

THE ORCHARD HOME SCHOOL (BETHESDA SOCIETY)

Records 1828-c.1948

Charities Collection -- CC 16

1.5 Manuscript Containers	Processed February 1997 by Jennifer Hanna
7.5 linear inches	Supervising Archivist: Claire Goodwin
Accession number: 1997.010	

ACQUISITION: In 1911, the Boston Children's Aid Society gave its entire library to the Simmons College School of Social Work Library. This library included the annual reports of many local and international welfare and charitable organizations. With the passage of time this collection took on historical significance; in 1991 it was transferred to the Simmons College Archives.

As part of donations in 1988 and 1989, Donald Moreland, a local social work administrator and collector of social work history, gave the Simmons College Archives a large number of annual reports, pamphlets, and other materials related to various welfare and charitable organizations. Because neither of these donations formed a discrete collection, the materials donated by Donald Moreland were combined to form the Charities Collection. The Simmons College Archives Charities Collection consists of numerous small collections. Accession numbers for the individual collections are assigned during processing.

ACCESS: Unrestricted

COPYRIGHT: Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the College Archivist.

HISTORY:

In 1816, the Penitent Females' Refuge was formed by a group of concerned gentlemen. The first meeting was held in 1818. The Society was formed to protect and re-educated "fallen" girls and young women. The Society opened a home at 32 Rutland Street, Boston. Women who were accepted were expected to stay for two years. They had school two days a week and were also taught needlework and vocals. Housework was also done by the inmates. The women were placed in homes when they were prepared.¹

¹*Directory of Charitable and Beneficent Organizations of Boston* (Boston: A Williams, 1880) p. 62.

By 1824 a women's auxiliary was begun to help defray the costs of running the home. In addition to raising and donating funds, the women visited the home to counsel, instruct, etc. the young women. The two groups worked together towards the common goal of rescuing "fallen women."

In 1854, the women's auxiliary was officially incorporated into the Bethesda Society. The Penitent Females' Refuge and the Bethesda Society worked together until 1914, when they merged under the Bethesda Society's name.

In 1916, they moved the refuge house to 917 Belmont Street in Watertown, after using a house on Mt. Auburn Street in Cambridge for two years. This new house was renamed the "Orchard Home School." By this time, the goals of the home school had changed, as reflected in the 1914 *Directory of Charitable Beneficent Organizations*: "...a private unsectarian home-school...receives fallen women and wayward girls who desire reform, or who are placed here by relatives. Common school branches, sewing, domestic work...when the girls are prepared to take care of themselves suitable places are found. Matrons keep in communication with girls after they leave the home." (p. 195)

Again in 1924, the Home School's purpose changed slightly: "Receives, on request of parents, courts or other social agencies, white girls preferably under the age of 17, residing in Massachusetts..."² However, the work always relied on "sympathy, occupation and religious influence for reform."³

In 1936, the Bethesda Society changed its name to the "Orchard Home School."

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

The Records of the Orchard Home School (Bethesda Society) 1828-c.1948 (with gaps) constitute 7.5 linear inches.

The records include annual reports and other publications of the Society.

Series I contains the Annual Reports, which are divided into 4 subseries based on the creating entity (since the development of the society was so complex.) The Annual Reports contain financial statistics, messages from people on the board, member lists, number of women at the refuge, etc. The Annual Reports are chronological within the series and the subseries.

Series II contains other publications of the Society, arranged chronologically with dates between 1824 and 193-(?) (with gaps). There are only 5 items in this Series.

CONTAINER LIST:

²*Directory of Social Agencies in Boston* p. 13

³*Directory of Charitable and Beneficent Organizations of Boston* (Boston: A Williams, 1880) p. 62.

BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
		SERIES I: ANNUAL REPORTS
1	1-4	Penitent Females' Refuge & Bethesda Society
	1	◆ 1828-1875 (with gaps) bound volume
	2	◆ 1860-1865 (with gaps)
	3	◆ 1876-1889 bound volume
	4	◆ 1890-1900 (with gaps) bound volume
2	1	Refuge & Bethesda Society ◆ 1901-1913 (with gaps)
	2	Bethesda Society ◆ 1854; 1914-1941(with gaps) full reports ◆ 1934-1946 (with gaps) postcard reports ◆ 1941 condensed report
		To the Friends of the Orchard Home School
	3	1944; 1948(?)
		SERIES II: MISC. PUBLICATIONS
	4	◆ "The Board of Managers of the Penitent Female's Refugeto a Benevolent Public" 1824 ◆ "Sermon delivered in Park StChurch before the Penitent Females Refuge Society"1825 ◆ "In Memoriam - A Brief Notice of Maria Howland..." 1881 ◆ "Bethesda Society" Pamphlet 1918 ◆ "Orchard Home School" flyer [N.D.-193-?]