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History of Deaconess Work in Boston, MA

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HISTORY OF DEACONESS WORK IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

presented at

THE ALUMNAE ASSOCIATION

of

THE NEW ENGLAND DEACONESS TRAINING SCHOOL

FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

at

TREMONT STREET CHURCH

June 5, 1948

by

Miss Orianna F. Harding

New England Deaconess Hospital



In July 1899, the Committee met in the Historical Room, 36 Bromfield St. to prepare for Incorporation. At this meeting the Officers were elected as follows;-
 President, Rev. William Clark, Vice President, Rev. William Nart Broadbeck; Secretary Mrs. T. C. Watkins; Treasurer Mrs. Isabella Cushing. The organization was incorporated under the Name of the New England Deaconess Home and Training School. Later in 1901 it was re-incorporated, New England Deaconess Association. Immediately after incorporation, property was purchased at 45 East Chester Park, now 693 Massachusetts Ave., at a cost of \$5000.

The formal opening of the Home was Nov.20, 1889. The Committee invited Miss Isabella Thoburn to come and superintend the opening of the Work. She consented to come until they could find a permanent Worker.

Miss Mary E. Lunn, College graduate and graduate of the Chicago Training School for Deaconesses and Missionaries became the first Superintendent of the Home and Training School. Soon after entering the Work, Miss Lunn asked that her friend, Miss Ellen D. Hibbard might come from the St. Louis Deaconess Home to help her. Miss Hibbard remained in Boston 25 years and gave beautiful service as Superintendent and Instructor in the Training School, and editor of the New England Deaconess Journal. Those who were privileged to know Miss Thoburn, Miss Lunn, and Miss Hibbard know the New England Deaconess Work began with a high intellectual and spiritual standard. Young women, who wanted to enter Christian Work came to the School to train for Deaconesses, Home and Foreign Missionaries,



There is a feeling unlike any other emotion that comes in a life time, where^y privileged to revisit the place of ones Birth. I imagine there are some here today, who have an experience akin to this, coming back to this celebrated Church and familiar scenes so near the original spot where Deaconess Work had its birth in Boston.

Deaconess Work started in Germany when Theodore Fliedner, Minister and Philanthropist, opened a Home and Hospital in Kaiserwerth. He founded 100 Deaconess Institutions throughout Asia and Europe.

This Benevolent Spirit flew to America and found lodgement in the heart of a woman who was just graduating from a Womens Medical College in Philadelphia. Her name was Mrs. Lucy Ryder Meyer. As soon as possible, she made her way to Kaiserwerth to study Deaconess Work at first hand. She also visited the Work in Mildway, England. She helped to open a Deaconess Home and Training School in Chicago in 1877.

New England was not far behind in this good Work. April 1889, Resolutions were passed at the New England Conference held in Worcester, to have a Deaconess Home and Training School in Boston. They appointed a Committee to look after the Work as follows---
 Dr. William Clark, Dr. William Nart Broadbeck, Dr. Warren Adams, Dr. Willard Allen, Mrs. J. W. Cushing, Mrs. T. C. Watkins, and Mrs. Silas Pierce.



Hospital and the Medical Mission.

Sir Joshua Merrill, Christian Nobleman of Tremont St. Church, sent Sunday Dinners to the Hospital and Home for several years assuring the Workers of one good meal a week.

The Fresh Air Work had its origin in this Church when the great hearted preacher, Rev. Chas. E. Davis gave the use of his cottage in Framingham for this purpose. The first party of men, women, and children was selected largely from this Missionary Community. The money was raised by Miss Josephine S. Fisk, the very efficient Superintendent of the Deaconess Home, apostle to the poor, an expert in the art of money raising, and bringing comfort to the sorrowing.

The Fresh Air Work has ever been one of the most beneficent enter-prises of the Deaconess Association. The Work has developed through the years changing its location from time to time until a permanent Home was given by Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Wilbur; known as the J. W. Wilbur Health Home in Natick, providing a year around Home for undernourished girls with special emphasis on Summer Work. This Work was for many years under Deaconess supervision with Miss Clara Wood, Miss Susan Colson and Mrs. Helen Diamond as Superintendent, Miss Emma Hahn as Matron. These names will ever be linked with the needy children of Boston and Vicinity.

Quietly the Work went on in the little Hospital saving hundreds of lives until it was evident that



Social Workers and Evangelists. As the Deaconesses journeyed from home to home, they found men, women, and children desperately ill, with no one to care for them. It was then that the vision of a Deaconess Hospital came clearly to Superintendent and workers. The deepest feeling of the hour was this; the Deaconess Work can never be complete in Boston without a Hospital of its own.

Several years before the opening of the Hospital a little girl sent \$5.00 to Dr. Parkhurst toward a Methodist Hospital. The good Editor held this money with a hope that some day the little girls dream would be realized. This was the first contribution to the Hospital.

The Hospital was dedicated Feb. 6, 1896 in a building adjacent to the Home. At the time of the opening of the Hospital, the work of the Home and School were separated and carried on in the same building until 1897, when the School was moved to 685 Massachusetts Avenue, (a rented building). The Deaconess Village on Mass. Ave. had three places- Home, School, and Hospital. They lived and worked side by side happily and successfully with Tremont St. as their Church Home. The beloved Pastor of those days was Rev. John D. Pickles. Seldom a day passed, that he did not visit the Institutions giving cheer and courage to the Workers. The sick ones fared well for Medical care as Dr. A. H. Powers, member of this Church, was Physician to Hospital and Training School. This Prince of Doctors gave his service to the poor patients in the Deaconess



The Superintendents of Home were

- Miss Mary E. Lunn
- Miss Josephine S. Fisk
- Miss Mary Anna Taggart
- Miss Margaret Eckley
- Miss Sadie Hagan
- Miss Alice M. Robertson

That the Training School was true to its Mission is evident as we acquaint ourselves with the contribution the graduates have made to Deaconess, Missionary, Social, Evangelistic, Educational, and Hospital Work.

This is the list of Foreign and Home Missionaries;

- Miss Clara Organ----- India
- Miss Althea Todd- --- China
- Miss Eleanor Burpee -- Korea
- Miss Anna Hall-- ----- Africa
- Miss Martha Drummer -- Africa
- Mrs. Lettie Mason Kipp-Africa
- Miss Emma Palm -- ----China
- Miss Margaret Hermistone-- India
- Mrs. Emma Chisholm Brown - China
- Mrs. Pearl Gosnell Bisbee- India
- Miss Mena Wanzer ---- -- China
- Miss Pearl Palmer ----- India
- Mrs. Bertha Ham^{er} Bowmar-- Malaysia
- Miss Mary Pearson----- Mexico
- Miss Vernice Gelvin ---- Mexico
- Mrs. Grace Timing Overley- West Virginia
and Kentucky

Mrs. Effie Faulkner Baldwin--Alaska
Baptist Missionary and Lecturer, Mrs. Minnie Carr.
Congregational Missionary and Secretary, Home & School
Miss S. Elisabeth Stratton



if the Hospital was to meet the Medical and Surgical needs of the time it must have a different location and a larger Building.

The Committee, with Miss Lunn selected the present site. The years have plainly shown the wisdom of this choice. On this land was a fine old estate that the Committee feltought to be utilized until the Hospital was ready to use it. As the School was occupying a rented building the lot fell to the School to make the first move. The School left Mass. Ave. Nov. 1901 with Miss Elisabeth Wiles as Superintendent to carry on its work in this newly acquired possession.

The Hospital left Mass. Ave. in 1907 for its new 50 Bed Hospital and fine Nurses Home. The School then found its Home at the corner of Park and Bellevue Sts., now Deaconess Road. The Work went on fine until Harris Hall was dedicated Sept. 24, 1913 with the two fine Buildings on a very desireable corner. The School was finely equipped for its advanced educational curriculum.

In 1919 the School became a part of Boston University School of Religious Education under the Superintendency of Miss Alice M. Robertson and Harris Hall became a part of the Hospital, to be used as a residence for nurses in training.

The Deaconess Home remained on Mass. Ave. 32 years as a splendid Christian Community Center reaching out its arms of helpfulness to those in need, far and near.



New York Deaconess Home

Mrs. Eliza Jones Gard, Supt. 10 years
Mrs. Eula G. Chandler, Present Supt.

Home for Aged, Beverly, Mass.

Mrs. Effie Seavey Shepardson, was Supt. 7 yrs.

Executive Secretary of the N. E. Conference Board
of Education and Director of Christian Education
Miss Edith M. Jordan

Minister of Music, Pilgrim Congregational Church,
North Weymouth, Mass.

Miss Ruth Clive Halford.

~~Exec. Sec.~~ Secretary of Church School Literature
at Boston Methodist Publishing House.

Miss Isabel Whitaker

Secretary, Malden Center Church,

Miss Dorothy Hook

Meth. Church Board of Education, Southern Calif.
and Arizona Conf. Secretary of Children's Division

Miss Louise A. Brown

Physicians:

Dr. Edna B. Averill

Dr. Elisabeth Shapleigh

Travelor's Aid Work in Providence Station

Miss Helen P. Draper, 5 years (deceased)

Miss Harriett Murch, 5 years.



Episcopal Deaconess, Miss Edna Sargent, Chicago, Ill.

Noted Preachers: Rev. Emily Barlow Spencer

Rev. May V. Grainger

Rev. Agnes Ellingwood

Rev. Mabel Whitney

Rev. Edith Porter

Rev. Audrey Hunt MacDonald (deceased)

Rev. Gertrude Williams Tewksbury

Rev. Lucy Coffin Freeman

Rev. Una Morgan, Prof. of Social Work in Boston

University.

Singing Evangelists:

Mrs. Emilie Freeman Thorpe

Miss Augusta Anderson

Mrs. Millie Martin Dodge

Mrs. Jennie Chisholm Bean was the Singing Evangelist
to Hospitals of Greater Boston

Visiting or Parish Deaconesses Worcester

Miss Bessie E. Carty, 39 years in Wesley Church,

Miss Hannah Solomon

Mrs. Laura Walker Todd

Miss Caroline Boultenhouse

And many, many others, throughout New England.

Miss Carrie Sugden was Matron of Deaconess Home.

Childrens Home--Elizabeth Bradley Home, Hulton, Pa.

Miss Olive Morgan, Supt. 20 years.

Home for Young Women and Working Girls.

Fliedner Hall, Pawtucket, R. I.

Miss Zilla Dower, Supt. 35 years or more.

Lucy Ryder Moyer Hall, Prov., R. I., Supt. and Field

Secretary.-- Miss Florence Stevens, about 24 yrs.

Sophia Little Home, Prov., R. I.

Miss Carrie V. H. Snear, Assistant Supt., and
Superintendent for 30 years.



The Deaconess Association as it progressed in its work, felt there ought to be a Home for Aged Methodist Women; and this became a reality in 1913 when a Home was opened in Concord, Mass.. The first Superintendent was Miss Sadie Hagan, followed by Miss Nettie Hathorn, Miss Mollie Detweiler, and Miss M. Rebecca Bowman. Great praise is due these Deaconesses, for they helped to establish one of the finest Institutions of its kind in the Country.

In 1911, the wife of Mr. Charles Emerson of Concord, Mass. was a patient in the Deaconess Hospital. They were so pleased with the care and attention given them, especially by the Receptioness, Mrs. Seaboyer, that they gave the land and money for a Deaconess Hospital in Concord, Mass. This small Hospital of 25 beds was managed by the Boston Hospital for eight years. Miss Lillian Williams gave valuable service in helping to organize the work which went forward under the efficient Superintendents ;-

Mrs. Lucy Cherille Anderson
Miss Lydia Stanley
Miss Edith Bennett

It is still a fine Hospital with good plans for enlargement. Miss Bowman has been House Worker of Nurses Home for thirteen years and still holds that position.

In June 1920, the Cullis property at Roxbury was transferred to the New England Deaconess Association, to be used as a Hospital for the care and treatment of patients with advanced cancer. The Building was renamed Palmer Memorial Hospital with 39 Beds. During the seven



Ministers Wives

Mrs. Elisabeth Springham Seaboyer
Mrs. Margaret Forsaith Jeffries
Mrs. Alva Osborne Arnold
Mrs. Mabel Ridgway Huse
Mrs. Ruth Harvie Taylor
Mrs. Rena VanderPyll Powell
Mrs. Mabel Pollard Brennan

Mothers

Mrs. Emily Barlow Spencer
Mrs. Emma Aker Howard
Mrs. Marion MacIntosh Parker
Mrs. Grace Chandler Welch

Business-- Bank Secretary

Miss Edith M. Moffatt

Banking

Miss Dora Hawkes
Mrs. Annie Raddin French

Teachers

Miss Laura Sanborn
Mrs. Katharine Cooper
Mrs. Ella V. Hunter
Mrs. Phoebe Stone
Miss Lillian G. France, of Music and Piano, 28 yrs.



Educators in this part of the country to make the successful arrangement. She also affiliated the school with the most scientific Hospitals in Boston and vicinity that the Nurses in training might be thoroughly equipped to stand side by side with the great Physicians and Surgeons as they put into practice their scientific knowledge.

Deaconess Nurses who have shared in the Hospital Work with ~~ed~~ laude distinction are as follows:-

Miss Annette Lundwall
 Miss Lilly Brown
 Miss Sarah Blakely
 Miss Alice Thorpe
 Miss Annie Raynier
 Miss Marian Hamilton
 Miss Lulu Mauk
 Miss Eleanor Burpee
 Miss Martha Drummer
 Miss Margaret Robertson
 Miss Marion Nevers
 Miss Mina Ruud
 Miss Frances Crosscup Cassidy
 Miss Mabel Spencer
 Mrs. Maude Andrews
 Miss Nanny Peterson

Secretaries:-

Miss Abbie Reed
 Miss Agnes Chapman
 Miss Bernice Quimby

Receptionist and Field Secretary

Mrs. Elisabeth Seaboyer

Chaplain and Receptionist, Miss Alice Barker

Chaplain, Miss Josephine S. Fisk.



years in this Building, 600 patients were given a beautiful Christian Home. Miss Hagan was the first Supt. and remained in that position until the Palmer became a part of the Deaconess Hospital.

Those of us who have carefully studied the Deaconess Hospital from its inception, have seen it meet and conquer many obstacles such as wars, depressions, financial straits and huge debts for expansion. None of these things has moved the Hospital from its great purpose and through its 50 years or more of service, its doors have never been closed.

The work of the Deaconess Hospital has been going on 52 years and 34 years of that time was under Deaconess supervision:-

Miss Mary E. Lunn, Supt. 5 years.
 Miss Adeliza A. Betts, Supt. 22 years
 Miss Caroline A. Jackson. " 7 years
 Miss Lillian A. Williams, Assiat. Supt.
 and Supt. 10 years.
 Miss M. Rebecca Bowman Assist. Supt. 5 yrs.
 Miss Sadie Hagan Assist. Supt. 13 years.

These Hospital Administrators, through toil and many odds, but with great patience, courage, and sacrifice, wisely laid the sure foundation of our world famous Deaconess Hospital.

The Nurse Training School was organized and Miss Adaliza A. Betts was Superintendent and Principal of the School 22 years and brought the School up to a high standard. In 1913 she affiliated the School with Simmons College,- one of the first Training School



This hurried air plane trip has given just a Bird's Eye View of our wonderful institutions functioning at full speed. What greater thing can I say to the Graduates of the Deaconess Training for Christian Service than this:--

You have helped to keep the Deaconess Spirit living in New England for over sixty years and this organization shows that your wish to still keep the light burning, and there could be no surer way than the one you have chosen.

"Teach us, O Father that lowliest duty done is highest service unto Thee. Teach Thou, and we shall know the truth; that we may sow the seed that blossoms through eternity."