presentation and Mary Maclean Association logo ( 88.0 items. ) (2 copies)

**vm\_box Fldr**

1 3 Scrapbook, Savannah Health Center, 1920s