

**Massachusetts Woman's Home Missionary Union**  
**Records, 1879-1990 (gaps)**  
**6 linear feet**  
**RG0122**

No access restrictions.

Gift of Massachusetts Woman's Missionary Union, ca. 1982, 1995.

Accession 1995-03 and portions of 1982 accession processed February 1996 (processor removed at their request). Original processor unknown.

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**HISTORICAL NOTE**

The Woman's Home Missionary Association's first meeting was November 4, 1879 in the vestry of the Park Street Church, Boston, Massachusetts; the organization was officially chartered September 28, 1881. The association's first report states: "On November 4, 1879, a group of devoted women met in Park Street Church, Boston, to confer on what Congregational women could do to spread the knowledge of the gospel in the United States. They organized a 'society for the prosecution of Home Missionary work.' On February 26, 1880, a constitution was adopted and a name was given this new child--Woman's Home Missionary Association. March 18th the first public meeting was held, and on October 18th, the close of the fiscal year, \$2,644 had been received for the work" (series I-A, 1-1). Members were from Boston, as well as neighboring cities. Life members contributed \$20 and annual members contributed \$1 each (series V, 7-26). Names appearing on the original 1881 charter include: Sarah M. Hunnewell, Mary A. Tyler, Abby W. Pearson, Mary H. Bishop, Mary M. Topliff, Louise L. Adams, Mary A. Moore and Ann Maria Preston (series V, 7-18).

Founded to meet the material and spiritual needs of women and children, the Association raised money through concerts and lectures in churches. Auxiliary groups quickly formed within the state of Massachusetts and substantial bequests (or legacies) were left to the Association.(1) Donations of books, clothing, school supplies and toys grew from \$7000 in 1883 to \$36,000 in 1902. By 1926 the Association acquired \$113,483 per year and donated \$1,500,000 from gifts of living donors and \$165,982 from legacy gifts, a total of \$1,766,000 between 1880-1926 (series I-A, 1-5)

The Women's Home Missionary Association was primarily organized to support home missions and the Congregational homeland societies (i.e., the Congregational Home Missionary Society, the Congregational Church Building Society, the Congregational Sunday School Extension, the American Missionary Association, the Congregational Education Society, the Congregational Foundation for Education, the Congregational Board of Ministerial Relief and the Annuity Fund for Congregational Ministers, series V, 7-22). Through this work the Association supported: Miss Lilla Davis and the Cotton Valley School for African-American women in Alabama, the

first such school in the country; the Santee Indian School in Nebraska; Tuskegee Normal School in Alabama, now Tuskegee Institute; Bethlehem Bible Readers Home in Ohio, which later became Schaufler College and later Oberlin College; and French Protestant College in Springfield, Massachusetts, now Springfield International College. Dr. and Mrs. Booker T. Washington were frequent speakers at the early meetings and were influential in the Association's establishment of African American schools in the South.(2)

Around 1920, the funds and work of the General Association of Massachusetts' (3) men's and women's organizations merged, and the Massachusetts Court ruled that money held as specific bequests for women and children must be separated and administered by a corporation elected for this purpose.(4) As a result, the Woman's Home Missionary Association became the Massachusetts Woman's Home Missionary Union in 1924. "to act as trustees of funds entrusted to them and to disburse the income of the same for the work of Congregational Home Missions."(5) In 1927 the Massachusetts Woman's Home Missionary Union and the Massachusetts Branches of the Woman's Board of Missions merged to become the Congregational Woman's Missionary Society of Massachusetts (series I-A, 1-5). By 1934, the charter and bylaws used the name Massachusetts Home Missionary Union (series V, 7-18).

Today the Union disburses approximately \$40,000 annually. The Union receives quarterly requests from the United Church Board for Homeland Ministries and also supports the Massachusetts Conference, which is responsible for the United Church of Christ missionary work in Massachusetts. (6) In addition, the Union funds numerous charitable organizations. See Appendix A for a list of the officers of the Massachusetts Home Missionary Union from 1881-1937. Note that for a short period, the board was not all-female: from 1932-1937 Reverend Oliver D. Sewall served as treasurer since "after the merger in 1927, it was felt wise that this position would be a man conversant with the State treasury" (series I-C, 2-13).

### **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

Annual reports from 1966-1988 (series I-A, 1-9-13) contain copies of the Massachusetts State Annual Report form, as well as a MHMU annual report. The notation "gaps" denotes the absence of a MHMU annual report; if the box list notes a gap, a Massachusetts State Annual Report form may exist, even if a MHMU annual report does not. Annual Report Correspondence 1981 (series I-A,1-14) documents the reinstatement of nonprofit corporation status, which lapsed in 1981 due to an absence of annual reports on file with the state of Massachusetts. The necessary forms and annual reports were filed in 1981 and nonprofit corporation status was reinstated.

Minutes contain a mixture of annual meeting minutes and board of director minutes. Typically the minutes between 1879-1908 (series I-B, 1-6-17) contain annual meeting minutes and lists of the officers, committee members and their cities of residence. The minutes from 1918-1925 contain monthly meeting minutes and the treasurer's report, since both reports are were typed together. The minutes and treasurer's report from 1934-1990 are filed separately. Agendas (series I-D, 2-19-23) include a mixture of annual meeting and board of director agendas. If agendas are typed on the same page as the minutes, they are located with the minutes.

Treasurer's reports contain a wide variety of information, from annual reports to five-year reports. The majority of the finance committee reports are also filed with the treasurer's reports, since they include very detailed financial information (series II-A, 2-26-36).

Bequests (or legacies, according to the Massachusetts Home Missionary Union records) contains correspondence, documents and probate notices and clippings related to gifts bequeathed to the Massachusetts Woman's Home Missionary Union. Originally, several documents were stored together in one envelope. If the envelopes had relevant information written on the outside, the envelope was saved (series I-G, 3-16). Newspaper clippings (mostly probate notices) were xeroxed onto permanent paper and filed alphabetically by last name (series I-G, 3-1).

There are a number of separate ledgers and bank books that document the income from different funds (series II-E). Ledger sheets were removed from their original binders, for preservation purposes. Correspondence that specifically related to the bequests are filed in series II-F, 3-7-13. Correspondence that relates to the management of investments are filed in series II-H, 3-20-32; the majority of this correspondence is to and from the treasurer and investment management companies.

The majority of the correspondence from 1965-1990 contains correspondence to and from the Massachusetts Home Missionary Union and potential grant recipients; the bulk of the correspondence contains grant proposals and notification of awards. Correspondence from 1920-1982 documents the Travis Scholarship award; series III-A, 6-9 contains photographs of the Travis Scholarship recipients.

The majority of the historical material (series V) was found in several folders, in no apparent order. Some of this material is correspondence answering questions about the foundation of the MHMU and its relationship (or lack of relationship) to other early missionary societies. There is also some material that appears to have been collected to answer these questions (e.g., material on the history of home missionary societies in America and the New Hampshire Cent Society). There is also a congratulatory letter from President Jimmy Carter, commemorating the Massachusetts Home Missionary Union's 100th anniversary in 1979 (series V, 7-49). Miscellaneous items contained in this series include the black metal embossing stamp (series V, 7-52) for the Massachusetts Home Missionary Association (ca. 1924) and unidentified photographs of a Congregational Medical Services Car (series V, 7-51). The photographs were found in the back of the 1926 annual reports/addresses at 25th anniversary.

Biographies and memorial material were found located throughout the collection, in no apparent order. Newspaper or fragile copies were copied onto permanent paper and filed in series V, 7-24.

#### ENDNOTES:

- (1) *Massachusetts Woman's Home Missionary Union (Who are We?)*, October, 1979, p. 1-2.
- (2) *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- (3) The General Association of Massachusetts was founded in 1802 and later became the Massachusetts Congregational Conference. In 1966, the name changed to the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ.

- (4) *Ibid.*  
(5) *Ibid.*  
(6) *Ibid.*, p. 3.

## DESCRIPTION

- Series I. Board of Directors
  - Subseries A. Annual Reports
  - Subseries B. Minutes
  - Subseries C. Officer/Corporate Member Roster
  - Subseries D. Agendas
  - Subseries E. Misc. Correspondence to Board of Directors
- Series II. Financial
  - Subseries A. Treasurer's reports
  - Subseries B. Finance Committee Minutes
  - Subseries C. Auditor Reports and Financial Statements
  - Subseries D. Golden Anniversary Fund
  - Subseries E. Massachusetts Home Missionary Union Funds
  - Subseries F. Bequests
  - Subseries G. Investments/Stock Certificates
  - Subseries H. Investment/Finance-related Correspondence
  - Subseries I. Ledgers
  - Subseries J. Investment Reports/Purchases and Sales
- Series III. Programs
  - Subseries A. Travis Scholarships Fund
  - Subseries B. Grant Program Correspondence
- Series IV. Suffolk District
  - Series V. History
    - A. Legal Documents
    - B. Printed Material
    - C. Biographical Material
    - D. Misc.
    - E. History of other Home Missionary Societies
    - F. History--Financial
    - G. History--Correspondence
    - H. History--Photographs
    - I. History--Misc.

## Box List

Box/folder	Description	Year
Box 1		
1-13	Annual Reports	1880-1927; 1935; 1950-1988 (gaps in last section)
14	Annual Report Correspondence	1981
15-32	Minutes, treasurer reports (treas. only to 1925)	1880-1950
33-44	Minutes	1950-1990
45-50	Officer/Corporate Member Roster	1881-1990
Box 2		
1-5	Agendas	1927-1990 (gaps)
6	Nominating Committee material/guidelines/ correspondence	1970-1971
7	Board Correspondence	
8-18	Treasurer's reports	1926-1990
19	Finance Committee minutes	1897-1916; 1925, 1928 (gaps)
20-26	Auditor's Reports	1952-1985
27-31	Golden Anniversary Fund, correspondence	1925-1930
32	Financial Report	1930
33	Printed material/photographs	
34-36	Income sheets	
37	Administration Fund Ledger	1909-1930
38	Chamberlain, Sarah P. Fund ledger	1911-1913
39	Hyde, Mary W. and Lucy Hale Bannister Fund	1897-1903
40-41	Towne, Joseph Hardy and Rosina Fund	1912-1916; 1912-1933
42	Fund History	
43-45	Funds	1903-1916; 1937; 1938-1965
46	Bequests clippings (probate court notices, articles)	
47	Bequest lists	1881-1929
48-51	Bequest Documents, A-Z	
52-58	Bequest Correspondence	1900-1977
Box 3		
1	Bequests bank books	ca. 1917-1921
2-5	Bequest: receipts, envelopes, ledgers, notes, worksheets	
	<b>Investment/ financial</b>	
6	Clippings, announcements	
7	Correspondence / documentation (concerns certificate #751)	1951-1986
8-19	Correspondence	1881-1987
20	Stock certificates/ receipts	
21	Investment/financial handwritten notes/scribbles	
	<b>Ledgers</b>	
22	Income and payments- fund income	1932-1946
23	Assets, liabilities, income, expenses	1933-1968
24-25	--	1946-1963; 1967-1985
26	Income	1938-1983
27	Investment	1970-1985

28	Income	1970-1977
29	General	1974-1982
30	Misc	1974-1982
31	Grant Schedules	1975-1982
32	Cash receipts, disbursements	1978-1985
33	Income	1978-1985
34	--	1985-1986
<b>Box 4</b>	<b>Oversize Ledgers</b>	
1	Cash book	1946-1963
2	--	1964-1977
3-4	Gifts received from churches	no date; 1915
5	--	1982-1989
<b>Box 3</b>		
	<b>Investment</b>	
35-39	Reports, listings, purchase & sales	1968-1988
<b>Box 4</b>		
1-12	Reports, listings, purchase & sales	1968-1988
	<b>Travis Scholarship Fund</b>	
13	History	
14-20	Correspondence	1920-1982
21	Recipient photographs	
22	Booklets	
23-32	Grant Program Correspondence	1965-1990
<b>Box 5</b>		
1-7	Grant Program Correspondence	
8	Grant Program- brochures, information about groups funded	
	<b>Suffolk District</b>	
9	Newsletter	1957
10	By-Laws	
11	Printed Material	
12	Office of the President guidelines	
13	Officers and life members	
14	Correspondence	1956-1960
15	Annual reports and committee reports	1955-1959
16	Annual reports	1960-1966
17-18	Agendas and annual letter from the president	1950-1966
19	Auditor's reports	1957; 1960
20-21	Minutes	1955-1966
22	Treasurer's Reports	1954-1966
23	Alliance of the Woman's Home Missionary Union Yearbook	1926-1927
	<b>History</b>	
24	Charter of incorporation, renewal	1881, 1924
25	History of association	1881
26	charter, bylaws, constitution	
27	MHMU name change	1924
28	WHMA and Rhode Island Neighborhood of Auxiliaries, separation	1923

29	Brochure	1879-1979
30	Plan of work of the Women's Home Missionary Association	1924-1925
31	Printed material	
32	Membership biographies and memorials	
33	Biographies (Mrs. Almira S. Steele)	
34	Newspaper clippings	
35	Speakers	1941-1975
36	Speakers- Kip Tiernan speech	1982
37	Anniversary materials: 25, 50, 80, 125	
38	Library of Congress registration	1900
<i>31-40: includes copies and originals</i>		
	Sermons/ Addresses from the National Council 1892 meeting	
39-40	Columbus and the National Council	1892
4-42	Meeting	1892
43-44	Note for the free preaching	1892
	History- Newspaper clippings	
45-46	<i>Advance</i> Oct. 7	1892
47-48	<i>Northwestern Congregationalist</i> Oct 21	1892
	History	
49	Pew holders – New Meeting House Society	1821-1835
50	US home missionary history	
51	National Council material	
52	New Hampshire Cent Society	
53	Financial, Mass. Congregational Fund	
54	Financial, Conditional gifts, Cong. Edu. Soc	
55	Insurance Policies	1966-1988
56	Correspondence	1881-, 1921, 1925-1926, 1928, 1933
57	Correspondence, Jimmy Carter	1979
58	Correspondence from previous members	1982
59	Photographs, Congregational Medical Services car	
Box 7	Embossing stamp for MHMA	1924

## APPENDIX A

Officers from 1881-1937 (transcribed from series I-C, 2-13). Officer names past 1937 may be obtained from officer lists (series I-C, 2-13-18) and from annual reports (series I-A, 1-6-13).

### *President*

1881-1887	Danielson, Mrs. John W.
1888-1892	Palmer, Mrs. Alice Freeman
1892-1900	Goodell, Mrs. Constans L.
1900-1907	Blodgett, Mrs. William H.
1907-1923	Patton, Mrs. Cornelius H. (d. 1936)

1923-1929 Smith, Mrs. Henry Francis

*Home Secretary*

1882-1893 Lord, Miss Nathalie  
1893-1894 Pickens, Miss Anna A.  
1894-1901 Kellogg, Mrs. Louise A. (d. 1929)  
1901-1906 Sherman, Miss L. L.  
1906-1909 Jackson, Miss Mary C. E.  
1909-1920 Noyes, Miss Louise K. (d. 1936)  
1920-1932 Camp, Mrs. Mabel S. Badger

*Treasurer*

1880-1882 Pearson, Abby W.  
1882-1886 Moore, Mrs. Henry H.  
1886-1887 Proctor, Mrs. H. H.  
1887-1889 Burgess, Miss S. K.  
1889-1890 Leland, Miss Ella A.  
1890-1895 Burgess, Miss S. K.  
1895-1899 Bridgman, Miss Annie C. (d. 1936)  
1899-1917 White, Miss Lizzie D. (d. 1929)  
1917-1932 Duncan, Mrs. [Amos L.] Albert Greene Hatheway (d. 1932)  
(married Albert Greene Duncan 1922)  
1932-1937 Sewall, Rev. Oliver D. (d. 1937)

*Assistant Treasurer*

1896-1903 Woodberry, Miss Miriam L.  
1903-1917 Smith, Miss Ellen A.  
1915 Taft, Miss Leora M. (substitute)  
1917-1937 Taft, Miss Leora M.

*Field Secretary*

1905-1907 Woodberry, Miss Miriam L.  
1907-1909 Noyes, Miss Louise K.  
1909-1910 ... ..  
1910-1911 Taft, Miss Anna B.  
1911-1912 Lewis, Miss Anna N.  
1912-1926 Briggs, Ona A Evans (married 1925 to Rev. H. A. M. Briggs)

*Secretary Junior Work*

1896-1897 Brown, Mrs. Henry C.  
1897-1901 Shepard, Miss Bertha  
1901-1904 Moore, Miss Anna P