



City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division

Guide to the Temporary Home for Women and Children records

Finding aid prepared by Kristen Swett

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Repository: City of Boston Archives and Records Management Division
Title: Temporary Home for Women and Children records
Collection No.: 8720.001
Dates: 1857-1993
Quantity: 6.0 Cubic feet (53 volumes)

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Historical note

The Overseers of the Poor in the Town of Boston, a corporation established in 1772 by Act of the Legislature, were succeeded in 1864 by the Corporation called "Overseers of the Poor in the City of Boston," consisting of twelve residents of Boston. In 1921, the name of the Board was changed to Overseers of the Public Welfare. In 1954, the official name of the department was changed to the Welfare Department. The Welfare Department was abolished as a municipal agency by Chapter 658 of the Acts of 1967.

In 1857, the Board of Directors of Public Institutions was established, and superseded the annual committees which formerly had management of those institutions. The almshouse was removed to Deer Island. This change left the Board of Directors, the Overseers of the Poor, and others without any place where they could provide for such persons as came to their hands between two o'clock (the hour of sailing of the steamer) one day, until two o'clock the next day. To supply this want the Board of Directors, Overseers of the Poor, Police etc. made

arrangements with Mr. Hill, the then City Crier, to feed and lodge such persons as these officers felt it their duty to provide with temporary relief, and the bills for board were sent to the City for payment.

After a time, the city authorities deemed it advisable to rent the house of the City Crier, and pay the expenses of it. The house was given in charge of the Board of Overseers, and called the "City Crier's House," and the house remained in their charge till 1862, when its management became unsatisfactory to the City Government. In the early part of 1862, the joint rules and orders were so amended as to require the appointment of a Joint Standing Committee on Overseers of the Poor. This committee communicated with the Overseers, and an arrangement was made with them by which the house should be given in charge of the two committees, viz.: the Committee on Overseers of the Poor, and a Committee of the Board of Overseers.

Under this anomalous arrangement the two Committees were united, and were called the Committees on Temporary Home. This Committee at once leased a house on Charles Street, put it in order, and moved from the "City Crier's House" to the new Home, in May 1862, at which time the lease of the house in Portland Street expired. The Temporary Home was continued under this management till the re-organization of the Board of Overseers, when it was placed under their charge by ordinance passed July 1864. The Central Charity Bureau and Temporary Home at Chardon, Hawkins and Bowker Streets was completed in 1868. By Ordinance passed March 5, 1869, the Overseers of the Poor were given charge of the Charity Building and Temporary Home.

The Home afforded a temporary abode for women and children, and provided single meals for men, it sheltered women bereaved, or deserted by their husbands, soldiers' wives and widows, and others brought to distress under various circumstances. It found them employment so that they could support themselves, and helped them on to their distant homes or friends, or disposed of them in various other ways as the case may require. It received foundlings and abandoned children. The unhealthy and undesirable were sent to the almshouse. The healthy and interesting ones were provided with parents and homes where they received home influences and education instead of graduating at an almshouse. Lost children were restored to their homes, wet nurses were supplied, and about four hundred single meals a month were supplied to hungry people who were sent by the Overseers of the Poor, Board of Directors, Police and others.

A new Charity Building and Temporary Home, replacing the home built in 1869, opened in March 1926 on the same site. Presently, the New Chardon Temporary Home for Women and Children remains in operation as a shelter under the charge of the Massachusetts Department of Social Services. The building is owned by the City of Boston.

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Scope and Contents note

The collection includes records of the City Temporary Home also known as the Temporary Home for Women and Children. The collection has been divided into the following four series: Series I. Registers of Inmates admitted; Series II. Indexes to Inmates; Series III: Report of Inmates received and aided at City Temporary Home; Series IV. Administrative records.

The inmate registers span the years 1857-1993 with gaps. The registers are recorded chronologically. The volumes from 1857-1862 are registers of inmates admitted to what was then called the "City Crier's House." George Hill served as the City Crier. From 1862-1993, it is called the Temporary Home. Women and children were provided temporary shelter. Men are included in these registers as they were furnished meals in the house. The registers generally include name, age, circumstances and disposition of case. The first two volumes contain lists of lost children at the end of each volume. Each register from February of 1878-1993 includes a name index at the beginning of each volume.

The indexes are labeled Index to Temporary Home Inmates and cover the years 1880 January-1883 August and 1885 May-1887 July. The indexes include name, age and a page reference. However, the page numbers do not

correspond to the Inmate Registers.

The Report of Inmates received and aided at the City Temporary Home is a compilation of monthly reports including statistics on the number remaining in home at close of last month, number of Females and Children received, number applied for and refused, number aided and disposed of, number sent to Almshouses, number remaining in home at close of month, and number of meals furnished to males and females. Also, includes list of inmates remaining at close of month and remarks.

The Administrative records include miscellaneous volumes relating to the administration of the house. One item of particular interest is the expenditures volumes which documents the expenses of the home from 1864-1893.

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Related Material

Records of the Temporary Home for Women and Children can also be found in the [Boston Overseers of the Poor Collection](#) at the Massachusetts Historical Society.

"Centennial Year of Temporary Home for Women and Children, Research and Compilation by Belle Epstein" 1957 can be found in the Publications Collection.

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Series I: Registers of Inmates admitted, 1857-1993 with gaps (44 volumes)

Volume

1	1857 August 1-1858 January 31 (1 volume)
2-3	1858 June 1-1859 March 31 (2 volumes)
4-6	1860 February 1-1861 March 14 (3 volumes) Pages 1-22 are missing from volume 6 which cover approximately 1860 December 1-13.
7-8	1861 August 2-1862 September 19 (2 volumes)
9	1864 June 1-1865 March 15 (1 volume)
10-17	1866 May 1-1874 December (8 volumes)
18-23	1875 September-1885 (6 volumes)
24-27	1889-1901 (4 volumes)
28-44	1906 June-1993 (17 volumes)

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Series II: Indexes to Inmates, 1880 January-1883 August, 1885 May-1887 July (2 volumes)

Volume

45	1880 January-1883 August
46	1885 May-1887 July

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Series III: Report of Inmates received and aided at the City Temporary Home, 1878 May-1893 June (1 volume)

Volume

47 1878 May-1893 June

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Series IV: Administrative records, 1864-1938 (6 volumes)

Volume

48 Expenditures, 1864-1893 (1 volume)
49 Meals furnished at the Temporary Home, 1875-1876 (1 volume)
50 Ledger, 1880 (1 volume)
51 State Wards, 1933-1935 (1 volume)
52 Night Matron's Record Book, 1935-1938 (1 volume)
53 Account Book, undated (1 volume)

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