

BOSTON SOCIETY FOR THE CARE OF GIRLS (1800-1947)

Records, 1801-1921

Charities Collection -- CC 17

1 manuscript container	Processed October 1997 by Amy Lux
5 linear inches	Supervising Archivist: Joan Gearin
Accession number: 1997.139	

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 and in 1991 it was transferred to the Simmons College Archives.

As part of donations in 1988 and 1989, Donald Moreland, a local social worker 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 is a discrete collection, the materials transferred in 1991 from the School of Social Work Library and related 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

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ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The Boston Female Asylum (BFA) was established in 1800, incorporated in 1803, and changed its name in 1910 to The Boston Society for the Care of Girls. The Boston Female Asylum, organized by Mrs. Hannah Stillman, was the "first public charity projected and established by women in the town of Boston."¹

¹*An Account of the Boston Female Asylum: with the Acts of Incorporation, By-Laws, Rules and Regulations* (Boston: Press of John Wilson and Son, 1867) p. 1.

The BFA was run by a Board of Managers, consisting of fourteen members. Elected from among the board members was a First Director, a Second Director, a Secretary and a Treasurer. The Society also had subscribers who would pay \$3 per year or \$50 for a lifetime membership. The Board Members and Subscribers would come together at the annual meetings to vote on issues at hand. Gentlemen could not become members of the Society, but were allowed to make monetary donations.²

The objective of the Society was to "raise funds for the benefit of female orphan children from three to ten years of age."³ During the Society's first two years, the girls were boarded out to good homes for \$1.50 per week. But in 1803 the Managers purchased the first of a succession of houses, having deemed it necessary to accommodate the girls under one roof. At the age of twelve, a girl was then placed in a home under indenture. She would stay with that family until the age of eighteen, when at that time, the family would pay her \$50. Often the girls married right away, so they were provided for before they reached the age of nineteen. Others were provided for by adoption. No child was placed outside the Asylum before the age of twelve unless she was adopted by a good family.⁴

In 1906, the Society began to place all the girls with private families. The families would be paid \$3 per week until the child was adopted, returned to her family or old enough to be on her own.⁵ In 1910 the Society sold their final home and bought a building, 184 Boylston Street, to serve as office space. It was also in 1910 that the name changed, from Boston Female Asylum to The Boston Society for the Care of Girls, and the Society changed the scope of its objective. It began working with older girls "to aim at prevention rather than cure."⁶ The help that the Society now gave out ranged from placing an orphan in a good home, to helping a runaway get situated in Boston, to a friendly chat.

In 1922, the Board of Managers and the Directors from the Boston Children's Aid Society voted to form a federation, known as the Children's Aid Association. From 1922 until 1947 the "two organizations retained their corporate identities although functioning as one child placing agency. Then in 1947 [the two organizations] were legally merged under the name of Children's Aid Association, Inc."⁷

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records of the Boston Society for the Care of Girls, known as the Boston Female Asylum until 1910, constitute 5 linear inches. The collection includes annual reports,

²*Institution of the Boston Female Asylum* (Boston: Russell and Cutler, 1801) p. 4-6.

³*Ibid.*, p. 4

⁴*One Hundred Years of Work with Girls in Boston* (Boston: Mary Caroline Crawford, 1919) p. 17.

⁵*The Boston Society for the Care of Girls: Annual Report* (1917), n.p., p. 10.

⁶*One Hundred Years of Work with Girls in Boston* (Boston: Mary Caroline Crawford, 1919) p. 19.

⁷*Children's Aid Association: Annual Report* (1949), n.p., p. 6.

publications, and sermons which demonstrate the organizational and institutional history of the Society.

SERIES LISTING

- I. Annual Reports, 1842-1921, with gaps
- II. Publications, 1801-1919, with gaps
- III. Sermons and Discourse, 1802-1850, with gaps

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I. Annual Reports, 1842-1921, with gaps

The annual reports for 1841-1842 contain an account of the year's progress and activities. The 1850 report contains an account of the year's progress and activities, a list of officers and subscribers and the annual meeting sermon by Rev. F.D. Huntington. The annual reports for 1909-1921 list the Board of Managers, committees (and their members), office staff, society history, organizational chart, Board of Managers Report, General Secretary Report, donor list, Department of Advice and Assistance Report, Department of Placing Out Report, an account of yearly progress and Treasurer's Report.

Series II. Publications, 1801-1919, with gaps

This series contains nine publications which record the legal and social history of the society. The publications are arranged alphabetical by title.

An Account of the Boston Female Asylum with the Acts of Incorporation, By-laws, Rules and Regulations. (1810, 1867, 1874, 1889, 1898)

Five of the publications have like titles and all contain certain elements that are similar, if not the same. These publications contain an historical account of the Society, locations of past and current locations, and changes that have taken place within the organization. They also contain parent surrender and indenture forms, Acts of Incorporation, By-laws and Regulations, Rules and Regulations for the government of the children, current year officers and managers, annual subscribers and life members. The 1810 Account gives a more detailed account of the Society, including the past and present names of Board Members, teachers and governesses, the present state of the funds (expenses and salaries), and donations (names, years and amounts).

Acts of Incorporation (1910)

This 1910 pamphlet documents the original Acts of Incorporation and the changes that had occurred up to 1910, including the name change to The Boston Society for the Care of Girls.

Institution of the Boston Female Asylum (1801)

This publication was published for the first anniversary of the Boston Female Asylum. The booklet states how the Society will be structured, the rules of the Society, the progress and happenings of the Society from 1800-1801, the current funds, and the names of subscribers to the Society.

One Hundred Years of Work with Girls in Boston (1919).

This publication contains a general overview of the asylum history up to 1919.

Reminiscences of the Boston Female Asylum (1844)

This publication includes the history of the asylum, how the governing body of the Society is structured, locations of past and present homes, names of governesses, preachers and teachers, officers, names of subscribers, anniversaries and financial information. The financial information includes the names of donors and the amounts donated and a list of benefactors with a description of their gifts. This publication also includes a chapter titled "Asylum Anecdotes," starting on page 44, which tells what has happened to some of the orphans that have since left the Asylum.

Series III. Sermons and Discourse, 1802-1850, with gaps

This series contains five sermons (1802, 1809, 1825, 1835, 1850) which were delivered at the annual meetings of the Boston Female Asylum for the coinciding year. The 1850 sermon was printed with the 1850 annual report and is located in box 1, folder 2. The sermon speakers include Joseph Eckley, J.S.J. Gardiner, F.W.P. Greenwood, Jonathan M. Wainright and F.D. Huntington. For a complete list of the speakers at the anniversary celebrations from 1801 to 1835 see page 35 of *Reminiscences of the Boston Female Asylum*, box 1, folder 13.

CONTAINER LIST

BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS	
		Series I Annual Reports	
1	1	1841-1842	
	2	1850	
	3	1909-1913	
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			Series II Publications
	6	<i>An Account of the Boston Female Asylum with the Acts of Incorporation, By-laws, Rules and Regulations, 1810</i>	
	7	<i>An Account of the Boston Female Asylum with the Acts of Incorporation, By-laws, Rules and Regulations, 1867</i>	
8	<i>An Account of the Boston Female Asylum with the Acts of Incorporation, By-laws, Rules and Regulations, 1874, 1889</i>		

9	<i>An Account of the Boston Female Asylum with the Acts of Incorporation, By-laws, Rules and Regulations, 1898</i>
10	<i>Acts of Incorporation, 1910</i>
11	<i>Institution of the Boston Female Asylum, 1801</i>
12	<i>One Hundred Years of Work with Girls in Boston, 1919</i>
13	<i>Reminiscences of the Boston Female Asylum, 1844</i>
	Series III Sermons and Discourse
14	Discourse, 1802
15	Sermons, 1809, 1825
16	Sermon, 1835