

The Whitney Library
New Haven Colony Historical Society

Manuscript Register

MSS #250

THE MARY WADE HOME

RECORDS, 1866 -

Arranged and described

by

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INTRODUCTION

After much discussion during the spring of 1866 concerning the need for a shelter and refuge for the friendless and homeless women in New Haven, a group of benevolent women in the city held a meeting in Mrs. Eli Whitney's home, at Elm and Orange Streets, on September 8, 1866. Plans were made at this meeting to procure a building for the institution that was to be called, "The Home for the Friendless." It was to be organized and guided by a Board of Managers, selected from women representing various Protestant churches. On September 15, officers for the board, a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and chief manager, were elected and an advisory committee appointed. The constitution and by-laws were drafted and the executive committee was to consist of the officers and two managers selected by the officers. Donations of money enabled the procurement and furnishing of a frame house, the former residence of John H. Rogers, in a thinly settled area of Fair Haven, at the corner of Clinton Avenue and Pine Street. Monetary donations as well as those of coal, furniture, food and other necessities, allowed the institution to open its doors to the needy on November 20, 1866. In May 1867 the Home was incorporated by the Connecticut legislature.

A matron was hired to run the Home and rules were established for the residents, who were called "inmates." In addition to shelter, training in all branches of domestic service and needle work was provided so that the women might become self-sustaining; employment was found for many of them. Except for the children, born at the Home or for the most part, admitted with their mothers, residents were required to work at the facility.

Throughout the years, donations brought improved changes to the Home, including a new addition to the wooden building in 1874, housing an infirmary and a nursery; a playroom was added in 1879. In 1888 a brick wing for the elderly was built, and in 1898 a three-story brick building, replacing the wooden structure, was made possible by the generous contribution of \$20,000 by Mrs. Lucy Boardman. The benefactor's wishes were that her sister's name, Mary Wade, be associated with the gift, which became the Mary Wade wing. A charter revision in 1931 added "The Mary Wade Home" to its original name, becoming exclusively in 1966 the name of the institution.

By 1939 most of the income for the Home came from endowments, board from residents who could afford to pay and annual memberships of \$1.00 or more. Applications were accepted to admit women from East Haven, Hamden, North Haven, Orange, West Haven and Woodbridge by 1945; the membership of the religious establishments changed to include Jewish and Roman Catholic affiliations; the leadership structure was revised, allowing men to be elected to the board in 1977; (in 1990 Frank C. Hepler became the first male president) and the staff grew and changed to meet the new needs of the Home, which in 1983 admitted men as residents.

Today, The Mary Wade Home consists of a forty-three bedroom home for the aged, a thirty-bed intermediate care facility, as well as a thirty-bed skilled care facility, built in 1988. A fourth service for the elderly was introduced in 1991, when an adult daycare program was established.

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15 boxes

7.5 linear feet

The collection is organized numerically by box.
Each box is organized alphabetically by folder.

DESCRIPTION OF PAPERS

This collection consists of fifteen boxes of minutes, visitors reports, financial and admission records, annual reports and historical papers pertaining to The Mary Wade Home (The Home for the Friendless).

Series I, Minutes, pertain to those taken separately by the Recording Secretary at the Board of Managers Meetings and the Executive Committee Meetings. The Board of Managers meetings, at first, were held at 3:00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month, when reports of receipts and expenditures were made by the treasurer as well as by various committees; the annual meeting was held in December. "No communication, but business till the close of meeting." Throughout the years, while the day of the week has changed, at least nine monthly meetings still take place. At times referred to as "Executive Board Meetings," Executive Committee Meetings were initially held at 10:00 am every Tuesday, when the executive board met with the visiting committee, to "confer on all subjects relating to the interests and property of the Home ..." After a while, meetings were held at least once a month, except in July and August.

Series II, Visitors Reports, presented at the monthly meetings of the Board of Managers, were taken by members of the visiting committee, which consisted of two managers, appointed by the board to visit the Home at least once a week, to "receive and carefully investigate applications for aid, and decide temporarily upon them." They also met with the Executive Committee at their weekly meetings. Members of the executive committee also visited the Home at least once a week to confer with the matron concerning "deficiencies" or other matters connected with the running of the Home; these reports were then presented to the entire executive committee.

Series III, Financial, from September 1866, when Mrs. Mary H. Staples was elected treasurer, this officer kept an account of all receipts and expenditures and paid all bills, approved by the purchasing committee. In 1915 the Union and New Haven Trust Company was elected treasurer, in charge of financial affairs, subject to the approval of the Board of Managers.

Series IV, Admission records contained in eleven various sized volumes, some engraved for the Home, listed the date that the resident entered the facility and the date of his or her departure. While many entries were brief, others were colorfully detailed. Overlapping records were kept in the two volumes of "Admissions Records 1880-1884" and "Home Records 1882-1883." In the case of Admissions Records 1866-1881, this information is duplicated in an indexed list of admissions for 1866-1873. From 1932 to 1949, Doctors Burnett S. Adams and Joseph Groark were employed to make calls at the Home, treating patients for as little as \$1.00 (in 1947). Residents were also treated in the doctor's office during this period. Board accounts were kept separate for those residents, who were able to pay, as much as

\$6.00 (in 1939). The Home provided care for elderly and other persons in need of assistance, living outside the facility, paying their heating and other maintenance bills and rent.

Series V Annual Reports were printed publications, bound in engraved volumes from 1867 to 1916, incorporating a mass amount of information that included lists of the newly appointed officers, committees and the names of all of the managers and the churches which they represented. In addition, the constitution and by-laws, rules and lists of donations and subscriptions were included. Throughout the years, the little pamphlet, although revised in its content, continued to be published annually, even when the name of the institution changed to The Mary Wade Home in 1930. It appears that no reports were printed from 1944 to 1950, and by the 1959-1960 issue, the pamphlets were no longer identified as "Annual Reports." From 1978 to present, these pamphlets have been called "Year Books." Various committee's annual reports were submitted at the annual Board of Managers meetings in December. Many of them were incorporated into the minutes of the Board of Managers meetings and were subsequently printed in the earlier published reports.

Series VI, Historical, includes documents, booklets and other various items concerning happenings at the Home and persons associated with the institution, including correspondence, photographs and a scrapbook.

HISTORY OF THE PAPERS

The papers were initially transferred from The Mary Wade Home to the Whitney Library of the New Haven Colony Historical Society on June 2, 1992; on June 26, 1992, a scrapbook was transferred; and on July 8, 1992, admissions records and other papers were added.

By deed of gift these records have become the property of the New Haven Colony Historical Society, but the Mary Wade Home, a continuing institution, retains copyright. Photocopies for research purposes can be made by the Whitney Library. Researchers desiring copies for any other purpose must secure written premission from the Mary Wade Home, Inc.

SERIES I

MINUTES

Box/
Folder

Contents

Board of Managers Meetings

| | |
|-----|---------------------|
| 1/A | Sep 1866 - Dec 1873 |
| 1/B | Jan 1874 - Dec 1886 |
| 1/C | Jan 1887 - Nov 1906 |
| 1/D | Dec 1906 - Jul 1913 |
| 1/E | Sep 1913 - Dec 1923 |
| 1/F | Jan 1924 - Dec 1933 |
| 2/A | Jan 1934 - Dec 1943 |
| 2/B | Jan 1944 - Dec 1949 |
| 2/C | Jan 1950 - Dec 1954 |
| 2/D | Jan 1955 - Dec 1958 |
| 2/E | Jan 1963 - Dec 1968 |

Executive Committee Meetings

| | |
|-----|---------------------|
| 2/F | Apr 1878 - Mar 1884 |
| 2/G | Mar 1884 - Nov 1885 |
| 3/A | Jan 1886 - Jan 1891 |
| 3/B | Feb 1891 - Jun 1894 |
| 3/C | Jul 1894 - Nov 1903 |
| 3/D | May 1907 - Dec 1910 |
| 3/E | Dec 1910 - Jan 1914 |
| 3/F | Jan 1914 - Jun 1917 |
| 4/A | Jun 1917 - Mar 1921 |
| 4/B | Mar 1921 - Jun 1924 |
| 4/C | Sep 1924 - Dec 1928 |

Box/
Folder

Contents

| | |
|-----|---------------------|
| 4/D | Jan 1929 - Dec 1933 |
| 4/E | Jan 1934 - Dec 1938 |
| 4/F | Jan 1941 - Dec 1944 |
| 4/G | Jan 1947 - Dec 1954 |
| 5/A | Jan 1955 - Dec 1968 |

SERIES II
VISITORS REPORTS

Box/
Folder

Contents

Managers

5/B Dec 1875 - Dec 1889
5/C Feb 1890 - Jul 1897
5/D Dec 1898 - Mar 1911
6/A Mar 1911 - Dec 1922

Executive Committee

6/B Dec 1876 - Feb 1887
6/C Mar 1887 - Dec 1893
7/A Dec 1893 - May 1903
7/B Apr 1904 - Jul 1911
7/C Dec 1911 - Nov 1921

Managers and Executive Committee (integrated)

7/D Nov 1922 - Oct 1927

SERIES III

FINANCIAL

Box/
Folder

Contents

Receipts and Expenditures

7/E Sep 1866 - Dec 1884 (2 volumes)

8/A Dec 1884 - Nov 1898 (2 volumes)

Donations

8/B 1895-1904, 1905-1911, 1954-1966 (3 volumes)

Doctors Accounts

8/C Dr. Burnett S. Adams and Dr. Joseph Groark,
Jul 1932 - Jul 1949

Outside Aid

8/C Nov 1932 - Oct 1937

Tradesmen's Accounts

9/A Dec 1937 - Aug 1944

Board Accounts

9/A Dec 1933 - Jan 1943

Deeds, Funds, Legacies and Taxes

9/B 1868 - 1968

SERIES IV

ADMISSIONS

Box/
Folder

Contents

Records of Admissions and Dismissals

9/C Nov 1866 - Dec 1881 (2 volumes)
9/D Oct 1876 - Jun 1879
9/E Nov 1880 - Feb 1885 (2 volumes)
10/A Jul 1884 - Jun 1888
10/B Jan 1884 - Aug 1891
10/C May 1894 - Nov 1907 (2 volumes)
11/A Sep 1903 - Jan 1920
11/B Oct 1920 - Feb 1954

Matron's Reports

11/C 1878 and 1879

Entrance Applications

11/C 1910 - 1917

Profiles, Rules (and other information pertaining to residents)

11/D 1867 - 1973

SERIES V
ANNUAL REPORTS

Box/
Folder

Contents

Printed Annual Reports (and Year Books)

| | |
|------|--|
| 12/A | 1867 - 1891 |
| 12/B | 1869 - 1891, excluding 1870 |
| 12/C | 1892 - 1916 |
| 13/A | 1911 - 1928, excluding 1912 and 1913 |
| 13/B | 1929 - 1943, excluding 1934 and 1935 |
| 13/C | 1951 - 1966, excluding 1963; includes a letter from Mrs. Thomas S. Paradise, 16 May 1961, found with these reports |
| 14/A | 1967 - 1991, excluding 1980 |

Committee Reports

(annual and other, filed by year, organized by committee)

| | |
|------|---|
| 14/B | 1905, 1908, 1915, 1918, 1932-1934, 1937-1939, 1944-1946, 1951 |
| 14/C | 1952 - 1956 |
| 14/D | 1957, 1958, 1963-1968, 1972-1974 |

SERIES VI
HISTORICAL

Box/
Folder

Contents

Constitution and Amendments to Charter

15/A 1931 amendment to charter, including copy of Home's certification; other information concerns amendments of 1933, 1935 and 1950; 1951 booklet of constitution and by-laws

15/B Correspondence

Amendments to Charter, 1931-1935
Free Beds, 1905-1966
In Search of Mary Wade, 1931
Property, 1934
Other, 1956 and 1957

15/C Historical Notes

"In Search of Mary Wade," profiles of Mary Wade, Lucy Boardman and William Whiting Boardman, "Information Concerning Names on Doors," "The Years Between, 1866-1931" and various data concerning happenings at the Home and those associated with it

15/D Photographs

Scrapbook

15/E Items 1-17: includes 1867 letter from the Hon. James E. English to Mrs. Joseph E. Sheffield, enclosing \$1,000

15/F Items 18-34: includes rules and by-laws for 1873, estimates of L. W. Robinson, architect, 7 July 1887 and correspondence for 1870-1879 and other information concerning the early period

15/G Items 35-58: includes broadside for Home for the Friendless, July 1870; among photographs is one of Mrs. Mary F. W. Greist (president from 1913 to 1920)

15/H Items 59-77: includes mainly newspaper articles and photographs for period of 1944 to 1966