



Gremms-Doolittle Library
Schenectady County Historical Society
32 Washington Ave., Schenectady, NY 12305
(518) 374-0263

Heritage Home for Women Records, 1860-1981 (2009.31)

Creator: Heritage Home for Women

Accession Number: 2009.31

Extent: 3 cubic feet (5 boxes)

Source: Donated by Kathy Fernandez, Administrator, Heritage Home for Women

Inclusive Dates: 1868-1981

Access: Access to this collection is unrestricted.

Processed By/Date: Unknown; 2009.

Updated By/Date: Melissa Tacke, 5/7/2011

Administrative History

Organization

The Heritage Home for Women traces its origins to the Ladies Benevolent Society, which was founded in 1813 to aid needy women and children. The Constitution and By-Laws of 1868 provided a governing framework that consisted of a Board of Managers, an Executive Committee, a House Committee, a Matron, and a Board of Trustees. The Board of Managers were constituted of 29 women each elected to two year terms. Their duties largely involved appointing committees, holding quarterly and annual business meetings, and annual written reports of proceedings, income, and expenditures. The Executive Committee divided responsibility among 13 members that included First and Second Directresses, a Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Directresses presided over meetings and the Secretary and Treasurer engaged in activities typical of their roles, such as spending reports and fiscal management and the maintenance of meeting minutes and the organization's correspondence.

The first trustees served as an advisory committee, shared responsibility for the organizations' finances, property, and affairs and included J. Trumbull Backus, Charles H. Mathews, Alexander M. Vedder, D. Cady Smith, Andrew Traux, Horace G. Day, and Lewis C. Barhydt. The trustees were exclusively men until 1968. These men achieved success in their respective areas that allowed them to make financial contributions and

serve as founding members. Rev. J. Trumbull Backus served as pastor of First Presbyterian Church and started a residence for homeless children in 1888. The "Home for the Friendless" was established in earnest when the trustees purchased a \$3,000 building on 35 Green Street from George J. Soley. They were exclusively men until 1968.

The women of the Society were primarily responsible for the Society's day to day activities including house maintenance and affairs, collection of funds, and the care of the residents. The women managed these functions through an organizational format composed of officers, an executive committee, a board of managers, and individual positions for treasurer and secretary. The first officers included Mrs. Urania Nott, First Directress; Mrs. Mary A. Myers, Secretary; Mrs. Anna Angle, Treasurer. Urania E. (Sheldon) Nott is principally responsible for the Home for the Friendless and served as president of the Ladies Benevolent Society before she worked as "First Directress" for the Home for the Friendless.

Residents

Mrs. Sarah Jane Clark earned the honor of the first resident when she arrived on September 15, 1868 in frail condition. Shortly thereafter the organization formed a more formal structure on August 4, 1868 under the corporate name of the Home of the Friendless of the City of Schenectady. According to the Home's First Report, she is credited with introducing a weekly religious service that survives to this day. Mrs. Sarah Morris became the Home's second resident when she arrived on October 20, 1868 in her 86th year as a widow and with no relatives. Born in Boston, MA she resided in Schenectady for three decades and was a communicant of St. George's Episcopal Church in the Schenectady's Stockade District.

Significant Figures

An indefatigable advocate for impoverished women and children, **Urania E. (Sheldon) Nott** was the principle architect behind the Home for the Friendless. She helped established the Home shortly after the death of her husband, Union College President Eliphalet Nott. She served as the Home's "First Directress" from 1868 to 1885. Prior to her work with the Home for the Friendless, Urania E. Nott gained experience working with young women as a headmistress of a private girls' day school in Schenectady and later in Utica, NY. While at Union College, many regarded her as the "power behind the throne" and even felt she played too heavy a role in the creation of Nott Trust. Mrs. Nott's other experience in financial matters included her role as manager of the Nott Exchequer. Today a stunning portrait of her unveiled in January 2006 hangs in the President's Office.

The Home's second directress was **Cordelia A. (Seeley) Crane**, the wife of Jonas H. Crane, the co-owner of Crane-Veeder Coal Co. and a prominent Schenectady businessman. She served as "2nd Directress" of the House from 1868 -

Sarah Hulme (Wilson) Mynderse served as president of the Home from 1922 – 1950, a total of 28 years. She also served as a board member for 45 years and was the wife of the architect William TenBroeck Mynderse.

The Home –Changes in Name and Location

The Home for the Friendless was renamed the “Old Ladies Home” in 1901. It was relocated from its original location on Green Street to its current home at 1519 Union Street in 1905, in an effort to accommodate 43 women and staff. The Home today houses about 36 women.

At its Union Street location, the Home for the Friendless was renovated in 1915 and again in 1936-1937, both times for the purpose of accommodating a growing population of residents. The Home for the Friendless was renamed the Heritage Home for Women in 1968, the year of its centennial anniversary.

Financial Donations

The Home’s largest donation came from **Anne E. Blodgett**, who willed more than a quarter of a million dollars to the Home when she died in 1989. She and her husband made substantial donations to other organizations including the Sloan Kettering Institute for Cancer Research and the Mt. Pleasant Reformed Church in Schenectady.

Other significant figures in forming the Home for the Friendless include Andrew Traux, a physician who left his Hudson Valley practice to open a drug store in his native Schenectady. His \$1,000 contribution assisted in balancing the Home’s \$3,000 debt in 1878. Dr. Traux endowed a total of \$20,000 to the Home. These seven men occupied various positions including

Some significant donations during the Home’s early years came from Dr. A. M. Vedder (\$5,000), Colon C. Clute (\$6,000), and a civic organization named the True Blues (\$1,000).

Ms. Anna McKnee’s donation in 1906 helped the Home to purchase the plot on 1519 Union Street. Construction costs for the new building were made through a \$20,000 donation from Jane Anne (Schermerhorn) Smitley.

Series List

- Series 1: Finance
- Series 2: Photographs
- Series 3: Historic Documents
- Series 4: Cemetery Records
- Series 5: Constitution and By-Laws
- Series 6: Admissions / Applications – Deceased Residents
- Series 7: Minutes and Reports
- Series 8: Personal Effects Left By Residents

Box and Folder List

Box 1 – 1 cf

Series 1: Finance

1.01. January 1883 – October 1891

Financial Reports

1.02. 1887 - 1897

Treasurer's Reports

1.03. October 1912 – October 1921

Treasurer's Reports (monthly)

1.04. 1921 – 1929

Treasurer's Reports

1.05. 1928 – 1950

List of Members Receiving Interest, Victory Tax Account, Pay-roll percentage for withholding tax

1.06. October 1, 1930 – January 1933

Pay-roll 1930-1933, Vacation Time Taken Record for dates of 1926-1933

1.07. 1935 – 1950

List of Members Receiving Interest, Investment Accounts, Disbursements

1.08. 1936 – 1942

Treasurer's Reports, November 1936 – May 1942

1.09. 1951 - 1954

Treasurer's Reports / Finances

1.10. 1955 – 1963

Insurance, Mortgage Information

1.11. 1961 – 1962, 1964 – 1965

Consolidated Balance Sheets

1.12. 1962 – 1965

Annual Budgets

1.13. 1963 – 1964

Treasurer's Reports November 1963 – November 1964

1.14. 1963 – 1967

Quarterly Financial Reports

1.15. 1965 – 1966

Treasurer's Reports

1.16. 1967 – 1968
Treasurer's Reports

1.17. 1974 – 1981
Social Security Ledger

1.18. 1939 - 1959
Account Book – Dues paid

1.19. Financial Records - E. Burnam 1961-1968

Box 2 – 0.33 cf

Series 2: Photographs

2.01. Miscellaneous Black and White Photos, 1860 – 1966 (bulk 1880s – 1890s)

2.02. Photograph of street covered in snow, envelope containing 5 small photographs, 8 and ½ “ x 11” photograph of bride and groom

2.03. Old Ladies Home, ca 1909
6 photographs of Old Ladies Home

2.04. Silver Tea Ceremony 1966
1 photograph of Silver Tea Ceremony on November 3, 1966

2.05. 1880 - 1890s
8 Stereoscopic photographs, worldwide

2.06. 1880 - 1890s
16 Stereoscopic photographs, worldwide

2.07. Portrait of a Man
Portrait of a Man by Stanley Costa

2.08. Photos / Effects left by Residents
4 small photographs

2.09. Portrait of a Woman
Portrait of a Woman in Frame (frame needs to be removed)

2.10. Portrait of a Woman
Portrait of a Woman in Frame (frame needs to be removed)

2.11. 5 Plastic Sleeves of Photographs and 1 Photograph of three boys bound in thin volume
8 Photographs total

(Box 2 continued)

Series 3: Historic Documents

3.01. First Report of Home for the Friendless, 1868-1869

3.02. Lists of Baskets of Food, 1878 - 1892

3.03. Report of Publicity Committee, 1960, 1961, 1962
Scrapbook of newspaper clippings and photographs

3.04. Summary of the Founding of the Home
Four typed copies authored by Howell & Munsell, History of Schenectady 1662 – 1886,
includes original draft

3.05. Report of the Superintendent (Administrator), March 17, 1934
Three Copies of Stationary for The Old Ladies Home
Copy of passage read by M. C. Yates at the Christmas Party December 1941
Register for the Matron of the Home for the Friendless

3.06. Statement by the Supreme Court of Schenectady County on Home Assuming New
Corporate Name
Typed Legal Size Statement, 1907

3.07. Community Chest of Schenectady Correspondence, 1958 – 1961
Letters discussing public funding

3.08. Records of Residents, Application for Admission
Small Book with Folded Pages , 1916 – 1918 (suggest unfolding pages)
Small Book labeled Ledger

3.09. Register for the Matron , ca. 1868

3.10 History Notes
History of Schenectady 1662 - 1886 by Howell & Munsell

3.11. Dining Room Rules

3.12. Rules for Residents
2 copies, published by Gazette Press - date unknown

3.13. Newspaper Clippings
1950-1980

3.14. Plumbing Work Specifications, 1907 (Fuller and Pitcher Architects Albany. NY)

- 3.15. Mason and Iron Work Specifications, 1907 (Fuller and Pitcher Architects Albany. NY)
- 3.16. Heating and Work Specifications, 1907 (Fuller and Pitcher Architects Albany. NY)
- 3.17. Painting and Glazing Work Specifications, 1907 (Fuller and Pitcher Architects Albany. NY)
- 3.18. Painting and Glazing Work Specifications, 1907 (Fuller and Pitcher Architects Albany. NY)
- 3.19. Alterations and Additions Specifications –date unknown (Mynderse –Architect – Schenectady, NY)
- 3.20. Building Specifications, 1907 (Fuller and Pitcher Architects Albany. NY)

Box 3 – 1 cf

Series 4: Cemetery Records

- 4.01. Cemetery Y. 1955-1958
- 4.02. Cemetery V, - contains marriage license for Mr. Charles Veeder –deed , Vale Cemetery deed involving Van Dyke (1888)
- 4.03. Cemetery T, 1935 - 1942
- 4.04. Cemetery S, 1941 - 1956
- 4.05. Cemetery S, 1939, 1967 (various dates)
- 4.06. Cemetery R, 1870, 1957, 1963 (various dates)
- 4.07. Cemetery M 1935. 1937, 1950, 1967 (various dates)
- 4.08. Cemetery M, 1937, 1939, 1961 (various dates)
- 4.09. Cemetery K – L, 1939
- 4.10. Cemetery H – J, 1927, 1952
- 4.11. Cemetery G, 1959 - 1960
- 4.12. Cemetery D – F, 1903, 1919
- 4.13. Cemetery C, 1928, 1937, 1955, 1961
- 4.14. Cemetery 1979 – correspondence with Mr. Thomas M. McGovern

Series 5: Constitution and By-Laws

- 5.01. Reports and By-Laws 1868-1961
- 5.02. Constitution and By-Laws, 1877, 1887
- 5.03. Constitution and By-Laws, 1910 – 1911, 1911-1912, 1916-1917
- 5.04. Constitution and By-Laws, 1917-1918 – 1922-1923
- 5.05. Constitution and By-Laws, 1920-1921 – 1921-1922
- 5.06. Constitution and By-Laws, 1951-1961
- 5.07. Constitution and By-Laws (Children’s Home) 1923

Series 6: Admissions / Applications – Deceased Residents

- 6.01. Admissions, 1868-1909
- 6.02. Applicants / Article of Agreement, 1922-1950
- 6.03. Applications of Deceased Residents – H (11 applications)
- 6.04. Applications of Deceased Residents – J – L (10 applications)
- 6.05. Applications of Deceased Residents – L – M (10 applications)
- 6.06. Applications of Deceased Residents – M (10 applications)
- 6.07. Applications of Deceased Residents – P (12 applications)
- 6.08. Applications of Deceased Residents – S (10 applications)
- 6.09. Applications of Deceased Residents – S (8 applications)
- 6.10. Applications of Deceased Residents – T – V (10 applications)
- 6.11. Applications of Deceased Residents – V – W (10 applications)
- 6.12. Applications of Deceased Residents – W – Z (8 residents)
- 6.13. Applications of Deceased Residents – A – D
- 6.14. Applications of Deceased Residents – E – G (11 applications)
- 6.15. Applications of Deceased Residents – H – M (11 applications)
- 6.16. Applications of Deceased Residents – P – T (11 applications)
- 6.17. Applications of Deceased Residents – W
- 6.18. Applications of Deceased Residents – A – B (16 applications), 1926 – 1948
- 6.19. Applications of Deceased Residents – C (14 applications), 1927 – 1946
- 6.20. Applications of Deceased Residents – D – E (10 applications)
- 6.21. Applications of Deceased Residents – F (9 applications)
- 6.22. Applications of Deceased Residents – G – H (4 applications)

Box 4 – 1 cf

Series 7: Minutes and Reports

- 7.01. First Report of the Home for the Friendless, 1868-1869
- 7.02. Minutes and Reports, 1890 – 1897
- 7.03. Minutes and Reports, 1897 – 1902
- 7.04. Minutes and Reports, 1902 – 1906
- 7.05. Minutes and Reports, 1906 – 1908
- 7.06. Minutes and Reports, 1918 - 1921
- 7.07. Minutes and Reports, 1940 – 1950
- 7.08. Minutes and Reports, 1954 -1956
- 7.09. Minutes and Reports, 1957
- 7.10. Minutes and Reports, 1958
- 7.11. Minutes and Reports, 1959
- 7.12. Secretary Reports, 1908 – 1917
- 7.13. Secretary Reports, 1921 – 1926
- 7.14. Secretary Reports, 1927 – 1939
- 7.15. Correspondence / Residents, 1957-1963
- 7.16. Corresponding Secretary Records / Financial, 1959 – 1970
- 7.17. Book of Manager Meetings, October 1956 – October 1959

Box 5 – 0.33 cf

Series 8: Personal Effects Left by Residents

8.01. Personal Effects of Residents

-Scrapbook or Maggie Quick – December 25, 1882 –notes addressed to Maggie Quick

-New National First Reader (Barne's New National Readers) –copyright 1883

By A.S. Barnes & Co., published by American Book Company in ?

-*The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse*, 1927 Impression

Ivanhoe by Sir Walter Scott, published in 1905 by Thomas Nelson and Sons

8.02. Eleanor Gottschalk –Red Cross Certification, April 1942

8.03. Letter – Treber to Resident Edna Wittbecker –October 1, 1938

5 large scrap books