The New York Colored Mission Records, 1865-1964

(9 document boxes plus 7 volumes (6 linear feet, ca. 1000 items.)

Coll. no. 1123

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Abstract

The records of a Quaker organization from the mid-19th to the mid-20th centuries, with social and training offerings in New York, particularly to the African American community, and based on the principle of obtaining jobs and decent housing for African Americans.

Background note

According to an article of its constitution, the objects of the New York Colored Mission were the "religious, moral and social elevation of the colored people." Programs to this end were classes in cooking, sewing, carpentry, bible instruction also a lodging house, employment agency, district nurse and the Fresh Air program, which gave black women and children a chance to spend some time in the country.

The Mission was founded in 1865. Originally named the African Sunday School Association, it was later renamed the New York Colored Mission. The governing arm of the Mission consisted of a Board of Managers and a Board of Trustees. While the managers, appointed by the trustees, carried on the work of the Mission, their actions were subject to approval by the Trustees.

Two of the Mission's leading lights were Joshua L. Barton, 1849-1926, and Levi Hollingsworth Wood, 1873-1956. Barton, a doctor, was elected to the Board of Managers in 1883; he served as secretary and president of the Board of Trustees until his death in 1926. Wood, a lawyer, was elected secretary of the Board of Trustees in 1898, a position he held till his death in 1956. He was also active in other social work, and was chairman of the Board of the National Urban League.

Based on the Washingtonian principle of obtaining jobs and decent housing for blacks, the New York Colored Mission officially terminated in 1966 when the duBoisian principle of immediate equality for blacks became preeminent. Assets of the Mission were turned over to New York Monthly Meeting.

The New York Colored Mission was under the care of the Society of Friends from its inception.
Notes
see Harry Helmsley letter, 1964, in box 6

It was founded in 1865 as the African Sabbath School and incorporated in 1871 by the state of New York. Its objectives were “to conduct in the city of New York Sabbath schools for religious instruction, social religious meetings, an evening school for adults, a sewing school, a mother's meeting, an employment office, a free reading room and a temperance society, also to employ missionaries to aid the society in promoting the foregoing”. It also provided residence for some women. It was located on both 130th & 131st Streets in New York City until 1941 when it was reduced to three houses on 131st St. It was affiliated with the Protestant Welfare Federation.

Notes
Information from Original Documents in Box 6

Scope and content
This section of the collection includes minutes of the Board of Managers and Board of Trustees, correspondence, accounts and donations, and miscellaneous.

Other descriptive information
User note: See additions beginning in box 6

Collection inventory

Accounts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accounts</th>
<th>1.</th>
<th>1908</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>1909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>1910</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Wrapped and standing on shelf: Account book, 1865-1876; Account book, kept by T.W. Spanswick, including donations, for 1873.

Donations to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donations to</th>
<th>1. Fresh Air Fund</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a. correspondence with agencies concerning aid to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fresh Air program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. report of the Central Bureau of Fresh Air work 1910.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for the Colored People, [re application form for potential Fresh Air outings participants; report on fresh air homes]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Fresh Air Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Fresh Air Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. N.Y.C.M.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Correspondence (Highlighted on basis of contents or author)

   [announcement of Wood's election as chairman of social education committee]

   [reports amount in treasury of N.Y.C.M. & other financial matters, including possible property purchase.]

   [case history of one girl and what is being done for her.]

   [asks what to do for a specific case.]

5. Collins, Stephen W. to L. Hollingsworth Wood. 2-9-[1907].
   [Suggests new location for N.Y.C.M.]

   [concerns property for potential purchase by N.Y.C.M.]

   [Gives option to N.Y.C.M. on his farm.]

   [treasury report of N.Y.C.M.]

9. Wald, Lillian (Henry Street Settlement House) to Dept. of Education. April 17, 1908.
   [Supports request of N.Y.C.M. to establish a kindergarten in their building.]

    [concerns Fresh Air Fund — plans for sending people connected with N.Y.C.M. into the country.]

[says there are many Fresh Air Homes for women and children and related matters; encloses list of cooperating agencies.]

[gives statement of N.Y.C.M. finances and suggests possible investments.]

[accepts check to be used for district nurse.]

15. Talison (?), Anna to “my dear cousin”. May 19, 1910
[tells of various charities to which Friends donate money]

[accepts invitation to be on debating society of N.Y.C.M. — which later became Young Men's Social and Literary Club]

[regrets that his organization which gives free classes in manual training and domestic economics cannot afford to help N.Y.C.M. with a physical training class]

[reports work being accomplished in the Mission office, primarily by Mary Shober Kimber]

[concerns the sale of N.Y.C.M. property]

[gives information concerning available building]

[cites causes why N.Y.C.M. is not prospering]
22. Forster, Dorothy to L.H. Wood. n.d.
[discusses setting up of cooking classes and evening classes]

23. Buffum, Katherine (artist used by N.Y.C.M.) to L.H. Wood. n.d.
[has never been in a carpenter's shop, so her drawing may be lacking].

Minutes
1. Annual meetings of the Board of Trustees of N.Y.C.M., 1909-30 &
2. Annual meetings of the Board of Trustees of N.Y.C.M., 1931-51
   a. rough and final copy of minutes dealing with appointments of trustees; notices of meetings;
      account sheets presented by the treasurer
3. Regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees, 1901-1905 &
4. Regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees, 1906-1917 &
5. Regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees, 1918-1928 &
6. Regular and special meetings of the Board of Trustees, 1929-1949 &
   a. rough and final copy of minutes dealing with investment and property actions, treasurers
   reports, repairs to physical plant etc.

Wrapped and standing on shelf: Board of Managers' minutes, 1865-1876; Board of Managers' and
Executive Committee minutes, 1876-1887; Managers', Trustees' and Members' minutes, 1886-1914;
Board of Trustees' minutes, 1877-1907.

Miscellaneous
1. Record of placements by the Mission's Employment Agency
2. Pamphlet on history of N.Y.C.M. & other small printed pieces; blueprint for building at 30th Street
   b. Report of Superintendent on relief work, 1914
4. Report on various endeavors of the N.Y.C.M., 1905
5. By-laws and appurtenances; portion of N.Y.C.M. constitution
6. Last will and testament of Sarah Gosmez, a former pupil of N.Y.C.M.
7. Correspondence of the Young Men's Social and Literary Club, a function of the N.Y.C.M.
8. Pictures
Wrapped and standing on shelf: 12 lantern slides


Separated Material
Separated material: Removed from the collection (with locations noted):

1. Newspaper clippings about or relating to work of the N.Y.C.M. - P.G.
2. Correspondence of Robert T. Kerlin - 315
3. T.L.S. by William Jay Schieffelin - 320
4. Programs offered by Friends on study of religion - P.G.
5. Papers relating to Hope Day Nursery for Colored Children - to papers of L.H. Wood
6. Papers of the National Urban League - to papers of L.H. Wood
7. Some volumes of the N.Y.C.M. annual reports - BX7643 N53 A2.

See also: printed constitution and by-laws of N.Y.C.M. in stacks (1886)


New York Colored Mission. Additions,
This addition to the records of The New York Colored Mission includes such original or fundamental documents as the certificate of incorporation in 1871, and several sets of by-laws; correspondence about the Green-Wood Cemetery and other issues; financial records, including investments and accounts; minutes of the Board of Managers; annual reports; and photographs of Sunday School groups at the New York Colored Mission building. Correspondents include: Stephen W. Collins, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Greater New York Fund, Harry B. Helmsley, Robert T. Kerlin, Malcolm Lovell, Frank C. Matthews, H.A. Miller, William J. Shieffelin, Lena Williams, and L. Hollingsworth Wood.

Arrangement: Materials in these boxes are arranged in series: Original or fundamental documents, correspondence and financial records (box 6, the latter continued in box 7); minutes (box 8); annual reports and photographs (box 9).

Information for Users:

This addition is in boxes 6-9 of the collection and is interrelated with records in the first accession. The abbreviation “NYCM” is used for The New York Colored Mission. The symbol + is for use at Haverford College.

+ Potential interest for History 361

Original or Fundamental Documents, Correspondence and Financial Records

Box 6

I. Original or Fundamental Documents, 1871-1951
Certificates of incorporation, signed by Edward Tatum, William F. Mott, William R. Thurston, Robert L. Murray, Maurice W. Ostrander, William
J. Tanner, William F. Mitchell and Augustus Taber. Ms. and published, as filed in New York City and Albany.

Document recording the sale of plot in Green-Wood Cemetery to The New York Colored Mission by the Association for the Benefit of Colored Orphans of New York, Partially printed and manuscript.

Copy of 1875 law allowing change of the number of trustees. Ms.

Document indicating increase to 30 and listing of the trustees of The New York Colored Mission, Ms.

Copy of a minute allowing Stephen W. Collins, Secretary of the Board of Managers, to open graves in the Green-Wood Cemetery, Ms., with legal form attached.

By-laws of The New York Colored Mission, TS. [18--?].

Document indicating decrease to 5 and listing of the trustees of The New York Colored Mission, Ms.

Document indicating increase to 10 and listing of the trustees of The New York Colored Mission, TS., with an appended note that this was never implemented.

Resolution to change the day of meeting, TS. 1905.

Copy of article 7 of the by-law recording the responsibilities of the president of the board of trustees, TS.

Corporate resolutions, Partially typed and printed. 1941.


Includes mission statement and activities provided by NYCM

Correspondence re amendment of charter to provide for children's day care, TS. & Ms. 1944.

Corporate Resolutions, Partially typed and printed. 1950.


II. Correspondence, 1909-1964

Correspondents include:
Stephen W. Collins, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Greater New York Fund,
Harry B. Helmsley, Robert T. Kerlin, Malcolm Lovell, Frank C. Matthews, H.A. Miller,
Topics include:
- Licensing; by-laws, including by-laws from 1905; listing of the Mission in Social Agencies directory; liability of managers if building does not meet code; securing more space in Green-Wood cemetery; distribution of money from Protestant Welfare Agencies; qualification of teachers in the Mission nursery

Highlights include:
- Schieffelin, Wm. Jay to Dear Sir. 1909 9/1. [asks recipient to buy stock in the City and Suburban Homes Co. which offers opportunity for employment of black laborers and thus improves housing for N.Y. blacks]
- Kerlin, Robert J. to [L. Hollingsworth] Wood. 1921-1922. 5 items. [after meeting with Kerlin, who was in the dept. of English at VMI in 1921, Wood writes a letter of recommendation; Kerlin writes to Wood of his qualifications after being dismissed from his teaching position and unable to find employment; Kerlin accepts post of head of English dept. at State Normal School, West Chester, Pa.; attached is a printed notice stating the reason for Kerlin's dismissal from VMI]
- Miller, H.A. to [L. Hollingsworth] Wood. [1922?] 6/29. [the Kerlin case; contrasting a trip in America to one in Russia]
- Lovell, Malcolm to Benjamin Doane. 1939 12/14. [list of Quakers who dined with Father Divine as his guests, including two members of the New York Colored Mission]
- Helmsley, Harry B. to Charles [Glowgower]. [1964]. [managers must be appointed who would be able to visit NYCM and make recommendations. As the Mission has been a Friends' group from inception, it is logical for look to New York Monthly Meeting for these managers; is the name NYCM in keeping with the times or should "Colored" be dropped]

III. Financial Records, 1892-1965
The records include:
- building fund, building additions, building improvements, 1900-1902; 1923; 1941
- list of funds, 1926 & 1928
- tax information and tax exemptions
- mortgage and real estate
- donations to Mission, including as legatee insurance, including war damage policy, 1943 +
- investments
- disbursements
correspondence regarding the records; correspondents include: Stephen W. Collins, Benjamin Doane, Frank C. Matthew and L. Hollingsworth Wood

Account Book, bound. 1894-1936, Box 7
Includes names of donors and other income, funds and expenses. Paste down on inside front cover indicates NY Colored Mission as legatee.

Audit reports, 1937-1938, 1942, 1944-1952
Income tax returns, 1940-1952
With related documents.

Minutes Box 8
Minutes of the Board of Managers, 1895-1912.
Bound volume with manuscript and typed entries.
Note: Laid in are four typed reports of the Superintendent of NYCM, 1913 and a draft of minutes of a Board meeting in 1913 with a typed resolution appended.

Minutes of the Board of Managers, 1951-1965.
Note: These were occasional meetings occurring at least once per year, but usually during the course of the year as well.

Laid in are letters and other documents, relating to Board business.

Annual Reports and Photographs Box 9
Annual reports, 1947-1964
Note: These included reports on the Sunday School, day nursery, day camp, employment center, donations, sewing classes and other activities.

Photographs
4 black & white photographs of [Sunday School?] groups leaving The New York Colored Mission building, [ca. 1920s?]

Materials removed from collection:
Separated material: Printed pamphlets and booklets published by The New York Colored Mission to PG & QC