

American Antiquarian Society

Manuscript Collections

Name of collection:

Worcester Soldiers' Relief Society,
Records, 1861-1865

Location:

Octavo volumes "W"
Misc. mss. boxes "W"

Size of collection:

6 octavo volumes
1 folder (43 items)

N.U.C.M.C. number:

RLIN id:

Sources of information on collection:

For information concerning the Worcester Soldiers' Relief Society, see Abijah P. Marvin, *History of Worcester in the War of the Rebellion* (Worcester: Abijah P. Marvin, 1870), p. 399-406.

Source of collection:

Unknown

Collection description:

The Worcester Soldiers' Relief Society was formed in October 1861 to coordinate the benevolent efforts of the women of Worcester during the Civil War. The president of the Society was Mary Elizabeth Whiton Washburn (1836-1928). Other officers included Mary Bigelow (1821-1872) and Mary Dickinson (1828-1906). Some of the activities of the Society included staging theatricals and fairs to raise money for hospitals and the United States Sanitary Commission. The women sewed blankets and clothes, and also prepared packages of food and medical supplies which were sent to soldiers in hospitals and in the field.

One of the most important activities of the Society was the operation of a lodging house for soldiers known as the "Soldier's Rest." Located on Foster Street in Worcester, the house provided free rooms and meals to soldiers passing through Worcester. The clerk was Thomas C. Bond (-), who was also active in sending supplies to Union soldiers in Southern prisons.

This collection contains three record books and two workbooks of the Worcester Soldiers' Relief Society, one record book of the "Soldiers' Rest," and a folder of correspondence to Thomas C. Bond.

The three record books of the Worcester Soldiers' Relief Society contain annual reports, minutes of meetings, treasurers' reports, and detailed lists of items purchased or produced and sent to soldiers. Among recipients of the items were

Worcester soldiers, military hospitals, Clara Barton (1821-1912), and the United States Sanitary Commission. There are also two workbooks of the Society, listing women's names and the amount of cloth or yarn they were given, as well as a record of what they produced and the day the product was delivered.

The collection also contains a record book of the "Soldier's Rest," which includes a list of donations for the house, and the guest register. The register includes the soldier's name, rank, regiment, home address, and remarks if the soldier was sick, wounded, or needed special help.

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Collection description (continued):

There is also a folder of correspondence to Thomas C. Bond, mostly from former guests expressing their appreciation. The folder also includes lists of items sent to Union soldiers in Southern prisons.

See Contents List.

30 August 1978
contents list added 30 April 1991
revised 5 March 2010

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Contents List

Octavo Volumes

- 1 Record book, containing annual reports, minutes, treasurer's reports,
and lists of items, 1861-1862
- 2 Record book, containing annual reports, minutes, treasurer's reports,
and list of items, 1861-1862
- 3 Record book, containing annual reports, minutes, treasurer's reports,
and list of items, 1864
- 4 Workbook of the Society, 1862-1863
- 5 Record book of the "Soldier's Rest"
- 6 Workbook of the Society on the "Soldier's Rest"

Folders

1 Correspondence to Thomas C. Bond