

**BOSTON YOUNG WOMEN'S
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
(1866-present)**

Records, 1871-1968

Charities Collection -- CC 18

1 manuscript container	Processed November 1997 by Amy Lux
5 linear inches	Supervising Archivist: Joan Gearin
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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 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) was established in 1866 by Mrs. Henry F. Durant and some of her friends. The Association was incorporated in 1867. These Christian women started the Young Women's Christian Association in America because they wanted to do something about the "deplorable state of things existing among the self-supporting girls in the City."¹ Two rooms were rented in the Congregational building on Chauncey Street and the Association opened its doors just

¹ *A Handbook of Information about the Young Women's Christian Association of Boston*, (Boston: np., 1939), p. 8.

two months after its founding. The YWCA offered boarding, classes and employment services.

By 1868 the Association purchased two houses at 25 and 27 Beach Street to accommodate 80 boarders. There was a dining plan available to boarders and non boarders, as well as classes on varied subjects. The Association moved to 68 Warrenton Street in 1874. This new building had the capability of boarding 200 women. The employment bureau was located in an adjacent building, along with a school for the training of domestics.²

The 1880 Boston Charities Directory lists the Association's objective as the "temporal, moral and religious welfare of young women who are dependent on their own exertion for support, and so delicately to bestow services that the self-respect of each shall be maintained."³ The YWCA provided different services to satisfy the needs of all who came to them.

The building at 40 Berkeley Street was opened in December of 1884 and is still used as the residence building today. This new building housed the training school and other educational departments, the employment bureau, offices of administration, a reading room and a gymnasium. In 1887 the YWCA started a department called Travelers' Aid. A YWCA employee would go to the docks to meet the girls arriving in Boston by steamship. They would then give them protection and help in finding their friends, lodging and/or employment. By 1891 the YWCA offered services such as a nurses registry, courses in domestics, physical education and gymnastics and free bible study classes.⁴ From "1896 to 1901 was the beginning of the earliest training courses for YWCA secretaries in the United States."⁵

In 1918 the YMCA began to expand from a small Association to a large metropolitan YWCA. It was also at this time that they started the "Younger Girls' Department" which focused on helping teenage girls. ⁶

According to the 1924 Boston Charities Directory, the Association changed their objective to promoting the physical, moral and spiritual welfare of young women in Boston. The individuals they helped now included women and girls, ranging from about 10-35 years old.⁷ In 1929 the main office moved to Clarendon Street where it still remains to this today .⁸ Over the years their services expanded to include psychiatric

² Ibid., p. 9-10.

³ *Directory of Charitable and Beneficent Organizations Boston*, (Boston: A. Williams & Co., 1880), p. 92.

⁴ *A Handbook of Information about the Young Women's Christian Association of Boston*, (Boston: np., 1939), p. 10-11; *Directory of Charitable and Beneficent Organizations, Boston* (Boston: Damrell & Upham, 1891), p. 136.

⁵ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶ Ibid., p. 11-12.

⁷ *Directory of Social Agencies of Boston*, (Boston: Boston Council of Social Agencies, 1924), p. 70-71.

⁸ *A Handbook of Information about the Young Women's Christian Association of Boston*, (Boston: np., 1939), 12.

case workers, vocational counselors and extended programs of activities for young men and women.⁹

Presently there are several YWCAs throughout the Boston area, and hundreds nationwide. They all offer classes, youth programs and child care centers. Residence programs are still available for young women seeking temporary and long term housing, as well as programs for adolescent parenting and grandparents who are caring for their grandchildren. What has remained the same through the Association's history is the dedication to the physical and spiritual well-being of women in Boston of all ages and situations. The Boston YWCA's current mission states that the YWCA is a women's membership movement that is rooted in Christian faith. It is composed of members who strive to create opportunities for women's leadership and power and who have a common vision of peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people. Their one imperative is to eliminate racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary.¹⁰

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The records of the Boston Young Women's Christian Association constitutes 5 linear inches. The collection includes annual reports and two publications. For the annual reports from 1871-1912, the year on the cover represents the date the report was written, not the year that the data inside represents. The reports were presented in March for the preceding year. Starting in 1952, the reports no longer state the annual report number, they only give the year. The amount of information in the reports gradually decreases over the years. A 1997 information packet sent from the Boston YWCA is located in the control file.

SERIES LISTING

I.	Annual Reports, 1871-1968 with gaps
II.	Publications, 1893

SERIES DESCRIPTION

Series I. Annual Reports, 1871-1968, with gaps

The annual reports include of the names of the Board of Managers, the Acts of Incorporation, the Standing Committee members and the Special Committee members, the Constitution, and the by-laws. They also include a list of physicians, the Board of Manager's report, the Treasurer's Report, a list of receipts and expenditures, Donations (monetary and goods), a list of annual subscribers and the names of life members.

Series II. Publications, 1893

⁹ *Directory of Social Service Resources of Greater Boston*, (Boston: Greater Boston Community Council, 1947), p. 49.

¹⁰ *YWCA Catalyst: Newsletter of The YWCA Boston* 3, n.1 (September 1997).

This series is comprised of two pamphlets published in 1893.

Annual Statement (January 1, 1893)

This is a brochure that states the locations of the board departments, activities of the employment departments and a description of the different schools and classes. Included in this brochure is a card with the dining times and prices for room and meals.

What is the Boston Young Women Christian Association doing in the line of religious work? (1893)

This pamphlet discusses the methods and means the Boston YWCA uses to develop the Christian character of the women it helps. It also includes the schools offered by YWCA and a small statement about "Kings Daughters."

CONTAINER LIST

BOX	FOLDER	CONTENTS
		Series I. Annual Reports
1	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1871 ◆ 1873 ◆ 1875 ◆ 1878-1884
	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1885-1892 ◆ 1894
	3	◆ 1895-1904
	4	◆ 1905-1912
	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1914-1915 ◆ 1918-1919 ◆ 1924 ◆ 1929-1932
	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1937-1941 ◆ 1947-1948 ◆ 1952-1957 ◆ 1959-1961 ◆ 1963-1968
		Series II Publications
	7	<i>Annual Statement</i> January 1, 1893
8	<i>What is the Boston Young Women Christian Association doing in the line of religious work?</i> 1893	