



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

## Guide to the House of Industry records

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This finding aid was produced using the Archivists' Toolkit

With funding from a grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC)

<b>Repository:</b>	City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division
<b>Title:</b>	House of Industry records
<b>Collection No.:</b>	8501.002
<b>Dates:</b>	1858-1904
<b>Quantity:</b>	5.2 Cubic feet (25 Volumes)

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

### SERIES LIST

[Biographical/Historical note](#)

[Series I: Registers](#)

[Scope and Contents note](#)

[Series II: Indexes](#)

### Biographical/Historical note

Chapter 26 of the Acts of 1822 established the House of Industry in the City of Boston. The Justices of the Police Court had the authority and power to order commitments to the House of Industry according to the provisions of an act, entitled “an act for suppressing and punishing rogues, vagabonds, common beggars, and other idle, disorderly, and lewd persons,” passed on March 26, 1788. The House of Industry, constructed on First Street in South Boston in 1822, finally opened in 1823 as a workhouse for the able-bodied poor. It was under the control of the Directors of the House of Industry. By ordinance passed March 5, 1827, the Directors of the House of Industry were given all powers and performed all the duties relative to paupers and to the binding out of children and other persons committed for support.

The Statutes of Massachusetts allowed for persons convicted of certain minor offences to be sentenced to the House of Correction or the House of Industry at the discretion of the Court. The City of Boston utilized this power and as a result, the House of Industry became home to two classes of persons: paupers and convicts. The City Council ordered the construction of a new Almshouse on Deer Island in 1849-1850 and it was completed in 1851. By November of 1853, the inmates and paupers in the House of Industry were transferred to the new

building on Deer Island.

The paupers were housed separately from the convicts in the Almshouse department of the House of Industry. On October 22, 1872, adult male paupers were removed from Deer Island and sent to the Home for the Poor on Rainsford Island that the City had purchased from the Commonwealth in 1871. Adult female paupers were moved from Deer Island to the new Home for the Poor at Austin Farm circa 1876-1877. Sick women and mothers with their babies remained in the Almshouse on Deer Island until the late 1880s. Pauper boys were sent to the Marcella Street Home in 1877 and pauper girls were sent there circa 1881-1882.

The House of Industry was under the control of the Directors of the House of Industry from 1822 through 1857. In 1857, the House of Industry, along with all other public institutions, was placed in the charge of the Board of Directors of Public Institutions. A Board of Commissioners replaced the Board of Directors in 1889. In 1895, the Board of Commissioners and the Department of Public Institutions were abolished and all public institutions, including the House of Industry, were put under the control of a single Institutions Commissioner. By chapter 536 sec. 9 of the Acts of 1896, the House of Industry was established as a house of correction for the county of Suffolk and designated as the House of Correction at Deer Island.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)

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## Scope and Contents note

This collection contains the registers and indexes for the inmates who were sentenced to the House of Industry on Deer Island. The registers cover January 1858 through April 1897 with four gaps. The gaps appear at June 1865 – August 1869, April 1876 – November 1879, September 1881 – August 1882, and September 1894 – August 1895. There are both male and female indexes. The female indexes cover the dates November 1881 through June 1904. The male indexes span February 1879 through July 1896 with a gap appearing from December 1884 through July 1886. Entries that appear in either the registers or the indexes after July 1, 1896 are actually entries for the Deer Island House of Correction and no-longer for the Deer Island House of Industry. After July 1, 1896, the House of Industry became the House of Correction. Through the combined use of the registers and the indexes an almost complete record of inmates at the House of Industry from February 1879 through April 1897 can be developed. The only gap that exists is September through October 1881 for female inmates.

[Return to the Table of Contents](#)

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## Series I: Registers

The registers list in chronological order every inmate who entered the House of Industry for the dates present. The following information was recorded for every inmate: register number, name, age, color, birthplace, marital status, literacy abilities, the date, wherefore, the number of the mittimus, the sentence, the date of expiration, the number of times the inmate had been committed previously or the inmate's former number, and the manner of discharge. After December 1879, the registers also record what court sentenced the inmate.

### Volume

1	1858 January - 1865 May
2	1869 September - 1873 February
3	1873 February - 1874 September
4	1874 October - 1876 March
5	1879 December - 1881 August
6	1882 September - 1883 December

7	1883 December - 1885 April
8	1885 April - 1886 August
9	1886 August - 1888 October
10	1888 October - 1890 March
11	1890 March - 1891 August
12	1891 August - 1894 August
13	1895 September - 1897 April

[Return to the Series List](#)

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## Series II: Indexes

The indexes are for the inmate registers for the House of Industry. Although there are separate indexes for male and female inmates, both indexes record the same information for every inmate. This information includes: register number, name, date of commitment, wherefore, sentence, former number, and the date of discharge. The entries are alphabetical within each month for every year. The male index for the dates October 1885 – July 1887 only has entries for inmates with surnames beginning with the letter O through the letter W. In addition, the letter O begins in April 1886; the letters P through W cover the dates October 1885 through July 1887. Fortunately, register entries exist for these dates so the missing information is available in another format.

### Females

Volume	
14	1881 November - 1886 August
15	1886 August - 1894 March
16	1894 April - 1904 June

### Males

Volume	
17	1879 February - 1881 November
18	1881 December - 1884 April
19	1883 April - 1884 November
20	1885 October - 1887 July
21	1886 August - 1888 October
22	1888 October - 1890 July
23	1890 July - 1893 October
24	1893 November - 1896 July
25	1895 March - 1897 October

[Return to the Series List](#)