

BOSTON YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION

Records, 1873-1955 (with gaps)

Charities Collection - CC 19

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| 2 manuscript containers | Processed November 1997 by Deborah Richards |
| 7.5 linear inches | Supervising Archivist: Joanie Gearin |
| Accession number: 1997.148 | |

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.

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

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY:

The Boston Young Men's Christian Association (BYMCA) was founded in 1851. It was the first YMCA established in the United States. Captain Thomas Sullivan, who was a lay missionary, and a group of men from different evangelical churches started the Association after becoming aware of the formation of a Young Men's Christian Association in London, England in 1844. They believed that there was a need for this kind of an organization in Boston due to its growth as an urban center and the migration into the city of young men from smaller cities and the countryside.

The fundamental principles behind the BYMCA were to work among young Christian men, to maintain control of the Association through evangelical believers from various denominations and to "recognize the power of environment in influencing the lives of

men.”¹ The chapter intended to keep young, Christian men away from the vices of the city and on a proper Christian path. Its mission was accomplished by offering numerous services to their members. The chapter provided a reading room, a library, a popular lectures series, evening classes, social gatherings, excursions, a gymnasium, an employment department, and a register of respectable boarding houses. In addition, numerous religious activities, including bible classes and prayer meetings, were offered for young men and boys.

The first home of the BYMCA was at Tremont Street and Temple Place, where a suite of rooms was rented. This was the BYMCA home for twenty years. In 1872, the Association was able to purchase a building better suited to its needs at Tremont and Eliot Streets. But due to the chapter’s rapid growth and success, the Tremont and Eliot building was quickly outgrown and a new building was built specifically for its needs at Boylston and Berkeley in 1883. Unfortunately in 1910 a fire destroyed the building and the YMCA was forced to reside in a temporary space at 10 Ashburton Place until a new building could be erected. By 1912 a new Association building was complete and the chapter moved into its new home at 246 Huntington Ave. This building was much larger than previous residences and able to house all of the numerous services for the members. The chapter continues to operate from this location.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE:

This collection consists of the annual reports of the Boston Young Men’s Christian Association from 1873 through 1955 with several years lacking a report. Also included are an address by Robert C. Winthrop delivered before the BYMCA in 1859, and a brochure entitled *The Centennial Year* [1951] which describes contemporary activities and services. Each annual report includes the chapter’s constitution and by-laws, committee reports, addresses given by officers during the year, and a list of officers and life members. The collection has been arranged in two series: I. Annual Reports and II. Other Publications.

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¹ Doggett, L.L. History of the Boston Young Men’s Christian Association (Boston: Young Men’s Christian Association, 1901) p. 14.

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| | 7 | 1890 |
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| | 4 | <i>The Centennial Year</i> brochure, 1951 |