

**WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS: DEPENDENT CHILDREN
IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK, 1880-1914**

by

Iris Towers

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York**

2005

UMI Number: 3169992

Copyright 2005 by
Towers, Iris

All rights reserved.

INFORMATION TO USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleed-through, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

UMI[®]

UMI Microform 3169992

Copyright 2005 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.

All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

ProQuest Information and Learning Company
300 North Zeeb Road
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

COPYRIGHT

2005

Iris Towers

All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

4/12/05
DATE


Gerald Markowitz, Chair of the Examining Committee

4/12/05
DATE


Mary Gibson, Acting Executive Officer, History Department

Carol Berkin

Carol Groneman

Thomas Kessner

Barbara Welter

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Abstract

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS: DEPENDENT CHILDREN
IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK, 1880-1914

by

Iris Towers

Adviser: Professor Gerald Markowitz

Between 1880 and 1914, children from more than 350 families in Westchester County entered the Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children. This study offers an analysis of their institutional experience from the perspective of the community, the family, and the children themselves. It also examines the 1880 Census for three representative Westchester towns in order to determine how the educational and work experiences of children committed to Westchester institutions compared to those of the general population. Although the youngsters left no written accounts, rich and previously unexamined records of the Home and related court proceedings reveal how they reacted to their treatment.

Scholars who have examined subordinate populations, such as women, slaves, and serfs generally ignore children, who also suffered oppression under the guise of protection and support. Youngsters committed to institutions such as the WTH had to cope with life outside their families and to negotiate on their own changing circumstances as they travelled from their families to institutions

to placements. The children in this study responded with behavior that ranged from acceptance and accomodation to resistance, retaliation, and running away. Behavior admired in adults, namely independence, self-determination, and resistance to oppression, was condemned in children. Those who dared to criticize or oppose their treatment risked punishment, arrest, and commitment to institutions.

This work builds on scholarship that considers the strategies of families who used institutions as a refuge for their children during times of crisis. This is not, however, merely an institutional study, but one that develops the experiences of the children of the WTH on a larger social and economic canvas. Their hardships and deprivations aroused both the charitable impulses and the anxieties of the county's upper classes, who feared that they posed both an imminent and a future threat. The WTH was part of the community, and many layers of Westchester society converged there. Their interactions shed light on changing theories regarding the education, healthcare, work, and discipline of children during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Prologue	28
Chapter One The Establishment of the WTH	49
Chapter Two Commitment to the Home	90
Chapter Three In the Home	129
Chapter Four Placement	187
Chapter Five The Scandals	235
Conclusion	286
Afterword	292
Appendices	295
Bibliography	302

INTRODUCTION

At the end of August 1887 three little boys entered the Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children (hereafter "WTH") on North Street in White Plains, New York. Their registration noted that their father was dead, "drowned while under the influence of liquor." It also reported that their widowed mother was a "good woman," overwhelmed both by her loss and by trying to earn a living while caring for her sons. Town officials and a local women's organization took an interest in the family and collaborated to help them. William R. Thorne, Overseer of the Poor for the town of Cortlandt, officially committed the boys to the WTH. Although policemen often transported youngsters to the Home, in this case Mrs. Hunton, the president of the Peekskill Dorcas Society, accompanied seven-year-old Frank, five-year-old Edward, and four-year-old William Banker. This women's society often recommended the WTH as a short term solution for a family's troubles, and Mrs. Hunton's presence may have eased the boys' commitment.¹

¹The two surviving WTH Ledgers, numbers 14 and 15, dated from April 2, 1884 to February 16, 1892 (hereafter "WTH Ledgers"), are located at the Westchester County Historical Society (hereafter, "WCHS"). They chronicle children's admissions and discharges from the Home, and include the names, ages, ethnicity, race, and family circumstances of approximately 559 children in nearly 2,000 entries. They also record the names of the officials who committed or discharged inmates and information regarding the children's actions that precipitated their return to the Home or conditions that required their removal from placement families. WTH Ledger 15:2 (August 25, 1887).

The U.S. Census of 1880 and 1900, and the New York State Census of 1905 also give the names, ages, races, and ethnicity of additional WTH inmates. (The 1890 census is unavailable.) Because the census data do not provide the detailed backgrounds offered by the WTH Ledgers, I have only counted the children listed in the existing Ledgers for the purposes of this study. Neither the census data nor the WTH Ledgers recorded actual birthdates.

The name Dorcas derives from that of a Biblical woman "full of good works and almsdeeds." Acts 9:30. The Peekskill Dorcas Society, founded in 1862, sent out volunteers to identify and aid the sick and the poor in their community. Chester A. Smith, *Peekskill, A*

The Banker family was typical of those who turned to the WTH as a temporary haven in times of financial, medical, or marital crisis. The Banker brothers represented the majority of WTH inmates, most of whom were young, male, native-born, had lost at least one parent, and came from the laboring classes.²

This study seeks to focus on those children committed to the WTH and on issues pertaining to their families, health, education, work, and discipline. The surviving WTH Ledgers offer detailed narratives of the lives of children that challenge a common assumption of nineteenth-century society that children would be protected and supported in exchange for their obedience and their labor.³ This was expected in families, placement homes, and institutions such as the WTH. Yet, for a variety of reasons, not all parents were loving; many more were physically or financially unable to care for their children. The discipline and order provided by institutions were not always an improvement over conditions in childrens' homes. And rural, Protestant, and solvent

Friendly Town: Its Historic Sites and Shrines; A Pictorial History of the City from 1654 to 1952 (Peekskill: The Friendly Town Assoc., 1952), 154-160.

²In its Annual Reports the WTH called its residents "the children." Although the term inmate often carries the connotation of prisoner, it can mean any person confined in an institution, and I use it in that sense. During an investigation of the Home's disciplinary practices, the court-appointed Referee Daniel W. Guernsey referred to children in the WTH as inmates. Supreme Court of the State of New York, Westchester County Decision of Daniel W. Guernsey, dated October 2, 1897 (hereafter "Referee's Decision.") See Chapter 5, "The Scandals," for further information on the investigation.

³As late as 1900, a Georgia case affirmed that "a father has the right to appropriate to himself the earnings of his minor children who have not been manumitted by him." *Smith v. Smith*, 37 S.E. 407, 112 Ga. 351.

placement families did not necessarily provide better homes than the children's parents could afford. In their own families, at institutions, and in placements, some adults abused children rather than protected them. Adults often overworked children, beat them, neglected their nutrition, health, and schooling, and took advantage of their sexual vulnerability.

The children in this study responded in a variety of ways. Some adjusted to or attempted to mitigate each change in their circumstances; others accepted their situations with stoicism. A number openly demonstrated their discontent with their own homes, institutions and/or placement families by resistance, retaliation, and running away. Behavior that nineteenth century society admired in adults - namely independence, self-determination, and resistance to oppression - it condemned in children, labeling them unmanageable, stubborn, and even potentially criminal. When youngsters attempted to judge for themselves acceptable living conditions, work, and discipline, they risked punishment; they were also subject to arrest and commitment to institutions. Some scholars have inquired into the ways that subordinate groups such as slaves and serfs create a hidden transcript to critique the uses of power by dominant groups. Although, in every society, children also constitute a subordinate group, these scholars routinely ignore age as a factor that crosses the borders of race, class, and gender, and that also lends itself to oppression under the guise of protection and support.⁴ This work seeks to correct that

⁴James S. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), xi-xii.

omission.

Many adults in this study were ambivalent about children who tried to find their own solutions to the problems they faced, especially those who ran away. Although some claimed to admire youthful independence, most had misgivings about excessive displays of it, as the case of eleven-year-old Katie Spearing shows. Spearing had run away from parents the community considered "intemperate and depraved." The warm June weather enabled the girl to sleep in barns and outhouses until she was apprehended, arrested as a nuisance, and brought to the WTH.⁵ The prospect of a homeless, neglected youngster aroused the community's impulse to protect her. But it also raised fears that she would pose both an immediate and a future threat to society. A speech delivered at the meeting to establish the WTH cited the familiar cautionary tale of Margaret, "a little pauper girl" from a village along the Hudson River, who "became the mother of a long race of criminals and paupers, and her progeny has cursed the County ever since."⁶ During the late nineteenth century, the fact that even a child could turn to crime or prostitution in order to survive had become a familiar and menacing theme in Westchester

⁵WTH Ledger 15: 110 (June 11, 1891).

Mary Sullivan, head of New York City policewomen during the early twentieth century, recalled: "It is in summer that we can look for this year's crop of runaway girls. . . . The policewomen on . . . the Coney Island beach patrol find dozens of such girls sleeping under the boardwalks. Some of them hang around the side shows in the hope of getting jobs and fall under the influence of pimps and gangsters." Quoted in Oliver Pilat and Jo Ransom, *Sodom by the Sea* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1941), 128.

⁶"An Address delivered by Mrs. Joseph Hobson, at the Rooms of the State Charities Aid Association, No. 6 East Fourteenth Street, New York, February 12, 1880, Prior to the Incorporation of the 'Home'," (hereafter "The Address"), 8.

as it had elsewhere in America, particularly in large cities. In this respect, the county shared the apprehension of its southern neighbor, New York City, with its huge population and greater numbers of children many considered members of the "dangerous classes."

The financial upheavals of late nineteenth-century America sharpened that anxiety. After the Civil War, America's soaring economic prosperity alternated with precipitous depressions and financial panics.⁷ The vagaries of these business cycles produced social crises. If the uppermost echelons of Westchester society remained reasonably secure during this era of economic turbulence, the social and economic strata beneath them proved more vulnerable and liable to collapse. The financial well-being of farmers, artisans, small businessmen, and professionals fluctuated with the tempestuous economic cycles. Likewise, factory workers, day laborers, and farm hands suffered from any adverse financial winds that shook their precarious fiscal stability.

Across the nation, Americans of the middle and upper-classes feared the

⁷The depression which followed the Panic of 1873, during which 18,000 businesses failed and the unemployment rate reached thirteen percent, had subsided by 1880 when the WTH was founded. Between 1884 and 1887 during a less severe recession, the rate of unemployment only reached seven to eight percent. The Depression of 1893 saw an unemployment rate of over eighteen percent. Even as it began to ebb in 1897, the rate remained close to fourteen and a half. When the depression lifted, inflation battered the nation. Prices rose sharply between 1897 and 1916. Paul Finkleman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001) vol.2, s.v. "Panics and Depressions," 468-473. Stanley I. Kutler, ed., *Dictionary of American History*, 3rd. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2003), vol.III, s.v. "Financial Panics," 365-367.

Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 22-23.

millions of unemployed and striking workers. In 1889, the *New York Times* described strikers as "sullen knots of men gathered on every corner in the morning," engaged in conflicts with the police. In Westchester, those who lived in the magnificent residences of the county experienced the same uneasiness. Washington Irving's nieces complained to visitors that "the railroad, just below the house (Sunnyside), was infested with tramps," roving bands of unemployed and homeless men, who alarmed the women. Some local towns dealt with the perceived menace of these men by imprisoning them. *The Mount Kisco Recorder* reported in January 1897 that the town of Peekskill was "entertaining 150 hobos in its lockup." For the homeless and impoverished, jail may have been a reasonable way to keep warm and nourished. Some may even have considered jail less demeaning than accepting alms. The father of WTH inmate Charles Prince told the Home's Superintendent James W. Pierce that he preferred to serve time in the White Plains jail rather than enter the County Poorhouse.⁸

⁸New York Times (hereafter "Times"), February 1, 1889, 1. Joshua Freeman, *et al*, *Who Built America: Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society*, vol. Two: *From the Gilded Age to the Present* (New York: Pantheon, 1992), 137-8, 144.

Jennie Prince Black, *I Remember: A Short and Intimate Sketch of the Dignified Seventies, the Elegant Eighties, and the Gay Nineties in . . . the Hudson Valley in the Vicinity of Sunnyside, the Home of Washington Irving . . .* (New York: Claydon Print, 1938), 16-17, 20.

Mount Kisco Recorder, January, 1897, in Renoda Hoffman Scrapbook, Box 2, vol.1, 106 and 134, at the WCHS.

WTH Ledger 15:8 (October 18, 1887).

The Local Visiting Committee for the Westchester County Poorhouse noted "a growing dislike among the worthy poor to accept a refuge in the Poorhouse, even when dire necessity seems to leave nothing else available to them," in "First Annual Report of the Local Visiting Committee for the Westchester County Poorhouse to the Secretary of the State Charities Aid Association," dated February 4, 1873 (New York: Cushing, Bardua), (hereafter "First Annual Report"), 4.

If financial instability increased the anxiety of the upper classes, it had a ruinous effect on the poor. Unemployment statistics do not reveal the depth of misery experienced by Westchester's part-time and seasonal workers. For them, even good times presented a financial challenge to survival. Managing at subsistence level left little latitude for emergencies - economic, marital, or medical.

The families of Westchester's laboring poor employed various strategies to make ends meet, to keep from starving, and to stay out of jail or the poorhouse. A Peekskill stove worker recalled:

These winter layoffs in the stove foundries worked great hardship on the [iron] moulders' families. Many exhausted their savings, and . . . had to be carried by the grocers and meat markets where they regularly traded . . . Men took their children's sleds and went out to the Hudson River where the net fisherman had piled up sturgeon like cordwood, and brought back, free, all they could. . . Sturgeon was called 'Albany Beef' and kept many a family from starving.⁹

Farmers made shoes and harvested ice during the winter months. Housewives took in sewing and boarders; some even accepted unrelated toddlers for the small stipend they brought with them.¹⁰ Some families sent their older children out to work while keeping younger siblings in school. During an era

⁹Quoted in Stephen J. Friedman, "Industrialization, Immigration, and Transportation to 1900," in *Westchester County: The Past Hundred Years, 1883-1983*, ed., Marilyn E. Weigold (The Westchester County Historical Society, 1984) (hereafter "*Westchester County*"), 86.

¹⁰One Westchester family designated the one-year-old girl in their home as a "charity child;" others identified unrelated children under the age of three as boarders. United States Census for 1880 (hereafter "1880 Census").

when middle-class youngsters had begun to benefit from prolonged childhood and extended education, poor families continued to rely on their children's wages and unpaid labor. Most important for their survival, Westchester families helped each other, taking in widowed and orphaned relatives, elderly parents and in-laws, siblings, cousins, and grandchildren when necessary.

A breadwinner's lack of work could be devastating, but the loss of a parent had even worse consequences. The death, serious illness, or abandonment of a parent was more likely to precipitate a child's commitment to an institution than poverty alone. Those least able to cope with problems resulting from illness or poverty, often widowed or deserted women, entered the Poorhouse with infants and toddlers. Others, whose extended families failed to help, placed their children in institutions, often hoping that they could resolve their current difficulties and retrieve them.

The social structure of Westchester County during the late nineteenth century did not resemble a layer cake of "haves" and "have nots" as much as a slice of *mille feuille* pastry. Its many layers rarely intersected, but cohered to each other and to those beneath them in a fragile construction held together by philanthropy, especially as it related to needy children. Many different levels of Westchester society converged and interacted at the WTH. Often the different groups cooperated and accommodated each other's needs and expectations. On occasion, the Home's ideology and procedures became subjects of contention between the WTH and the childrens' families, local

officials, and eventually the public. These struggles often addressed questions regarding the care of children with which the whole country grappled: whether institutions or placement in private homes offered better settings in which to raise dependent children; what sort of education children should receive and for how long; at what age should children be expected to earn their own way; and what constituted appropriate discipline for children.

The WTH represented a particular vision of caring for dependent children that was on its way out. Like many earlier philanthropists, the officers and managers of the WTH were well-born volunteers. Only their superintendent for twenty-five years, James W. Pierce, was answerable to anyone. He had no formal education nor any training for his position. Pierce not only willingly implemented the policies of the managers, but also shared their perspective. The managers of the WTH, firm in their belief that they knew what was best for the Home, persisted in implementing their vision without recourse to professional advice, a characteristic of the Progressive era that was beginning to overtake them. In some respects, the Home's management attempted to come to terms with the modern era, but concentrated mainly on improvements to the Home's physical plant. Constrained by their self-assurance and their class bias, they ignored newer institutional trends in housing, education, and discipline.

The children in this study demonstrated that they had a conflicting conception of how they should be treated. By running away they showed how

much they disagreed with the Home's overall conception and its operation. WTH inmates publicized disciplinary practices that the WTH retained from an earlier era. By exposing their abuse they precipitated scandals that outraged the public. The scandals also confirmed that the Home's policies conflicted with newly-evolving standards about the treatment of children.¹¹

Each layer of Westchester society had its own reasons for hoping that the institution would solve the problems it considered most pressing. The officers, board members, and volunteers at the WTH and many local officials, attorneys, and bankers involved with the Home represented a complex network of distinguished Protestants bound together by family connections, social relations, common religious affiliations, and alliances made through various commercial, civic, benevolent, and cultural organizations.¹² The wives and

¹¹Less favorable depictions of the WTH appeared both in New York City and in local newspaper accounts of various scandals connected with the Home and Superintendent Pierce's administration of it. One scandal occupied a New York Supreme Court Hearing that lasted for nineteen months and included the testimony of 115 witnesses. The official court record of the proceedings and the referee's decision reveal a great deal about the children's reactions to their treatment at the Home. The court record includes testimony from inmates at the Home, alumni, volunteers, and people who worked at the WTH in various capacities. Newspaper articles covering the hearing included additional affidavits and statements that the official excerpts of the court record omitted.

Westchester historians Alvah French and Renoda Hoffman kept scrapbooks of newspaper clippings from this era. The WCHS has forty-two French scrapbooks and over fifty-five Hoffman scrapbooks. Other than the *New York Times*, the nineteenth-century newspapers used in this study came from these scrapbooks or other records of the WCHS.

¹²The Metropolitan Opera presented its first performance in New York City in 1883, shortly after the WTH began accepting destitute children. Many who held boxes at the Metropolitan had homes in the neighboring Westchester communities of Irvington and Tarrytown. Some had moved from New York City to Westchester; others straddled both worlds. Among these, William Rockefeller, Cyrus Field, Robert Hoe, an inventor and manufacturer of sewing machines, and Jay Gould generously supported the new institution. Eric Homberger, *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age* (New Haven: Yale University, 2002), 112-115, 231-232.

daughters of industrialists and financiers who contributed the most in time and money to the WTH reached upward to the descendants of early New York "aristocracy" and downward to the well-respected but less socially significant Westchester clergy, professionals, and merchants for assistance in founding and running the institution, locating homes for WTH inmates, and supervising those already placed in communities throughout the county. Whether or not these groups socialized with each other or even regarded themselves as members of the same social class, they joined easily to aid and influence those whom they considered beneath them. Concern for dependent children elicited the most generous impulses of Westchester's upper classes. It also evoked fears about the possibility of class unrest. The officers and managers of the WTH focused these conflicting emotions on their inmates, whom they believed they had the power to control, re-educate, and protect from becoming degenerate adults. As a group they were well pleased with their own efforts on behalf of the children of the less privileged. Many attributed any subsequent lack of success to what they considered the shortcomings of the children, their deplorable backgrounds, or their poor upbringing. In addition to their most charitable intentions and sincere concern for the children in their care, those who founded and ran the WTH did so confident in the sense of superiority that their own backgrounds and upbringing fostered.¹³

¹³WTH Annual Reports that cover the period from 1880 to the Home's closing in 1908 present the public face of the institution and information about its founders, managers, superintendent, volunteers, and donors. They also reveal evidence of the Home's ideology and

Westchester tradesmen, farmers and dairymen, doctors and dentists, ministers and housewives, who also contributed to the Home, were of lower social status and less prosperous than the elite founders of the Home. But they too considered themselves good Christians bent on good deeds, especially when they took WTH children into their homes. However, providing a home for an unfortunate child was not their only motivation.¹⁴ Members of the middle-classes also suffered from the financial instability that affected America during the latter half of the century. They often needed a helping hand, a servant who would not expect payment, a laborer with few alternative options. Like their wealthier acquaintances, they wanted servants, but preferred not to pay for them.¹⁵

Families who made use of the Home often did so after other alternatives broke down. The 1880 Census confirms that nineteenth-century Westchester families in distress turned to more secure family members as a first step in difficult times. When that did not work out, some parents boarded their

attitude toward its charges.

¹⁴Letters included among the documents of Westchester Justice-of-the-Peace Isaiah T. Williams, a chairman of the WTH Placement Committee, relate details about the placement and oversight of WTH inmates sent to private homes. Isaiah Thornton Williams Papers, 1833-1918, Section I.D. Personal Correspondence (Container 111), Mss. and Archives Section, New York Public Library (hereafter "Williams Papers.") My thanks go to Elaine Massena, Principal Archivist at the Westchester County Archives and Records Center (hereafter "Westchester Archives") for directing me to this source.

¹⁵Despite claims that the WTH placed children in good homes, most families that repeatedly took WTH inmates and returned them complained that the child was "too small to perform the work required." Since the county did not pay families to provide homes for the children at this time (as in foster care), most of these families expected children as young as six or seven to work for them.

youngsters so that they could keep working or found older children live-in positions with other families. Placing children in an institution was their final recourse. When necessary, families of the laboring classes learned to manipulate the system to their advantage. Parents and other guardians, who could no longer care for a child, quickly discovered how to locate an official who would agree to commit the youngster to the Home. The families of inmates also learned to employ the vocabulary regarding dependent children developed by the upper-classes and use it for their own purposes. They realized that labeling children "dishonest" or "uncontrollable" assured them a better chance of admission to the WTH than confessing that a father or a stepfather had no work.

In addition to children committed to the Home because of the death, illness, incarceration, or abandonment of parents or guardians, poor and otherwise troubled families committed their children when extended family aid or alternative care disintegrated. Parents also brought in youngsters in need of medical care that families could not afford, those who needed protection or a respite from family tensions, and those whom they could not control. While the underlying objectives of the different levels of Westchester society may have differed, all agreed on one thing - the need to provide care for children whose families could not.

Westchester philanthropists were neither unique nor especially innovative in their response to the problem of children needing community care.

Concerned Americans of means had sought institutional solutions for orphaned and destitute children since early in the nineteenth century. The War of 1812 and Indian attacks left many children orphaned or without care. The construction of orphan asylums began in earnest during the cholera epidemics of the 1830s, and the crises created by deadly epidemics and warfare continued to spur the founding of new institutions. In 1832, cholera ravaged Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, and cities in New York and New Jersey. In 1849 the Gold Rush in California generated a need for asylums, as children who lost parents had moved far from extended families in the East and mid-west. By mid-century a huge urban immigration had the same effect. After the Civil War, homes for soldiers' orphans appeared across the country. Between the Civil War and 1890, the population of America doubled, but the number of institutions for children in America tripled.¹⁶ During the latter half of the nineteenth century, a number of New York City institutions for children moved to Westchester in a quest for less expensive real estate and a healthier environment.

But Westchester had its own indigent children. In 1875 New York State legislation mandated the removal of children from almshouses, and the conditions which local children endured at the Westchester County poorhouse

¹⁶Timothy A. Hacsí, *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 12, 22, 26.

For a more detailed description of the founding of private orphanages and temporary asylums during the nineteenth century, see Homer Folks, *The Care of Destitute, Neglected, and Delinquent Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 43-71.

induced a group of prominent and well-to-do residents to seek a better solution for the care of the Protestant youngsters among them. In 1880 the WTH opened, the sixth facility for children in Westchester County and the first specifically designated for all Protestant children in need.

The Wartburg Orphans' Farm School had been constructed in 1866 on 100 acres in Mount Vernon for the care of the orphans of Union soldiers, but only those who were also the offspring of members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. A number of other Westchester institutions had transferred from New York City or were offshoots of asylums there. The New York Infant Asylum established summer quarters in Mount Vernon in 1878 for foundlings and children under the age of two. In 1880, the existing institutions for children in Westchester county also included the following Catholic homes: St. Vincent de Paul, founded in Tarrytown in 1868; St. Michael's Home for Wayward Girls, opened in Mamaroneck in 1868; Boland Farm, established in 1871 in Cortlandtville (near Peekskill) to teach farming to nearly 100 of the older boys from the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum in New York City; St. Patrick's Male Orphan Asylum in Peekskill, with 103 pupils of predominantly Irish descent between the ages of eight and eighteen; and St. Joseph's Home for Poor Children, founded in Peekskill in 1879 by the Missionary Sisters of the Order of St. Francis. In 1884, St. Joseph's housed 400 children on its fourteen-acre campus. By the 1930s, fifty orphanages, day nurseries, homes for wayward girls, and children's hospitals operated in Westchester, reflecting a similar trend

throughout the country.¹⁷ See Appendix A for a listing of "Westchester County Institutions for the Care of Children During the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries."

Although most institutions that cared for children first opened in urban settings, the WTH began in a refurbished farmhouse in the rural community of Pleasantville, New York. Unlike the majority of asylums founded in response to crises arising from deadly epidemics, warfare, or immigration, the WTH was created in response to New York State legislation that forbade keeping children over the age of two in almshouses and a local concern that young poorhouse inmates needed better care than they had been receiving. The WTH also differed from the majority of other American institutions in that it admitted

¹⁷Contemporary sources regarding dependent children during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are very rich. The 1875 report of William Letchworth, Commissioner of the New York State Board of Charities, pre-dated the WTH, but offers a contemporary view of other New York State institutions that cared for children. William P. Letchworth, Commissioner of the New York State Board of Charities, *Homes of Homeless Children: A Report on Orphan Asylums and Other Institutions for the Care of Children* (January 1876).

Annual Reports of the New York State Board of Charities inspections furnish more complete investigations of the WTH and provide a comparison with other similar institutions.

Sources for other New York institutions provide a way of examining dependent children from similar social and economic backgrounds. See Henry P. Phelps, "The Albany Orphan Asylum, established 1829: What it is Doing for God and Little Children" (Albany:Albany Engraving, 1893).

"The History of the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Mount Vernon, New York (1866-1979)" unpublished, 1972 (hereafter "History of Wartburg"), in the WCHS. John G. Wintien, "The Village of Mount Vernon, New York from 1851 to 1891," Historical Pamphlet No. 2, Mount Vernon Public Library, 1940, 32.

"Chronology of Children's Institutions," in WCHS publication "Mindful of Children: A Photographic Exhibition of Westchester Institutions Serving Children, 1828-1940, 26 September 1993 to 2 January 1994," (hereafter "Mindful of Children"). J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Westchester County, New York Including Morrisania, Kings Bridge, and West Farms Which Have Been Annexed to New York City* (Philadelphia: L.E. Preston, 1886; reprint in two volumes Camden, ME: Picton Press, 1992) vol.II, 398, 400, 754-755. Maureen McKerna, "Know Your Westchester," in Scrapbooks, vol. 2, 211 at the WCHS.

1880 Census for Cortlandt, District 87.

children of color. Many orphanages throughout the country refused to accept African-American children. Across America, racism impeded the placement of non-white children in private homes as well. The WTH not only admitted these children, but had no difficulty placing them in county homes. This further demonstrates that most Westchester households accepted WTH inmates as unpaid helpers, rather than as additions to their families.¹⁸

However, in many ways the WTH resembled the orphan asylums that multiplied across the nation during the nineteenth century. The WTH was privately founded and managed, although it received the largest percentage of its funding from the county Superintendents of the Poor. It began by serving a local population, and local authorities had the final decisions about admissions and discharges. Like the majority of such institutions, the WTH proved flexible in providing both temporary care and longer terms of asylum for children who did not return to their families or were too young to be placed out.¹⁹ Women of wealth and position were the primary force behind the WTH, as they were throughout the country. The female founders of the WTH enlisted the backing of men of means and influence, the support and labor of middle-class volunteers, the cooperation of civic and religious leaders, and the good will of the Home's neighbors.

¹⁸Hacsi, 21-22.

¹⁹Hacsi, 41-42. Some WTH funding came from local Boards of Education when the Home accepted truants, and a few families paid small amounts to help defray the costs of their children's board.

The WTH began in a limited way with a small number of children housed on a farm. In its early days, both the children and their caretakers were local people, and this provided a shield of community oversight and protection as well as support. Over time, both the inmate population and the manner of handling them changed. The numbers of children increased greatly, and the Home drew inmates from a wider area, including New York City, other New York counties, and Connecticut. The majority of extra-county imports were male, and they were older on average than local inmates. Many of them were truants exported to the WTH, which had been designated legally qualified for their commitment. These factors increased the difficulty of providing adequate housing, clothing, education, and medical care and of managing both inmates and employees.

The increased inmate population required a larger staff, some of whom were also strangers to the county, to the Board of Managers, and to the children. For the Superintendent and the Board, supervising the performance and behavior of attendants and trying to staff WTH classes became as difficult as keeping the children in line. The WTH responded by continuing to maintain strict control of inmates' behavior and environment.²⁰ Although the largest

²⁰To balance my discussion of the discipline (and its excesses) used on nineteenth-century children as demonstrated at the WTH, the New Rochelle "Principal's Black Book" of punishments, dated 1871-1887, offers evidence of the range of behaviors and punishments of schoolchildren in the general population of the county.

Annual Reports of the Westchester County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (hereafter "Westchester SPCC") provide information on the sort of mistreatment children suffered in their own homes and neighborhoods, and in their workplaces. They also offer additional family background and circumstances surrounding children's commitment to Westchester institutions, and their removal from unsuitable placement homes because of ill-

influx of children occurred after the New York Compulsory Education Law of 1895 mandated the institutionalization of truants, the major scandal occurred that same year. During the hearing that followed, the public learned that the WTH had been using its most controversial disciplinary methods for many years. This illustrates that the Home's ideology had crystallized early and independently, rather than in response to the challenge of dealing with a larger group of inmates.

As a result of the increase in population, the WTH also required larger facilities. After a fire levelled its wood-shingled residence, the Home constructed imposing brick structures that were not only fireproof, but more institutional in design. This contrasted with newer trends taking place in the county and across the nation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Other Westchester institutions, including those that transferred from New York City, had begun to house children in small cottages, offering more individual attention by parental-type caregivers.²¹ The WTH continued to herd its residents into one large building and to maintain order by insisting on silence

treatment. The WCHS has in its archives seventeen quarterly reports of the Westchester SPCC, dating from June 1902 to December 1906. During that period, the SPCC processed 922 cases.

²¹Local institutions that adopted the cottage system, originally developed in Germany in 1833, included: St. Christopher's in Dobbs Ferry in 1890; Graham-Windham, which evolved from the Orphan Asylum and the Society for Half-Orphan Children, in Hastings-on-Hudson in 1899; the Jewish Protectory and Aid Society established the Hawthorne Cedar Knolls School for delinquent boys in Hawthorne in 1906; the New York Catholic Protectory, an immense institution with huge dormitories, which constructed the Lincoln Agricultural School in Somers in 1907 and moved its entire establishment to Westchester in 1938; the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society opened the Pleasantville Cottage School in Pleasantville in 1912; and Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial in Yonkers, 1928. "Mindful of Children," unpaginated.

and wielding the whip.

My work examines how and why this institution developed in the way it did. It explores the complicated and varied ways in which the WTH served the many levels of society in Westchester County and vice versa. It also reconstructs the experiences of children who were sent or brought to the WTH. By doing so, it seeks to gain a better sense of their home lives and family backgrounds, as well as their education and work conditions. In addition, it exposes how children from working households, especially those residing in suburban and rural areas, coped with their circumstances and expressed their responses to their vulnerable position in society.

By focusing on the experiences of children who entered the WTH, this study intersects with three main bodies of literature: the histories of children, of families, and of institutions. To a lesser extent, it addresses scholarship relating to children's labor, education, discipline, and sexuality. The majority of sources from the nineteenth century document the lives of children of the white middle classes. Consequently historians have focused their attention on the evolution of the prolonged childhoods and extended education that those children enjoyed. Most of this scholarship concentrates on adults' ideas about children and childhood.²²

²²Bernard Wishy, in *The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of Modern American Child Nurture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968), identifies a turning point in family relations and child nurture, which initiated more benign attitudes toward children and more loving methods of child-rearing during the 1830s.

Viviana Zelizer describes the cultural process of the "sacralization" of children that occurred between the 1870s and the 1930s, transforming the economically valuable child into

More recent works have begun to focus on the children themselves.²³

Scholars who have examined children from working class and poor families concentrate mainly on children in the cities. Several credit these youngsters with skill and imagination in their attempts to control their working experiences.²⁴ My study expands on works about urban working children by looking at the lives of children from similar backgrounds in suburban and rural areas. The WTH served a suburban county that combined small pockets of urban manufacturing and farmland - almost a microcosm of the country as a whole - and thus offers the opportunity to evaluate the children of seldom studied populations.

the economically useless but sentimentally priceless child in *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985).

Joseph Kett examines the white, native-born male in *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America, 1790 to the Present* and contributes the concept of "semi-dependence" to describe youngsters periodically sent off to school or as servants or seasonal workers before their final departure from home. However Kett overlooks a father's legal right to his offspring's labor and wages until the age of twenty-one as a factor that determined final departure.

²³Harvey J. Graff concentrates on middle-class Anglo-Saxon males from the mid-eighteenth century to the early twentieth, in *Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).

E. Anthony Rotundo investigates the concept of masculinity that developed during the nineteenth century among white, middle-class Northern males in *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993).

²⁴David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and At Play* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985) and "Children and Commercial Culture: Moving Pictures in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950*, eds., Elliott West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1992) (hereafter *Small Worlds*), 14-25.

Vincent R. DiGirolamo's "Crying the News: Children, Street Work, and the American Press, 1830s-1920s," Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1997 revisits the urban newsboys of Nasaw's work.

Christine Stansell treats the children in her study as contributing members of working-class urban society in *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

Studies that investigate children's labor usually do so in the context of industrial work. Most labor historians, like the child labor laws they examine, ignore agricultural and domestic work, which the majority of children performed in America during the nineteenth century, whether they received payment or not. In its examination of the work expected of youngsters sent out from the WTH, this study explores children's economic contributions to the homes and farms of their own families and others whom they served as temporary workers. By analyzing data from the 1880 Census, it compares the work of youngsters who resided with their own families with that of children from institutions such as the WTH, who had been placed in private homes.²⁵

As the subject of women's history has developed in recent decades, children have begun to appear in historical literature; frequently the two have been combined and/or submerged in histories of the family. Children are seldom central agents in these histories.²⁶ Conflating children's history with

²⁵In *Hostages of Fortune: Child Labor Reform in New York State* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965), Jeremy Felt surveys child labor reform in New York State during the early decades of the twentieth century.

Although David E. Schob writes about boys and girls who performed farm and house work, the youngsters he examines did not come from institutions. Since the majority of them worked their families' farms or hired themselves out to neighbors on a seasonal basis, they were less likely to work for strangers. *Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1975).

²⁶Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg provide an overview of the social history of American families in *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York: The Free Press, 1988). The social "revolutions" they describe actually took place in more staggered and sporadic fashion than the title implies.

See also Elizabeth Pleck, *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of Social Policy Against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Philip J. Greven, Jr., *Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991); and Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, Boston 1880-1960* (New York:

family history denies that children have interests and activities outside their families and conflicting interests within them. Not only does each member of a family view that group differently, but strategies that might benefit a family might not serve the best interests of its individual children. Youngsters committed to the WTH had to cope with life outside their families, and negotiated on their own changing conditions and expectations as they travelled from family to institution to placement. Consequently, this inquiry can provide a re-evaluation of commonly held notions about children that family issues subsume.

Most histories of institutions for dependent children stress the roles of the middle-class reformers who founded or administered them.²⁷ Some newer institutional scholarship considers the strategies of indigent and working-class families who used state facilities and private institutions as a temporary refuge

Viking, 1988) for an exploration of the history of family violence.

²⁷David J. Rothman traces the remarkable growth of institutions in Jacksonian America to confine the "deviant and dependent" in *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971).

See also Anthony M. Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Robert M. Mennel, *Thorns and Thistles: Juvenile Delinquents in the United States 1825-1940* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1973) who specifically address juvenile delinquency; LeRoy Ashby, *Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890-1917* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984); and Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne, 1997).

Marilyn Irvin Holt examines the resettlement of thousands of poor children from eastern cities to the rural mid-west and west in *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992).

or a last resort in times of crisis.²⁸ Most recently, historians have begun to produce a mosaic of studies of orphanages, institutions that housed dependent rather than delinquent children (although those definitions were often blurred) in various American cities. In contrast to the social control theorists, who maintain that child welfare strategies during the nineteenth century oppressed dependent children, many of these recent works credit orphanages with providing a social benefit for poor families.²⁹ Although the majority of youngsters committed to the WTH were not considered delinquent, my work will build on those studies that take account of young prisoners' struggles to

²⁸Among the studies that include the viewpoints of working-class parents and their institutionalized children at the turn-of-the-century, see Mary E. Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

For similar studies of wayward girls, see Ruth M. Alexander, *The "Girl Problem": Female Sexual Delinquency in New York, 1900-1930* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), and Barbara Brenzel, *Daughters of the State: A Social Portrait of the First Reform School for Girls in North America, 1856-1905* (Cambridge, MIT, 1983).

See also Judith A. Dulberger, *"Mother Don't Fore the Best;" Correspondence of a Nineteenth-Century Orphan Asylum* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996).

Gunja San Gupta writes of the uses that African-American families in distress made of the New York House of Refuge in "Black and "Dangerous"?: African American Working Poor Perspectives on Juvenile Reform and Welfare in Victorian New York, 1840-1890," in *The Journal of Negro History*, vol. 86, no. 2 (Spring, 2001), 99-131.

²⁹Hyman Bogen, *The Luckiest Orphans: A History of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992).

Nurith Zmora's claim that orphanages sustained needy families by keeping siblings together and encouraging orphans to maintain close ties with their families may pertain to the three institutions she examined. Most American facilities separated siblings by gender, age, or placement with other families; and they strictly limited the frequency and duration of visitation by families. *Orphanages Reconsidered: Child Care Institutions in Progressive Era Baltimore* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994).

Kenneth Cmiel, *A Home of Another Kind: One Chicago Orphanage and the Tangle of Child Welfare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

See also Priscilla Clement, "Families and Foster Care: Philadelphia in the Late Nineteenth Century," in *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective*, Joseph M. Hawes and Ray N. Hiner, eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) and Hacsí, *Second Home*.

resist or conform to reformatory expectations and demands.

Historians who have concentrated on the management of institutions generally do not compare inmates with other children of their class or region. This work fills some of these gaps by examining in detail the 1880 Census for the Westchester towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, and Eastchester in order to determine how the educational and work experiences of children committed to the WTH compared to that of the general population.³⁰

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This study follows a thematic rather than a chronological approach and will consider the children's ages and genders throughout, as those factors greatly influenced both their behavior and how they were treated in all situations.

A prologue describes Westchester County's symbiotic relationship with New York City and outlines the situation at the county poorhouse that led to the founding of the WTH.

Chapter One, "The Establishment of the WTH" introduces the superintendent, founders, and supporters of the WTH, a group motivated by a combination of genuine concern for the needs of their charges and fear that they would end up badly unless trained to lives of virtue and hard work. It relates the backgrounds of the key figures at the WTH and their involvement in the Home. It also traces the development of The Home's management,

³⁰1880 Census for the towns of Bedford, Districts 83-86; Cortlandt, Districts 87-92; and Eastchester, Districts 93-97.

finances, and the formation of the committees that ran the institution.

The second chapter, "Commitment to the Home" examines the conditions that precipitated children's entry into the WTH. This affords an opportunity to explore the social position of Westchester's working people and the circumstances surrounding children's commitment, including family crisis, intervention by an overseer of the poor or the Westchester County SPCC, or sentencing by the courts. It explores the ways in which Westchester institutions served many levels of the community.

Chapter Three, "In the Home" evaluates the health and education of Westchester children, both in and outside of institutions. It addresses nineteenth-century tensions over the conflicting expectations that American children should be educated and that dependent children should work for their caretakers. This chapter considers who went to school in Westchester county and what kind of education they received, what New York State law dictated and to what extent the WTH and similar institutions observed those requirements.

Chapter Four, "Placement" contains an examination of the nineteenth-century debate over the benefits of institutionalization versus "placing out." It compares the legal and social implications of indenture as opposed to informal placements and contains a brief discussion of legal and improvised adoption used during this period. This chapter inquires into the nature of the domestic and agricultural work that Westchester children were expected to perform. It

addresses the inmates' multiple reactions to their circumstances, including demonstrations of adjustment, resistance, outright rebellion, and flight.

Chapter Five, "The Scandals" deals with the issue of adult responses to children's expressions of resistance or autonomy, namely varying degrees and types of discipline - in their families, schools, and institutions. This includes a discussion of some sexual undertones of discipline (especially as practiced at the WTH) as well as the excesses of discipline that led to the WTH scandals. The children in this study demonstrated a broad range of responses to discipline, depending on their age, gender, and inclination. Those who ran away gained more than deliverance from intolerable conditions. When youngsters ran away from the Home (one boy dragged ankle chains more than ten miles), they launched publicity that alerted their families and the public to conditions at the WTH. In defiance of WTH rules that forbade showing the results of beatings to anyone, a female inmate fled to the mother of the local district attorney to display her bruises, which prompted a formal hearing. An analysis of the children's reactions, evident in the Westchester sources, contributes to our knowledge not only of their understanding of the limits of their position in society, but also the degree to which children were willing to challenge those limits.

PROLOGUE

During the nineteenth century, New York City and rural Westchester County were involved in a relationship of mutual dependence. In this symbiosis, the city contributed strong and rapidly growing markets that the county sustained with food products and building materials. Westchester, bounded by the Hudson River on the west and Long Island Sound on the east, used the two waterways to transport its produce and animals, timber, bricks, and marble to the metropolis. Steamers also plied the waterways to carry ice cut from Westchester lakes and ponds to New York and Brooklyn. Beginning in 1842 with the completion of the Croton Dam and aqueduct, Westchester also served as New York's watershed. During this period the railroads reached upper Westchester, and county farmers availed themselves of the daily milk trains to the City. Many abandoned subsistence farming and turned to dairy production, developing New York's milkshed as well.³¹

³¹ With the construction of the Erie Canal in 1825, timber and produce from the midwest offered intense competition that led to an overall decline in the number of county farms and began Westchester's shift to dairying. Anita Inman Comstock records that the number of Westchester farms fell from 3,800 in 1855 to 2,991 in 1880, in "Rural Westchester to the Turn of the Century: Farmers, Squires and Just Plain Folk", in *Westchester County*, 25.

The major train lines followed the north-south waterways. The New York and Harlem Railroad, which followed the Bronx River, reached White Plains in 1844. Five years later, the New York and Hudson, which hugged the Hudson River shore, reached Peekskill, and the New York, New Haven, and Hartford opened in the eastern part of the county along Long Island Sound. The railroads also spurred a demographic shift, reversing the greatest concentration of population from the northern to the southern part of the county. By 1860, the county population had grown to 99,000 and its largest city was Yonkers. Stephen J. Friedman, 53-55. Susan Cochran Swanson and Elizabeth Green Fuller, *Westchester County, a Pictorial History* (Elmsford, NY: Westchester County Historical Society, revised fourth printing, 1998), 52-53. Alexander Shoumatoff, *Westchester: Portrait of a County* (New York: Coward, Mccann, and Geoghegan, 1979), 55-56.

Milk production was not only more lucrative, but yielded income for twelve months of the year. On the other hand, mixed agriculture required less of the farmer's time and labor on

Westchester's internal rivers, among them the Saw Mill, the Bronx, and the Croton and its tributaries provided the power for some of the county's earliest industries. Gristmills ground corn for meal and wheat for flour, and sawmills cut lumber both for local consumption and for export to New York and beyond. The Hudson River provided the claypits for extensive brickworks in Verplank and Croton, which contributed to New York's expansive growth, as did the county's quarries, which supplied the marble for the neoclassical public structures favored by New York City and the nation.³²

County industries such as brickmaking and quarry work, like farming and construction, were seasonal jobs. At mid-century, Westchester brickyards employed 1,100 men and boys, who produced 168 million bricks during a six-month season at wages of \$12 a month. Between 1888 and 1894, the

both a daily and an annual basis. Milk production required larger herds that had to be milked twice a day compared to cows raised for the production of butter and cheese, that were only milked once daily. In addition, farmers who replaced subsistence agriculture for dairying had to purchase food for their families and fodder for their animals, thus becoming more dependent on markets and consequently more vulnerable to depressions. William P. McDermott, "Rushing the Milk Train: The Harlem Valley in Transition, 1845-75," unpublished paper delivered at a Conference on New York State History, June 16, 2000. E. Melanie DuPuis points out that the pure milk campaigns of the nineteenth century simultaneously sought a more sanitary and healthful product than that produced by swill cows in New York City and encouraged adult consumption of a food previously used only by small children. *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 5, 18, 21, 67, 147. Scharf also describes the move to dairying, vol.II, 576.

³²Colin T. Naylor, Jr., "Millions of Bricks," in *The Westchester Historian*, vol.43, no. 3, 54-58.

Marble from quarries in Tuckahoe, Sing Sing (now Ossining), Hastings, and Thornwood built the Washington monument and the Capitol as well as major edifices in New York City. White Tuckahoe marble was used for St. Patrick's Cathedral, the New York Stock Exchange, the New York Life Insurance Building, and the Union Dime Savings Building in Manhattan, and City Hall in Brooklyn. Louis Torres, *Tuckahoe Marble: The Rise and Fall of an Industry, 1822-1930* (Fleishmans, New York: Harbor Hill, 1976), 58.

J. Thomas Scharf, vol. I, 524. Swanson and Fuller, 52, 56.

average daily wage climbed to \$1 or \$2. Although by 1880, skilled stonecutters could earn as much as \$3.50 a day, the majority of quarrymen worked for a daily wage of \$1.25. In good times, the industry employed between 300 and 500 men.³³

Home industries, such as shoemaking and sewing shirts, declined by mid-century as small factories opened around the county. Most of these employed tens, rather than hundreds, of workers. One factory in Eastchester made cartridges under government contract during the Civil War, converted into a carriage factory after the war, and later manufactured pens. The Otis Elevator factory, the largest employer in Yonkers, expedited the construction of New York's multi-story buildings. Elisha G. Otis, who designed a safety brake for elevators so that they could be used for passengers as well as freight, opened his factory in 1853. By 1870, when the first elevator was installed in Lord and Taylor department store in New York, it carried 10,000 passengers during its first three days of operation.³⁴

³³Naylor, 54. Torres, 58. Scharf, vol. II, 414-419.

³⁴Actual skyscrapers, such as the eleven-story Tower Building erected in 1889 and the World Building with its sixteen stories required steel frame construction. Swanson and Fuller, 104.

The Brandreth Pill Factory, which opened in Sing Sing in 1837, made millions of pills and patent medicines each year. The Spencer Optical company operated in Mount Kisco, and the American Lens Company employed thirty people in Katonah. Foundries in the Peekskill area produced stoves, furnaces, and plows. By 1884 eight stove works employed over 700 men. Westchester also had brewing companies, chemical companies, an emory plant, Hastings Pavement, Standard Oilcloth in Buchanan, and National Conduit Manufacturing (later known as Anaconda). Lord and Burnham Greenhouse operated in Irvington. Tarrytown had three plants: the G & D Silver shoe factory built in 1871 that employed 150 - 175 men and women; a pottery works that made majolica and Ivory ware; and a roller mill with a capacity of 300 barrels a day all operated in the village. Eastchester factories made pianos, glue, jewelry, and leather gloves. Yonkers had sugar refineries, silk manufacture, leatherworks, Smith's Soda

As part of this relatively amiable relationship, portions of Westchester fell into New York's acquisitive embrace. New York had not only appropriated Westchester land for the construction of its aqueduct, the dams created by its water systems engulfed Westchester farmlands and towns.³⁵ As the city expanded and consolidated, it also spread northward. By 1895, Greater New York absorbed former Westchester communities of West Farms, the town of Westchester, Morrisania, Kings Bridge, and other southern portions of Pelham, Yonkers, and Mount Vernon, most of which became part of the Bronx. Although New York's land appropriation led to an overall decline in the population of Westchester, many former residents viewed consolidation in a positive light. They appreciated that New York City offered superior public services, such as police and fire departments, water and sewer systems, and public schools.³⁶

During the nineteenth century more than 1,300 mainly Irish immigrants had come to Westchester seeking jobs on the construction of public works.

Water factory, and the Alexander Smith Carpet Company, which opened in 1865; one of its partners invented the power loom. French, 64-68, 88-104. Scharf, vol. II, 413, 576, 720.

³⁵Construction of the Old Croton Dam, completed in 1842, inundated hundreds of acres. Thousands of acres more flooded between 1880 and 1907 when the Kensico Water System, including the Kensico and the Byram Lake Dams, and the Croton Water System, consisting of the Titicus, Muscoot, and New Croton Dams and the Amawalk Reservoir were built. Flooding from the New Croton Dam drove the entire village of Katonah to relocate with all its homes and businesses. Factories starved of water power by streams diverted into the new water systems also moved or went out of business. Swanson and Fuller, 88.

³⁶Scharf, vol. I, 522. Marjorie Chamberlain Herrmann Renino, *The Guide to Genealogical Research for Westchester County, New York* (Elmsford: Westchester County Historical Society Publication, 2003), 204.

After completion of the aqueducts and dams, many remained in the county and found employment laying railroad track, quarrying stone, making brick, and as day laborers.³⁷ Despite the large numbers of immigrants, during the late nineteenth-century the population of Westchester County remained predominantly native-born. From a total population of 109,000 residents in 1880, the native-born population numbered over 85,000 (or 78%). The foreign-born consisted of 14,500 Irish, 6,500 Germans, and 2,600 identified as "English and all others."³⁸

In addition to these laborers, New York City exported two other groups to Westchester - many of its wealthiest and most powerful citizens and its poorest and most vulnerable children. For both groups, the county offered a beautiful, verdant, uncrowded, and healthful atmosphere. Many of New York's oldest and most illustrious families had settled in Westchester since the Revolution or earlier. Among them, the family of Philip Schuyler, the Revolutionary War general, was one of the wealthy clans of Dutch descent that populated the banks of the Hudson. The descendants of John Jay, the first Supreme Court Justice who grew up on a farm in Rye, and those of Alexander Hamilton remained on their family estates in Rye, Bedford, and Irvington. By mid-century, this enclave of landed gentry added to the allure of the county for an influx of wealthy and socially-aspiring New Yorkers. The newcomers built

³⁷Swanson and Fuller, 69.

³⁸Scharf, vol. I, 522.

gentlemen's farms and country estates with gardens and hothouses, stables and riding trails, and piers for their yachts. They constructed additional sites for their private recreation - tennis courts, exclusive golf courses, and yachting clubs on Long Island Sound.³⁹ Some of the new residents had familiar names such as William and John D. Rockefeller, Jay Gould, the financier who became infamous as a robber baron, Cyrus Field, promoter of the transAtlantic cable, and Samuel Tilden, former governor of New York state. A sense of *noblesse oblige* motivated many of these privileged New Yorkers, whether they located in Westchester for the summer or year round.⁴⁰ Many chose to connect through charitable work with those at the opposite end of the social spectrum -

³⁹Alvah P. French, ed., *History of Westchester County, New York* (New York: Lewis Historical, 1925), 940. Scharf observed that "many wealthy inhabitants of New York have summer residences in the county, and not a few prefer to live here both winter and summer," in vol. I, 521 and vol. II, 192.

Mrs. Malcolm Murray recalled the display of affluence in the Hudson valley between 1870 and 1890. "About 5 o'clock every afternoon carriage after carriage would come down Broadway and turn into Main Street on their way to the late afternoon trains, carriages such as you have seldom seen, flawless, drawn by matched pairs with coats like satin, their silver mounted harness gleaming, the coachmen and footmen dressed in white moleskin breeches and boots and gaily colored coats, hunter green, navy blue, and plum. It was a thrilling sight." Quoted in Comstock, 30.

The founding members of the Larchmont Yacht Club, which opened in 1880, included financiers Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, and William K. Vanderbilt. Two years later, Jay Gould and friends founded the American Yacht Club in Rye for steam-powered yachts. St. Andrew's Golf Club, established in Yonkers in 1888, was the second oldest in the country. Swanson and Fuller, 125-128.

In 1896, General Philip Schuyler served as president of the Ardsley (Golf) Club, and both Rockefeller brothers, J.P. Morgan, and Commodore Vanderbilt sat on its Board of Governors. Ernest Griffen, ed., *Westchester County and Its People, A Record* (New York: Lewis Historical, 1948), vol. 1, 396.

⁴⁰Theodore Roosevelt addressed the boys of Groton, an exclusive boys' school, on their obligations to society, declaring that "much has been given you, therefore we have a right to expect much from you." Geoffrey C. Ward, *Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 193-194.

needy children who had been abandoned or abused, foundlings and orphans, youngsters who were sick, impaired or impoverished. Although their New York City counterparts entertained themselves lavishly while raising funds for the poor, Westchester philanthropists who supported the WTH were more serious and less self-indulgent. The original founders of the WTH were inspired by the dedicated group of women who established the Westchester County Poorhouse Visiting Committee, and like them had ties to the State Charities Aid Association.⁴¹

THE POORHOUSE VISITING COMMITTEE

In 1824 a New York state law required each of its counties to establish an institution for its destitute residents. Until this legislation, each town cared for its poor with varying degrees of solicitude. This change toward centralization reflected a national trend. Westchester County complied with the state law in 1828, constructing its Poorhouse on a 110 acre farm in the village of Eastview, town of Mt. Pleasant. The county hailed consolidation as a solution of efficiency and economy, since it eliminated duplication of effort and relieved individual townships of the expenses of poor relief. It also served to remove the destitute from the local public eye. By 1856 the Poorhouse accommodated 191 inmates in twenty rooms warmed by stoves and a furnace,

⁴¹M. H. Dunlop skewers the rich New Yorkers who chose to raise money for sick children while enjoying "a fine supper" and a "brilliant and fashionable concert" at the newly opened Waldorf Hotel during the depression of 1893. *Gilded City: Scandal and Sensation in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (New York: William Morrow, 2000), 18.

The first children to arrive at the WTH came from the Poorhouse.

with separate outbuildings for laundry and the isolation of the sick. Westchester farmers and householders could still obtain the labor of the able-bodied poor in exchange for housing, and many considered children able.⁴² However well-intentioned, each generation's reforms of the care and employment of Westchester's poor produced their own problems and drew the condemnation of subsequent observers, a pattern that would repeat itself throughout the century and beyond.⁴³

In 1856 the report of a New York State Senate committee described poorhouses around the state as "badly constructed, ill-arranged, ill-warmed, and ill-ventilated. The rooms are crowded . . . the air noxious." Statewide inmates received poor food and medical care and "unfit and vicious" teachers instructed the children. The report further disclosed that in the Westchester County Poorhouse, twenty-five "lunatics," eleven "idiots," two deaf and dumb and three blind inmates lived among the poor that year. Seventy-five of the residents had not reached the age of sixteen. The foreign-born comprised fifty-

⁴²French, 330-331. According to the "Westchester County Alms-House Report to the Board of Supervisors," dated November 8, 1830 by William Requa, Secretary, seventy-two children remained at the institution after twenty-one had been bound out allegedly with care taken "to get them good places." Reports of the Department of Social Services, Series 172-179, A-0249, no. 21 at the Westchester Archives.

⁴³Nina Bernstein maintains that generations of nineteenth and twentieth-century reformers critiqued previously acclaimed social welfare programs, dismantled them, and then saw them resurrected in subsequent waves of reform when their own innovations failed. *The Lost Children of Wilder: The Epic Struggle to Change Foster Care* (New York: Pantheon, 2001), XII, 24.

nine percent of the 191 inmates of the Poorhouse.⁴⁴

Before Arnell F. Dickinson became Overseer of the Poor in 1845, the Poorhouse did not register the names of children admitted or those discharged to county residents who sought free laborers. The identities of the children and those who took them were lost once the youngsters left the poorhouse premises, making it difficult for families to reunite and virtually impossible to monitor the treatment the children received.⁴⁵

The State Board of Charities reports for 1870 and 1871 urged additional reforms, particularly that special asylums should accomodate "those deprived of their reason, or of the use of any of their senses;" children should be separated from adults; and able-bodied paupers should be compelled to work.⁴⁶

In January 1872, twenty-four Westchester women met in Tarrytown,

⁴⁴In 1856, the twenty-six orphanages in New York State housed 2,816 children, 2,224 of whom had parents born abroad. "Excerpts from Report of Senate Committee appointed in 1856 to Visit All Charitable Institutions Supported by the State of New York," A-0249 (22) F Series 177 at the Westchester Archives, 2-4, 13.

In contrast, the Westchester Temporary Home for Protestant Children (the original name of the WTH) accepted only Protestant children. Since the immigrant Irish and Italian workers in the county were predominantly Catholic, most of their offspring went to Catholic institutions. The two surviving WTH Ledgers register nearly seventy-two percent of the 559 WTH inmates between 1884 and 1892 as "American."

According to the 1880 Census, two months after the Home opened all but one of its forty-four inmates (a boy born in Ireland) were born in New York State.

⁴⁵By 1880, the Address delivered at the meeting establishing the WTH observed that people who took children from the Poorhouse allegedly had to return with them once a year to show that they cared for them properly, 6.

⁴⁶First Annual Report, 4.

New York and established an organization that demanded such reforms in their county. They founded the Local Visiting Committee for the Westchester County Poorhouse (hereafter "Visiting Committee"). The public spirited citizens of Westchester County who organized the Visiting Committee acted at the suggestion of Louisa L. Schuyler, the descendant of two distinguished philanthropic Westchester families, the Schuylers and the Hamiltons. Louisa Schuyler and her sister Georgina had worked tirelessly for Civil War Relief. The Schuyler sisters grew up in New York City and the family estate near Dobbs-Ferry-on-Hudson, spent summers in Newport, and travelled in Europe. Their father, George Lee Schuyler an engineer and attorney, was a grandson of Revolutionary war general Philip Schuyler (their mother's great-grandfather). Both their parents were involved in the work of the New York Children's Aid Society. Their mother, Elizabeth Hamilton Schuyler was a granddaughter of Alexander and Betsey Schuyler Hamilton. Elizabeth Schuyler had been instrumental in founding the Woman's Central Association for Relief, one of the most important auxiliaries of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. After the war, the Schuyler sisters turned their attention to the reform of charitable and penal institutions. They recruited their neighbors and acquaintances in New York and Westchester society to serve the coalition of organizations that made up the State Charities Aid Association, which they

helped to organize in 1872.⁴⁷

The Schuyler and Hamilton women who sowed the seeds for the proliferation of associations for social reform after the Civil War came from the Hudson River aristocracy. These women acknowledged that the rights of their strata of society should be balanced by obligations to the less fortunate. They passed control for nurturing new organizations to women from slightly less prestigious families whose newer wealth derived from commerce, industry, and finance. Involvement in philanthropic works gave legitimacy to the aspirations of these women to prove themselves worthy of inclusion in the uppermost social class. The women of Westchester devoted much of their welfare work

⁴⁷Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Public Charities, State of New York, March 22, 1869, no.61, 64 quoted in Michael B. Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986), 34.

The first Alexander Hamilton's wife, Betsey Schuyler Hamilton founded the Graham School for orphaned children in 1806 in New York, and was the first president of its Board of Directors. The Graham School re-located to Hastings-on-Hudson in 1902. *American National Biography* (New York: Oxford, 1999), vol. 19, s.v. "Schuyler, Louisa Lee," by Lori D. Ginsberg, 458-459.

The Schuyler sisters' cousin Angelica, the wife of Alexander Hamilton, named for his illustrious grandfather, later worked on the Placement Committee of the WTH. Her daughter, Mrs. G. R. J. Bowdoin of Irvington served as chairman of the Committee on Adult Able-Bodied Paupers for the Visiting Committee. Angelica's father-in-law James Hamilton named the family's Irvington estate Nevis in honor of the island of his father's origin.

Lori D. Ginsberg notes that the leadership of the State Charities Aid Association replicated that of the Civil War Women's Central Association for Relief. Louisa Lee Schuyler served as vice-president and chairman of the executive committee. Her sister Georgina and several of the Woolsey sisters continued to work with her. *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 192.

Louisa Schuyler enlisted Mrs. Joseph Hobson as chairman of the committee to visit Bellevue Hospital in New York City. Elizabeth Hobson's report on the wretched conditions there resulted in the establishment of the Bellevue Training School for Nurses, which created a new profession for women and set new standards for trained and competent nurses. Edward T. James, ed., *Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1971) (hereafter "*Notable American Women*") vol. II, s.v. "Hobson, Elizabeth Christophers Kimball," by Anne L. Austin, 195-196.

to their local communities even though many had homes, church affiliations, and social lives in New York City as well. Perhaps they found greater opportunities for leadership in a slightly less august or less competitive arena. Both married and single women had parents and other family members involved in elite philanthropy. They passed that legacy along to husbands and offspring, siblings and cousins, neighbors, and fellow church members. They also engaged the efforts of middle-class women who provided the corps of workers who shared and executed their ideas of serving the community.

Westchester women from all ranks of society organized their benevolent activities in both formal and somewhat less ceremonious ways. In addition to sewing circles in nearly every church and missionary society, Ladies' Aid and Mothers' club, women established private philanthropic groups such as the Dorcas Society in Peekskill and local chapters of the Circles of Kings Daughters to aid the needy. Although the focus of their concern centered on traditional semi-domestic and semi-religious activities, some ventured into other arenas, stretching their imagination to arrive at new solutions for old problems. Women in Ossining established the Christ Child Day Nursery and Bethany Home. For a small fee, working mothers could leave their young children from 7:00 A.M. to 6:00 in the evening, six days a week, instead of placing them in institutions. Five cents a day ensured that working women could keep their jobs, have peace of mind regarding decent care for their offspring, and retain their dignity. The nursery also served as an informal employment agency, helping working-

class women to find housework and assisting organization members in hiring domestic helpers. The Bethany Home, situated on the nursery premises, housed a handful of destitute elderly women, who not only found a home and care in their local community, but avoided the stigma of the Poorhouse.⁴⁸

The women of Westchester extended their customary charitable visiting to include investigating and reporting as preludes to reforming conditions in institutions, procedures that would later be associated with progressive reformers. Yet, practicality rather than ideology motivated them. No quest for social justice that marked the progressive agenda activated them, and they were never more than untrained volunteers. As women, they felt that they knew what care should be given to the elderly, the ill, and the young. As citizens and taxpayers, they believed firmly that the able-bodied poor should be put to work. As privileged members of society, they were confident in their own ability to sort out what needed to be done without professional assistance or expert advice, the hallmarks of the progressive movement. Those who organized the Poorhouse Visiting Committee filled this description.

The female officers and board members of the Visiting Committee for the Westchester Poorhouse created sub-committees of their peers to concentrate

⁴⁸In 1895, Ossining women founded the Christ Child Day Nursery and Bethany Home (hereafter "Christ Child") in order "to keep up the courage of the struggling mother." Christ Child Fifteenth Report, 1911, 5. By 1909, 4,185 children had used the non-denominational nursery, with a daily average of twenty-four. Christ Child Thirteenth Report, 1909, 7. Women in New Rochelle also established a day nursery in 1895, and the following year Yonkers women started St. John's Day Nursery in their community. See Appendix A for a listing of additional day nurseries opened during the early twentieth century. Some of these facilities also located domestic work for the mothers who used the nurseries.

on three main areas of concern at the Poorhouse: the children, the hospital, and the able-bodied paupers. They added a group of "Advisor Members," which included five of their husbands and ten other prominent local residents, including a Tarrytown physician Dr. Horace Caruthers, Jessie Benton Fremont, the wife of John C. Fremont the "Pathfinder," and Robert Hoe, the nation's largest manufacturer of printing machinery. They also engaged ministers from the ten Protestant churches in the three adjacent Hudson River towns of Tarrytown, Irvington, and Dobbs Ferry among others as "Assistant Visitors." The clergymen not only assisted by visiting the Poorhouse and offering religious solace to the residents, they added the weight of moral force to the undertaking.⁴⁹

The Visiting Committee printed pamphlets outlining their goals and issued them to the county Superintendents of the Poor, the physician and the keeper of the Poorhouse, the Supervisors of the county, and the local clergy. All these

⁴⁹Five of the married women on the Visiting Committee involved their unmarried daughters in their work. Only Miss Anna Rockwell, the Committee's secretary, did not have a mother in the organization. First Annual Report, February 4, 1873, 2-3.

Jessie Fremont, the daughter of Thomas Hart Benton, a senator from Missouri, attended Miss English's school in Georgetown and read in the Congressional library. She helped to establish the Western Sanitary Commission during the Civil War. Fremont served as senator from California in 1850 and commanded the Department of the West during the war, after which the Fremonts lived at Pocahontas, their estate in Tarrytown. *Notable American Women*, vol.1, s.v. "Fremont, Jessie Ann Benton," by Allen Nevins, 668. Their daughter, listed only as "Miss Fremont," worked on the Visiting Committee's Committee on Children.

Robert Hoe held a prominent place in New York cultural life as a founder and trustee of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His printing machinery business employed 2,500 workers and had branches in Boston, Chicago, London, and Paris. In addition to his Manhattan residence, Hoe had a house in London, a large estate on the Hudson in Tarrytown, and a farm at Lake Waccabuc in northern Westchester. The sale of his book collection realized nearly \$2,000,000. *American National Biography*, vol.10, s.v. "Hoe, Robert," by Irene D. Neu, 924-925. *Who's Who in New York City and State* (hereafter "Who's Who in New York") (New York: L.R. Hamersly, first edition 1904), s.v. "Hoe, Robert," 308.

men initially approved the oversight committee's proposal to visit the Poorhouse, identify areas that needed improvement, and work to achieve those changes. Those in charge promised their "co-operation in the effort to remedy some of the existing evils, which they both acknowledged and regretted." However, once the women observed conditions and suggested actual changes in the administration of services or additional comforts for the sick and elderly, they confronted solid opposition from those same officials.⁵⁰

The Visiting Committee's efforts to improve the accommodations and management of the Poorhouse appear to have threatened male officials in charge of public funds and administration. Not only had members of the Visiting Committee invaded territory that men previously had controlled with little interference, they compelled those men to acknowledge that their management had been less than satisfactory. The men reacted by challenging the women's attempts to better conditions at the institution. According to their First Annual Report in 1873, each of the Visiting Committee's suggestions for reform met with resistance from the men in charge. The Westchester Board of Supervisors, who held the purse strings for the Poorhouse, insisted that they only had the power to spend money for projects approved by the Superintendents of the Poor. The women managed to wheedle windowshades and a few small bedside tables for the Poorhouse hospital from the Supervisors. In the absence of additional public funds, the Visiting Committee solicited

⁵⁰First Annual Report, 5-6.

donations of toys, newspapers, checkers and dominoes for the men and children, but removed the dice from the checkerboards and requested that the keeper's wife take charge of them on the Sabbath. Within three months, the Supervisors accused the Visiting Committee of introducing cards and dice which had been used for gambling purposes on the Sabbath.⁵¹

When the women disproved this allegation, the Supervisors shifted their attack and accused them of attempting to set aside the chaplain (a Methodist lay preacher), and engage other clergymen to replace him, without consulting the Superintendents of the Poor. The Visiting Committee countered that the clergymen in their organization merely offered to preach at the Poorhouse or officiate at burials occasionally, if needed.⁵²

Undaunted by the resistance they encountered, the Visiting Committee continued to behave in a manner that officials who were connected to the Poorhouse interpreted as more high-handed than high-minded. Although their motives may have been sincerely altruistic, the committee plunged forward with little regard for the apparently fragile egos of the men in charge. In one instance, Mrs. Sanford Cobb of Tarrytown, the chairman of the Hospital Committee, wrote directly to the Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital regarding an inmate of the Poorhouse with an eye disease. When she approached the part-time Poorhouse physician with information on the case, "to her surprise, the

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁵²*Ibid.*

doctor seemed very much aggrieved, and accused her of want of courtesy in making the application before consulting him." He also refused to consent to the man receiving specialized care outside his jurisdiction. Like so many others unsettled by the women's attempted reforms, the doctor seemed most concerned with protecting his influence and maintaining his reputation in the community. This seemed to echo the situation that occurred during the Civil War when the male medical establishment complained that philanthropic and nursing women trespassed on their territory.⁵³

In November 1872, less than a year after founding their organization, the Visiting Committee presented a petition to the Westchester Board of Supervisors, requesting an appropriation of \$5,000 in order to employ a resident physician, male and female nurses for the sick, male and female attendants for the insane, and a woman to take charge of the children at the Poorhouse. The petition also sought a proper classification of inmates (which must have lapsed after Mr. Dickinson's term of office), separation of the sexes, a separate room for confinements, additional compensation for the chaplain to provide Christian burials, an end to committing vagrants and criminals with the poor, and suitable food and clothing for the children.

In response, the Westchester Supervisors' Committee on the Poor

⁵³*Ibid.*, 10-11. The Cobbs belonged to the Second Reformed Dutch Church in Tarrytown, where they lived on their estate, Hillside. Scharf, 251.

During the Civil War, Dr. Francis Bacon disparaged the benevolent women who he thought did not seem to respect his professional status adequately. In turn, Civil War nurses complained that "no one knows . . . how much opposition, how much ill-will . . . women nurses endured" from army doctors. Lori Ginsberg, 147.

convened a hearing in early December. "Fourteen ladies" attended, as did three Superintendents of the Poor and the visiting physician to the Poorhouse. The Supervisors' final report sympathized with the women's goals and reproached the Superintendents, acknowledging that

the present method of caring for the poor has arrived . . . not from any system of forethought or calculation . . . the system of management pursued by the Superintendents and the keeper [of the Poorhouse] is copied from no other institution of its kind.

However, the Supervisors ultimately denied the petition, sidestepping responsibility for doing so with the explanation that although they appropriated the funds, the Superintendents made all rules and regulations for governing the institution. By the time the wife of the keeper of the Poorhouse complained that the Visitors "trespassed upon her time and kept her from other duties," and the Superintendents officially requested that the women cease visiting the Poorhouse as an organized body, the Visiting Committee's report bristled with indignation.⁵⁴

Although these women did not yet have the franchise themselves, they had great confidence in their privileges of citizenship. The women of the Visiting Committee claimed "their rights as citizens and tax-payers of Westchester County to visit its charitable institutions," and asserted that they continued their visits as usual. When local officials attempted to expel them from the Poorhouse, these women lobbied for and won a Right of Entrance Law

⁵⁴First Annual Report, 11-13.

passed by the New York State Legislature in 1881, which granted to State Charities Aid Association visitors the right to enter and inspect charitable institutions and poorhouses throughout the state. Without the ability to cast a ballot themselves, the women of the Visiting Committee further challenged local officials by advising county voters:

If the Superintendents of the Poor in our county be accountable to no one for their acts, it increases the responsibility of every voter, and becomes his duty to elect men of the largest humanity to fill the office.⁵⁵

The women on the Visiting Committee possessed a very clear understanding of the potency of the vote and of their own power to influence it. They armed themselves with moral righteousness, aptitude and verve, and family, church, and social connections that made them formidable foes of bureaucratic footdragging.⁵⁶ Perhaps it was their embattled stance, but according to their own report, these well-connected, well-intentioned volunteers managed to antagonize nearly everyone connected to the Poorhouse. Having worked so hard and having been so sure of the righteousness of their cause, these reactions puzzled and offended, but did not deter them.

The women persevered, and county officials continued to oppose them in an effort to preserve control of the system. The Visiting Committee was

⁵⁵Ginsberg, 194-195. First Annual Report, 14.

⁵⁶Kathleen McCarthy argues that nineteenth-century women used their philanthropic organizations to create realms of public influence that resembled male power structures in business and politics. "Women, Politics, Philanthropy: Some Historical Origins of the Welfare State," in *The Liberal Persuasion: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and the Challenge of the American Past*, ed. John Patrick Diggins (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 142-150.

particularly concerned with obtaining better care for the children at the Poorhouse. Their suggestions included urging the county to accept offers from the Children's Aid Society and the Female Guardian Society, both New York City based organizations, to "furnish every child in the Poorhouse with a good home." Although the women considered this innovation a boon for the children and a clever device to reduce county expenditures, the Superintendents refused. It is unclear whether they wished to avoid removing Westchester children from the county and the proximity of their families or merely acted to thwart the women on another front.⁵⁷

Their First Annual Report concluded with an appeal for the children of the Poorhouse, whom the visitors found

improperly fed, poorly clothed, and exposed to the degrading influence of those in immediate charge of them. Many are sick and puny, scrofula and sore eyes prevail among them; their countenances are sad, stolid, and expressionless.

The Report noted that the children lacked an infirmary and proper schooling, and an old woman whom they judged unfit acted as their attendant, assisted by her equally unsuitable daughter. The Visiting Committee made establishing a separate facility for these children their first priority. This became particularly urgent when a notice in the *Tarrytown Argus* in December 1879 alerted the group to the fact that the Board of Supervisors intended to borrow funds to build an asylum for destitute children on the farm adjoining the Poorhouse.

⁵⁷First Annual Report, 8.

Considering that the children's proximity to adult paupers would be both undesirable and dangerous, the Visiting Committee undertook the organization of the WTH.⁵⁸

⁵⁸First Annual Report, 15-16. WTH Annual Report for 1880, 6-7.

CHAPTER 1 - THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE WTH

THE FOUNDING

The founders of the WTH expected to remove children from an atmosphere of idleness, intemperance, and depravity, characteristics they perceived as plagues besetting the children's families and associates as well as inhabitants of the Westchester County Poorhouse, where many of the children resided prior to the establishment of the Home. Underlying their desire to help children in crisis and rescue them from a future of poverty lurked the fear that these children would grow into dangerous adults. They referred to the "large and constantly growing number of dependent children, who . . . may be expected . . . to fill our jails and alms-houses." At the meeting to establish the Home, Mrs. Hobson reminded the group that the "results of pauper influence and the heredity of vice . . . (were) proved beyond question." George Matsell, the first police chief of New York City, helped to induce this way of thinking. As early as mid-century he warned the public about the "constantly increasing numbers of vagrants, idle, and vicious children of both sexes," who ran loose in New York City.¹

Many of the more fortunate in Westchester shared this position. As one

¹WTH Annual Report for September 1880, 5. The Address, 8.

Matsell quoted in Christine Stansell, 194.

As the founder of the New York Children's Aid Society, Charles Loring Brace had considerable personal influence among the wealthy, the powerful, and the benevolent in Westchester and New York. His book, *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work Among Them* first came out in 1872 and had a great impact on the thinking of upper- and middle-class philanthropists. (Reprinted, with the Original Illustrations, from the Third Edition, 1880, Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith, 1967).

correspondent wrote to the WTH, "would that many more of the children who run in our streets could be sent to your home . . . so that instead of becoming a burden to us they might be a help in our community."²

A "Children's Law" passed by the New York State Legislature in April, 1875 provided the legal impetus for the establishment of the WTH. Induced by the reports of William P. Letchworth, Commissioner of the New York State Board of Charities (hereafter "State Board"), which asserted that a child brought up in an almshouse "inevitably becomes a pauper," the law *inter alia* mandated the removal of children between the ages of three and sixteen from poorhouses to institutions under the aegis of persons of the same religious faith as the children's parents. In 1878 the New York Legislature amended the law to include children over the age of two.³

On February 12, 1880, the president of the Visiting Committee, Mrs. Frank Vincent, the wife of a retired lawyer, and the Committee's secretary, Miss Anna Rockwell, both of Tarrytown, called a meeting at the offices of the State Charities Aid Association in New York City. They invited two of Westchester's Superintendents of the Poor and about fifty prominent and concerned Westchester residents, several of whom were members of the Visiting Committee. The meeting attracted many who would become both

²Letter from Georgia Knapp to Mrs. Henry R. Worthington, dated August 21, 1880, in the Isaiah Thornton Williams papers.

³The Address noted that the Poorhouse transferred the children of Catholics to the Roman Catholic Protectorate, 5-9.

William Letchworth, 81-83.

financial patrons and active volunteers for the new institution, including the two Irvington women who would remain its most faithful and ardent supporters. Ann Augusta Skeel attended with her husband, Roswell, and the young matron Anna Hoe came with her mother, Mrs. David Dows. Representatives from the State Charities Aid Association, founded in 1872 by Louisa Schuyler, included Mrs. Joseph Hobson, who delivered the Address that roused the meeting to action, and Josephine Shaw Lowell, an experienced and well-known social reformer. Lowell came from a family of abolitionists and joined the Women's Central Association of Relief, an auxiliary of the United States Sanitary Commission during the Civil War, where she acquired her first experience in organized charity work. Widowed at the age of twenty, Lowell embarked on a career in social welfare, first reporting on conditions in jails and almshouses throughout New York State and later as the first woman appointed to the New York State Board of Charities in 1876.⁴

With the goal of enabling inmates to become "useful and moral members of society," the founders determined to do more than improve on the care that inmates received in the Poorhouse. They resolved to integrate the children into the general population by placing them in private homes, hoping to remove from them the taint of pauperism. This could mean isolating them from the company and influence of their destitute parents as well as all association with the

⁴*Notable American Women*, vol. II, s.v. "Lowell, Josephine Shaw," by Robert H. Bremner, 437-438.

"For Homeless Children; How to Deal With a Difficult Problem; Westchester's Destitute Little Ones to be Cared For," *Times*, February 13, 1880, 3 (hereafter "For Homeless Children").

Poorhouse. The plan sounded very similar to the former arrangement by which Westchester residents who desired unpaid help took children from the Poorhouse. The only discernable difference was that those who took youngsters from the Poorhouse were expected to return them once a year to prove that they were caring for them properly. Although the absence of a yearly inspection would increase the possibility of failing to detect mistreatment, the founders disparaged the practice. They believed that it stamped "the child forever with its pauper origin," and taught it "to regard the Poorhouse as its natural place of refuge in case of need." Instead they would infuse the children with a "healthful spirit of independence." In other words, they expected even very young children to work for their keep. This approach appealed to the Superintendents of the Poor, who hoped for a decline in public relief expenditures, and accorded with the attitudes of the other leading citizens and taxpayers who attended the meeting. Josephine Shaw Lowell had insisted that the purpose of charity was not to relieve suffering but to rehabilitate the poor "even if the process be as painful as plucking out an eye." They agreed that children would be ideal candidates to mold into self-sufficient and self-supporting individuals instead of "unproductive paupers."⁵

To that end, the founders of the WTH proposed to teach girls "all kinds of housework" and boys "as much farming as possible" so that inmates could be placed in private homes. For this enterprise they sought \$3,000. The

⁵*Notable American Women*, vol.II, 437-438. "For Homeless Children."

carefully selected audience responded generously; initial donations reached \$3,800. In less than two months, the group established the first non-denominational home for Protestant children in Westchester. They originally named the home the Westchester Temporary Home for Protestant Children. Although the institution remained Protestant, within three years the WTH changed its name to the Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children, claiming only that the new name better explained the character of the institution.⁶

THE WTH

In every area of managing the Home - from the physical structure to more efficient record-keeping, from educating the inmates to ensuring their health and proper supervision - the Board of Managers measured their progress against the inferior record of the Poorhouse and were understandably gratified. They not only proved themselves better organized, but the combination of private and public funds gave the organization more money with which to provide a superior staff, more sanitary and healthful surroundings, and better training for the children. In 1881, the Home's first full year of operation, the

⁶WTH Annual Report for 1880, 12. Address, 8-9.

\$3,800 to outfit and staff a residence to house Westchester's destitute Protestant children seems a modest sum compared to the \$25,000 raised in 1858 to erect a home for foundlings on New York City-owned property. Julie Miller, "Gothams' Waifs: Foundlings in Nineteenth-Century New York City," Ph.D. Diss. The City University of New York, 2003, 177-178. However, the WTH accommodated fewer children who were older and therefore required less care than infants; and the Home did not build, but rented its premises.

In 1883, the WTH filed a new Certificate of Incorporation with the New York Secretary of State in order to increase the number of managers on its Board from twenty to thirty and simultaneously introduced the name change. WTH Annual Report for 1883, 6-7.

Superintendents of the Poor contributed 90% of the WTH annual budget. Throughout the following decade, public money averaged 89%. Donations provided the extras that raised care to a higher level than the Poorhouse could afford.⁷

With the funds they collected, the founders rented and furnished property known as the Shapter farm in Pleasantville, New York. In preparation for the arrival of the children, the WTH arranged to have the house painted and whitewashed and added closets, partitions, and new gutters to collect rainwater. They installed a new stove and a new floor in the kitchen, constructed a laundry, built eight outdoor toilets, and fenced in two playgrounds. The founders contracted with the county Superintendents of the Poor to board, clothe, and instruct children for the sum of \$1.50 per child per week (fifty cents less than the cost of maintaining them in the Poorhouse) beginning on April 1, 1880.⁸

In May, 1880, at the suggestion of Mrs. Frank Vincent, a founder, the Home engaged James W. Pierce, the youngest son of a prosperous local farmer and an autodidact, as Superintendent of the Home. Pierce had attracted her notice and gained her respect as a volunteer religious instructor at the

⁷Timothy Hacsí points out that during the nineteenth century only New York and California subsidized private institutions with public money, 34.

During the first half of the 1890s, public funds continued to total over 88%. Thereafter, the ratio of public to private funds declined. By the 1900s, the contribution of public funds only reached 61%. This was due both to rising costs and to the fact that the Home's ambitious construction projects required increased private donations.

⁸The Address, 7. WTH Annual Report for 1880, 6-7.

Westchester County Poorhouse. Although married and a father, the thirty-year-old Pierce moved alone into the new institution, which had opened in Pleasantville a month earlier. Pierce's wife Mary and daughter Sadie lived a few doors away, and his parents had a farm nearby. In 1894 a reporter portrayed Pierce as "a fine looking man, rather short but well built . . . and with an abundant growth of hair and beard."⁹

Although Pierce was not as wealthy or well-connected as the WTH founders and managers, he came from an old and affluent Westchester family. During Pierce's early childhood in the 1850s, his father assembled a farm of 114 acres, the largest parcel of which, 96 acres, he had obtained from Pierce's grandfather Thomas Pierce in 1855. By 1860, James Pierce senior owned real estate valued at \$40,000 and personal property worth \$2,000, making him the wealthiest farmer in Pleasantville before the Civil War. Only one other farmer in the area was worth half that amount.¹⁰ Despite their worldly success in

⁹The 1880 Census of the town of Mount Pleasant, District 110, registered the WTH at no. 40, Mary Pierce at no. 38, and the elder Pierces at no. 28.

"Pearce's (*sic*) Side Of It: The Superintendent Of The Home For Indigent Children Has His Say . . ." in *New York World*, February 5, 1894, in the scrapbook of Westchester historian Alvah French (hereafter "French Scrapbook") vol.10, 87 at the WCHS.

WTH Annual Report for 1880, 8.

¹⁰United States Census for 1860. Pierces resided in Pleasantville since at least 1700, the year the first James Pierce was born in the area. Scharf, vol.II, 318.

The value of the Pierce farm in 1860 would equal \$693,600 in more current terms. A dollar in 1860 would be worth \$17.43 in 1997. Scot Derks, ed., *The Value of a Dollar: Prices and Incomes in the US 1860-1999* (Lakeville, CT: Grey House, 1999), 2.

In addition to the deed from Thomas Pierce, one from a single woman, and a parcel purchased at public auction, the other grantors of deeds were four married couples. Yet Pierce senior did not include his own wife as a grantee on any of the deeds. Deed, dated April 1, 1853, made by Harvey Romer and wife Alinda to James Pierce conveying 16.5 acres in Pleasantville for \$3,500, recorded on April 5, 1853 in Liber 228, page 41 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk. Deed, dated April 26, 1853, made by Rebecca A. Lane to James

industry and finance, many of the supporters of the WTH also had roots in agricultural traditions and still honored them highly. Many of them demonstrated that regard as gentlemen farmers on their Westchester estates. Like his piety, Pierce' farming background would have gained their initial respect; his performance as Superintendent confirmed it.

The first Annual Report of the WTH declared that Pierce gave "entire satisfaction in the establishment of systematic order, cleanliness, and discipline" at the Home. Eager to succeed, he continued to please the managers, demonstrating "a uniform, painstaking care . . . showing a higher interest than compensation." As Superintendent of the WTH, Pierce had secured a position of considerable status and financial security, and he worked hard to keep it.¹¹

Pierce conveying one-half acre in Pleasantville for \$561, recorded on May 2, 1853 in Liber 230, page 278 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk. Deed, dated April 1, 1853, made by Thomas Pierce to James Pierce conveying 96 acres in Pleasantville for \$3,500, recorded on August 23, 1855 in Liber 311, page 111 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk. Deed, dated April 2, 1857, made by Joseph Reynolds and wife Lydia to James Pierce conveying one-quarter of an acre in New Castle (adjoining lands already owned by James Pierce) for \$35, recorded on June 25, 1858 in Liber 388, page 455 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk. Deed, dated August 1, 1859, made by Lemuel Pierce and wife Eliza to James Pierce conveying undisclosed acreage in West Farms for \$400, recorded on August 10, 1859 in Liber 416, page 126 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk. Deed, dated March 27, 1867, made by Elizabeth Ferguson and husband John to James Pierce conveying one acre in Pleasantville for \$3,000, recorded on September 22, 1868 in Liber 689, page 186 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk. Deed, dated June 27, 1890, made by Norman A. Lawler, Referee, to James Pierce conveying undisclosed acreage in the town of Bedford that he purchased at public auction for \$725, recorded in Liber 1207, page 16 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk.

¹¹WTH Annual Report for 1880, 8.

With no formal education or managerial experience, Pierce had landed a post that would shield him from the effects of the severe and prolonged depression that began in 1893 and the whiplash of other economic swings during his twenty-five year administration.

Because Pleasantville was the town in which Pierce grew up and where his family still lived, he was able to assist the WTH in establishing an accepted, even an approved presence there. At first, the inmate population was still small and the average age still quite young. Consequently the Home did not appear threatening and was welcomed into the neighborhood. During its early history when the Home was located in Pleasantville, the institution appears as both separate from and part of the community. The inmates did not attend local schools, but did participate at neighborhood churches. Apparently neighbors visited often, donated liberally, and involved themselves in the Home's activities. The institution also brought some business into town, as it purchased supplies and hired local people.¹²

In addition to Pierce, the WTH employed two women to do the cooking, laundry, and scrubbing. The Home also engaged two female attendants "both belonging to families well known and highly respected in the County." Their duties consisted of caring for the children, mending their clothing, and supervising the older girls, who were expected to help in the nursery.¹³

The WTH Managers' first task was to attempt to identify the thirty-one new inmates, since the Poorhouse failed to keep an official record of the

¹²In contrast, the Catholic Asylum of Mt. Loretto on Staten Island faced intense opposition from Pleasant Plains residents who feared large numbers of children in their neighborhood almost as much as they disliked the idea of a Catholic institution in the vicinity. John J. Brennan, "Father Christopher Drumgoole, Founder of Mt. Loretto: Understanding the Man," in *Community, Continuity, and Change: New Perspectives on Staten Island History*, eds., Michael Rosenfeld and Charles La Cerra (New York: Pace University Press, 1999), 103.

¹³WTH Annual Report for 1880, 6-8. By June 1880, the U.S. Census listed the WTH staff as Pierce, a nurse, a cook, and one servant.

names, ages, or "any facts concerning the antecedents or commitment" of the children it transferred to the Home. The oldest arrivals, a boy of fourteen "of weak intellect," two other boys of thirteen and eleven, and a ten-year-old girl gave their own names and those of the younger children, nineteen of whom appeared to be between the ages of two and six. Six of the forty-four (or 13.6%) were identified as "colored"; seventeen (or 38.6%) of the transfers were female. In marked contrast to the Poorhouse practice, at every subsequent admission to the Home, the WTH recorded all information it considered pertinent, including the child's name, age, race, ethnicity, religion, parentage, circumstances regarding her or his commitment, and the name of the official who committed the child. Every child received a number when he or she entered the Home, which was used again when the child was discharged.¹⁴

THE BOARD OF MANAGERS

In 1888 the *Eastern State Journal* (hereafter "*Eastern State*") of White Plains described the WTH as conducted

under the auspices of Protestant ladies of wealth throughout the county. . . noble women, whose tenderness, devotion, and Christian duty and sympathy for the poor and unfortunate is a

¹⁴WTH Ledger 14 began with number 352. This method of registration had the potential to create some confusion, as a child received a new number every time she or he returned to the institution. In addition, subsequent entries omitted the names of siblings who might have registered together at the time of their first commitment.

By June 1880 the Census recorded that the initial thirty-one entries from the Poorhouse had grown to forty-four inmates. Of these, the two oldest girls were eleven; the eight oldest boys included four nine-year-olds, one eleven, two age twelve, and one fourteen-year-old.

The 1880 Census differentiated between "black" and "mulatto" individuals. The WTH listed all such inmates as "colored" but indicated which, if any, had a white parent.

passion, which finds expression in the exercise of an earnest working charity.¹⁵

The press and the public regarded the WTH as run by "lady managers," because the Home was one of the few county institutions in which women represented the majority of officers and board members. Yet from the establishment of the institution, prominent Westchester businessmen and philanthropists contributed their influence, connections, and financial support to the organization. Significantly, unlike the Poorhouse Visiting Committee, the WTH Board did not include any clergymen. Family proved the most significant connection in engaging volunteers and donors for the Home. A great many WTH Board members were related by birth or marriage.¹⁶

Charles Butler, DD, LL.D, president of the WTH from its founding in 1880 until his death at the age of ninety-five in 1897, had demonstrated his concern for the children of the poor for some time. In 1835 he was a founder of the (Protestant) Society for the Relief of Half-Orphans and Destitute children in New

¹⁵"Westchester County Temporary Home," in *Eastern State*, February 11, 1888, French Scrapbook vol. 38, 28-29.

¹⁶In 1880, the Executive Committee had only one male member, the president, Charles Butler; the committees on Instruction and Placement both had male chairmen and female members; women headed and composed the House and Clothing committees. Three years later, the organization added a Finance Committee, with a male chairman and a membership that included four men and three women, and a Board of Managers that contained twelve men and eighteen women. By this time, most committees had additional male members. WTH Annual Reports for 1880 and 1883.

Paul Boyer observes the increasing secularization of philanthropy. No ministers sat on the board of trustees of the New York CAS either. *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 106.

Anne Boylan confirms that women engaged in benevolent and reform work recruited the services and support of family members. "Timid Girls, Venerable Widows, and Dignified Matrons: Life Cycle Patterns among Organized Women in New York and Boston, 1797-1840," *American Quarterly* 38 Winter 1986, 779-797.

York City. Although he was seventy-eight at the founding of the WTH in 1880, he lent his name and influence as well as his expertise to the new institution. The widowed Butler and his daughter Emily spent seven months of the year at their Park Avenue home in New York City, and the remainder at their 400 acre Scarsdale estate.¹⁷

Like many single women of her class during this era, Charles Butler's daughter Emily was also deeply involved in philanthropy and worked diligently for the WTH. In 1880 she served as the first secretary of the Home. Her Annual Report was detailed, efficient, and professional, and like the founding address delivered by Mrs. Hobson avoided flourishes of the sentimental and the religious. From 1881 to 1908 Emily Butler sat on the Placing Children in Homes Committee (hereafter "Placement Committee"); from 1885 to 1908 she worked on the Membership Committee as well; and from 1901 to 1908 also served as Second Vice-President and on the House Committee (in addition to Placement and Membership). Throughout the existence of the institution, she devoted

¹⁷The WTH eulogized Butler as "an earnest Christian, with a warm, sympathetic heart for all human sorrow and suffering." WTH Annual Report for 1897, 8. Butler was a founder of the Union Theological Seminary in 1835, and served as a director for sixty-one years and its president from 1870 to 1897. In 1895 he donated \$100,000 to the University of the City of New York and a like sum to the Seminary. His other New York associations included the Union League Club, the Century Association, Sons of the Revolution, the American Fine Arts Society, the American Museum of Natural History, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. "Obituary," in French Scrapbook vol.13, 189-191.

In December 1882, the WTH Board of Managers held a meeting at Butler's home at 78 Park Avenue.

considerable time to cutting and sewing garments for the children.¹⁸

Family connections continued to draw new members to the WTH Board. Benjamin F. Butler (Charles's brother), a lawyer and politician who had served in the cabinets of presidents Jackson and Van Buren, shared an interest in dependent children. He sat on the board of the Children's Village, founded as the New York Juvenile Asylum in 1857.¹⁹ His granddaughter Harriet Butler had been so active in civic and philanthropic movements in Yonkers, that she warranted a *Times* obituary. In 1898, just after her great-uncle Charles's death, Harriet joined her cousin Emily on the Board of Managers of the WTH and worked on the Clothing Committee until 1908, when the Home closed.²⁰

Mrs. Frank Vincent, the president of the Visiting Committee, continued to nurture the second fledgling organization she founded by acting as First Vice-

¹⁸Ginsberg points out that elite women gradually became more businesslike than evangelical in their philanthropic work. She quotes Georgeanna Woolsey, who worked for the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War and the State Charities Aid Association thereafter, who wrote that a colleague was a "most thoroughly satisfactory woman" because she did not have a "single grain of mock-sentiment" about her, 157.

In contrast, the Annual Report of Mrs. K.L. Patterson of Briarcliff, the second secretary of the WTH, gushed with thanks to "our Heavenly Father for his bountiful goodness in moving the hearts of so many kind friends to extend their sympathy and active help to these children, who, through sorrow and misfortune are made dependent on county care and support." WTH Annual Report for 1881, 4.

When Emily Butler died in 1927, her estate was valued at over \$1 million. Irving Sloan, "Modest Woman Left Generous Legacy of Land," in *Scarsdale Inquirer*, November 14, 1997, 4.

¹⁹The New York Juvenile Asylum purchased 277 acres in Dobbs Ferry in 1905. Harry J. Phillips, "Social Control or Benevolent Intervention: State Intervention in the Family and the Case of the Children's Village," unpublished, 1992, WCHS.

²⁰Harriet Butler collected and edited the reminiscences of her father, the lawyer and author William Allen Butler, entitled "A Retrospect of Forty Years." "Miss Harriet Butler Dies," *Times* January 5, 1914, 9.

President of the WTH in 1881. She remained interested in the Home, contributing her time, organizational experience, sewing skills, and substantial material goods until her death in 1883, for which the WTH praised her "untiring energy and foresight" on its behalf.²¹

Having set the process in motion, the founding generation left the day-to-day operations of the Home in the hands of younger volunteers with fresh energy and devotion.²² Even among a group so loyal and hardworking, two women stand out as pivotal figures in developing and supporting the WTH.

Mrs. Roswell Skeel followed Helen Vincent as First Vice-President and served the WTH with boundless enthusiasm, considerable financial assistance, and diligent sewing contributions for the rest of her life. Ann Skeel and her family lived on a twenty-two acre estate in Irvington next to that of Jay Gould.

²¹According to the 1880 census, the Vincents' Tarrytown household included Helen Vincent, fifty-five, her husband Frank, a retired lawyer of seventy, two daughters, Emma, twenty-five, and Louisa, twenty-three, and four female servants, which suggests a family of significant means. Her husband was active in the Second Reformed Dutch Church of Tarrytown. Scharf described Helen Vincent as "remarkable" in her efforts to organize the WTH, vol. I, 321; vol. II, 254-255.

During the first year of the Home's existence, Helen Vincent donated 100 Sunday School cards, 3 alphabet charts, alphabet blocks, 50 oranges, 10 pounds of candy, 1,200 torpedos (firecrackers), a bottle of cod liver oil, 30 hats for boys, shirts, 20 yards of gingham, a haircloth sofa, a bureau, a commode and a foot bath. In addition to her other organizational duties that year, she personally sewed 50 plaid bed-spreads, 13 crib ticks, 5 dozen crib sheets, 5 dozen diapers, 12 pillow-cases, 12 flannel skirts and blouses, 20 dresses, and cut out garments for others to sew. Her husband gave a printed register, bill heads, and a ream of paper and envelopes. WTH Annual Reports for 1880, 14; and 1884, 10 and 12.

²²In 1880, the Schuyler sisters donated \$25 each. Georgina wrote to Mrs. Worthington of the WTH Placement Committee excusing herself from any active volunteer work, "I wish my health permitted me to work with you actively. You may be sure of my . . . interest in the undertaking." Letter from Georgina Schuyler to Mrs. Worthington, dated September 4, 1880 in the Williams papers. The following year Georgina Schuyler repeated her earlier contribution. Then both sisters disappeared from the WTH records.

In 1880, the year that the WTH opened, Ann Augusta Skeel was fifty-four and her husband Roswell, a tea merchant, fifty-seven. Her children Rose, age fifteen, and Roswell, Jr., ten, completed the household served by three female Irish servants in their thirties and forties.²³

Skeel involved her children in working for the Home. Rose Skeel chaired the Clothing Committee of the WTH from 1887 through 1889, the year she married. In 1888 Rose had organized a "Ten-Cent Collection," which earned \$166.75 as a "Donation for Laundry and Improvements" for the Home. In 1900 Ann Skeel left the Home a bequest of \$10,000 to ensure continuing funds to support both the kindergarten and the Slojd classes, a program of vocational training that involved carpentry, that she and the WTH treasurer Anna Hoe introduced and financed. After the turn of the century, Ann Skeel's son and daughter-in-law also sat on the Board of Managers of the WTH.²⁴

The *Eastern State* commended the young WTH treasurer, Mrs. Richard M. Hoe, Jr. for her "simple, artless behavior and modest kindness of demeanor . . . [which denoted] the true woman." A newspaper sketch of Anna Hoe

²³1880 Census.

²⁴The WTH Annual Report for 1889, 16. In addition to her legacies to her children, Ann Skeel left \$10,000 each to the WTH and to the American Unitarian Association, among other bequests. Ann A. Skeel Will, admitted January 15, 1900 in Liber 136, 58, and "In the Matter of the Appraisal of the Property of . . . Appraiser's Report," both filed May 8, 1900, File No. 527-1900 in Westchester Archives Estate Inventories Series 16. Skeel's \$10,000 bequest consisted of a mortgage in that amount on property located in the Bronx. The Home would hold the mortgage and receive the interest income it generated. "The WTH to be Dissolved," *Eastern State* 1908, in French Scrapbook, undated, unpaginated.

No WTH Annual Report survived for 1900, but the Treasurer's Report in the WTH Annual Report for 1901 cites "Income from Mrs. Roswell Skeel's Bequest . . . \$191.67", 16. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of education at the WTH.

showed a young woman with small, even features and a prominent chin. A small hat adorned with a demure feather sat on her dark hair worn in a neat bun. She wore a high-necked light colored shirtwaist with a ruffled front and no visible jewelry. A true woman of the nineteenth century was supposed to possess the virtues of piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity. As a daughter of privilege and a dedicated worker for the WTH, Anna Hoe must have appreciated if not cultivated that image. Charitable works extended rather than challenged the popular injunction that women should remain within their proper sphere, the home. Philanthropy, considered pure compared to the corruption of politics or business, gave meaning to the lives of privileged women in socially appropriate ways, unlike engagement in issues such as suffrage reform.²⁵

In 1880, the twenty-seven-year-old Anna Hoe had been married for seven years, but remained childless. She and her husband Richard lived at her parents' country home, Charlton Hall, a massive stone house on thirty acres in Irvington. Her father, David Dows, was considered the nation's largest grain merchant. Although the family identified their primary residence as Irvington in 1880, they, like so many of their wealthy Westchester neighbors, also maintained a home in New York City.²⁶ With the approval and encouragement

²⁵"Westchester Temporary Home," *Eastern State*, July 25, 1896, 3. "Westchester County Temporary Home," in *Eastern State*, February 11, 1888, French Scrapbook vol.38, 28-29.

Barbara Welter, "The Cult of True womanhood: 1820-1860," in *American Quarterly* vol.XVIII, no.2, pt.1, Summer 1966, 151-174.

²⁶Anna and Richard Hoe were married at the Dows's Manhattan residence on January 15, 1873. "Married," *Times*, January 17, 1873, 5. The 1880 Census, District 99, no.93 recorded that the Irvington household included Dows, sixty-five, and his wife Margaret, forty-eight, two sons, five daughters (including Anna the eldest at twenty-seven, who signed her financial

of her family, Anna left the smooth management of both households to her mother and seized the freedom to create a vital career for herself. Her work for the WTH not only provided her with a position of responsibility, authority, and respect in an organization that included prominent men and women, but her role as Treasurer of the WTH led her into the male arena of finance.

Anna Hoe served as Treasurer of the Home without pause from its inception, on the Finance Committee (some years as chairman), chaired the Placement Committee from 1883 on, sat on the House Committee, funded innovations in education at the Home, and made very substantial monetary contributions to the institution. She visited the WTH once a week "coming in

reports and letters "Annie L."), Richard Hoe, thirty-one, designated as an iron manufacturer, ten servants, and a governess. The listing of a governess suggests that the Dows daughters did not attend the Misses Masters' Boarding and Day School for Young Ladies and Children, established in 1877 in neighboring Dobbs Ferry, which provided a finishing school for local debutantes until they reached the age of sixteen.

The Dows family, before moving into Charlton Hall, which David Dows named in honor of Charlton, New York the town in which he was raised, previously lived on an estate in Tarrytown across the street from the Hoe family, *County Atlas of Westchester County, New York* (New York: J.B. Beers, 1872) (hereafter "Beers Atlas"), 34-37. *Atlas of Westchester County, New York* (New York: George W. and Walter S. Bromley, 1881) (hereafter "Bromley Atlas"). Scharf, vol. 2, 191-192.

Anna and Richard Hoe lived with the Dowses in New York City also. In December 1882, a special meeting of the Board of Managers took place at the Dows residence at 1 East 69th Street. The following year, a letter from "Annie L. Hoe, Treasurer WTH" to Odle Close, Esq., Chairman of the Westchester Board of Supervisors, dated November 8, 1883, identified her living at the same Manhattan address. WCHS Vertical File: White Plains Orphanages, A-0306 (102)L Folder 14 (hereafter "Close letter")

Although the William Astors did not move from 34th Street to their newly completed mansion on Fifth Avenue and 61st Street until 1895, other wealthy New Yorkers had begun to move uptown earlier. Homberger, 15. The owners of the six Villard Houses completed in 1884 on Madison Avenue from 50th to 51st streets came from southern Manhattan. Elizabeth Mills Reid, the wife of Whitelaw Reid, who succeeded Horace Greeley as editor of the *New York Tribune*, bought Villard's own house in 1886. Christopher Gray, "A Landmark 6-Home Complex in Dark Brownstone," *Times*, December 21, 2003, RE 3. The Reids also had a magnificent Westchester estate they called Ophir Farm, now part of Manhattanville College in Purchase. Mrs. Reid served on the WTH Board of Managers and on its Finance Committee.

direct contact with the inmates . . . and visiting all its departments."²⁷

Anna's husband Richard Hoe acted as Secretary of the WTH from 1883 until 1908, and as chairman of Membership from 1887 to 1897; he also served on the Committee for Instruction of inmates. As Secretary, Hoe wrote the Annual Reports that shaped the public image of the Home. His style resembled the business-like tone of Emily Butler's first report, generally refraining from flowery phrases and references to "Heavenly Father." However, when the Home moved to White Plains in 1885, his Annual Report expressed thanks for the blessings of "kind Providence" as well as gratitude to generous supporters. An experienced businessman, Hoe "sold" the WTH to donors, volunteers, and the public not only by portraying it in the most flattering light in all his reports, but also by occasionally reinterpreting events in order to do so.²⁸

Other Board members with connections to the Visiting Committee or the State Charities Aid Association included Mrs. Henry Rossiter Worthington and her cousin Charles W. Woolsey, who was interested in the Home from its

²⁷Anna Hoe's interest in the welfare of children also led her to become a Life Member of the Westchester County SPCC. Report of the Westchester County SPCC, December 1906, 13.

"Pierce Testimony Ended: Mrs. R. M. Hoe Gave Evidence for the Superintendent," *New York Tribune*, undated, in French Scrapbook, no vol. or page number.

²⁸Richard Marsh Hoe, Jr. seems to have been named for his father's brother of the same name. In the 1880 Census, his father, Peter Smith Hoe, a printing press manufacturer of fifty-nine, presided over a household that included his wife Hannah, fifty-five, four sons, a daughter-in-law, two grandchildren, and five servants on a large estate in Tarrytown. His grandfather Robert Hoe had an even larger property nearby in Tarrytown. *American National Biography* vol. 10, s.v. "Hoe, Robert," 924-925. Like the Dows family, the Hoes worshipped at Christ Episcopal Church in Tarrytown. "Parish Register of Christ Episcopal Church Tarrytown Westchester County 1864-1895," 38, 150, 170, 176, 181, 186.

WTH Annual Report for 1885, 10.

inception. Like Ann Skeel and Anna Hoe, he attended the meeting at the State Board of Charities offices during which the WTH came into being. Sara Worthington and her daughter both served on the Hospital Committee of the Poorhouse Visiting Committee. As the first chairman of the WTH Placement Committee, Worthington worked with Woolsey to set up a system of placement of inmates and observation of WTH children discharged to private homes.²⁹

James Wood, the second president of the WTH, served as Supervisor of the town of Bedford by the age of twenty-three. His presidency of the WTH overlapped with his service as president of the Board of Managers of the Bedford Reformatory. He was a founder of the Westchester County Historical Society and its president from 1876 to 1900. This all-male organization, established in 1874, was another point in the intricate web of connections that

²⁹According to the 1880 census, Sara Worthington, sixty, the daughter of Commodore John T. Newton, and her husband Henry R., a hydraulic engineer and inventor of steam-driven pumps of sixty-three, lived at their estate The Homestead in Irvington as neighbors of the Skeel family. Only one of their four children, a son and his wife lived with them and three servants. After Henry Worthington died at their New York residence in December of 1880, Sara resigned her chairmanship and severed active involvement with the WTH. *American National Biography* vol.23, s.v. "Worthington, Henry Rossiter," by William E. Worthington, Jr., 886-887.

Charles William Woolsey was the only son of Charles William and Jane Newton Woolsey and the youngest child after seven daughters. In 1862 his sisters Georgeanna and Eliza joined hospital transport services as "nurses at large" to wounded Union soldiers. In 1863 Georgeanna and her mother went to Gettysburg after a false report that Charles had been wounded there. They remained after the battle to nurse the wounded. After the war, sisters Abby, Jane, and Georgeanna were among the elite women led by Louisa Schuyler who became so active in hospital, charitable, and educational work. *Notable American Women* vol. III, s.v. "Woolsey, Abby Howland, Jane Stuart, and Georgeanna Muirson," by Anne L. Austin, 665-668. Woolsey, prominent in New York club society, also gained renown for his philanthropy. "Col. C. W. Woolsey Dead," in *Times*, January 7, 1907, 7.

See Chapter 4 "Placement" for a more detailed discussion of the placement of WTH inmates in private homes.

enmeshed elite Westchester residents involved in the WTH. Some members supported the WTH; the wives and daughters of others worked for the Home.³⁰

Unfortunately, little can be learned about the many unmarried women who volunteered their time and energies to the Home unless, like the Schuyler and Butler women, they came from particularly noteworthy families or made a name for themselves in other organizations. One such example was Eloise Luquer, the daughter of Dr. Lea Luquer, who only worked for the WTH for a year. In 1883 she sat on the Board of Managers and on the Committee on Instruction. The following year she donated five dollars and eighty Christmas cards to the WTH, then dropped from their records. But Miss Luquer gained personal renown by founding the Westchester District Nursing Association, working for the Bedford Hills Community House and Women's Club, and giving talks on botany, even at the State Prison.³¹

³⁰Wood descended from one of twenty-two Puritan families who emigrated to Bedford from Stamford, Connecticut in 1680. Alexander Shoumatoff, 132. Wood also sat on the boards of Bryn Mawr and his alma mater, Haverford College. His travels in Germany and France did not diminish his interest in his Westchester estate Braewold or agriculture in general, and he acted as president of the county and state agricultural societies. He was a Quaker and a president of the American Bible Society. *The WCH Bulletin*, "75th Anniversary Edition," vol. 25 no.4 October 1949, 99-113.

Other contemporary members of the WCHS included Whitelaw Reid and Gen. Alexander Hamilton, Jr., whose wives worked for the WTH; Benjamin Butler, brother of Charles Butler, president of the WTH; the Rev. Edgar L. Heermance of White Plains, whose name appears in correspondence as a local visitor of WTH inmates discharged to placements; Horace Greeley, the editor of the *New York Tribune* and a close friend of Isaiah T. Williams, another chairman of the WTH Placement committee; and Dr. Lea Luquer, rector of St. Matthews in Bedford, whose daughter worked for the WTH.

³¹"Miss Eloise P. Luquer Obituary," dated January 22, 1948, in WCHS Vertical File. (The clipping does not identify the newspaper or page number.)

Single women, like childless matrons and those with grown children, who enjoyed the leisure provided by household servants, had the most time and energy to apply to worthwhile endeavors. The philanthropic work of single women presented an opportunity to engage in an idealized and extended female sphere of influence. By serving on the Board of the WTH and its committees, numerous single women enacted quasi-maternal roles, demonstrating concern for children's well-being and morals. If they could not attain the social status of their married female relatives and friends during this era, charitable work afforded them the opportunity to participate in the adult life of the community on a nearly equal footing.³²

During the earliest years of the WTH, single women represented a significant percentage of the officers, the Board, and the various committees. Although married women always made up the largest group in each category, at first single women exceeded the numbers of men in the organization. As time progressed, either the growing needs of the institution demanded board members with more financial and social weight or the men already involved enlisted more of their powerful friends and associates to work for the organization. In either case, the number of men on the Board increased and

³²Boylan observes that earlier in the nineteenth century benevolent women's organizations restricted the participation of single women. Such groups considered it appropriate for unmarried women to sew, collect money for missionary causes, visit aged and sick women, and act as secretary or treasurer of various groups. They regarded activities that involved pregnant poor women or prostitutes unsuitable for single women. 780-782. If such attitudes persisted in the latter part of the century, then the single women's work for the WTH would have fallen within acceptable boundaries.

they began to displace the single women. Yet these women continued to work on many committees and contribute their time, their sewing skills, and their money to the Home.³³

WTH FINANCES

As Treasurer of the WTH, Anna Hoe assumed the enormous responsibility of managing the Home's finances. In 1880, the young Mr. and Mrs. Hoe contributed only \$20, one of the smallest offerings to the institution. However, she obtained more generous donations from her family's wealthy friends and neighbors, including her father, David Dows (\$100). Others who contributed freely were Cyrus Field, the financier and promoter of the TransAtlantic telegraph cable (\$100); Samuel J. Tilden, a former governor of New York (\$100); and Frederick W. Guiteau, a retired grain merchant who was one of the original founders of the WTH (\$120).³⁴

³³In 1880, single women filled two of the six executive offices, President Charles Butler was the only male, and married women acted as the remaining officers. The Board was composed of eleven married women, six single women, and four men. WTH Annual Report for 1880, 3. Four years later, the number of married women increased from eleven to twelve, the number of men increased to eleven, and the number of single women declined to four. WTH Annual Report for 1884, 3-4.

³⁴WTH Annual Report for 1880, 13.

Cyrus Field expressed an early interest in needy children by working for the New York Children's Aid Society. He and Samuel Tilden had been neighbors in Gramercy Park in Manhattan before moving to Westchester. In 1869 Field completed the mansion he named Ardsley, after the English village of his ancestors, on 1,000 acres of property along the Hudson near the Dows estate in Irvington. Tilden built Greystone, his estate in Yonkers, to which he retired in 1879. *American National Biography*, vol.7, s.v. "Field, Cyrus West," by Richard R. John, 876-877 and vol. 21, s.v. "Tilden, Samuel Jones," by Joel H. Silbey, 660. Anita Inman Comstock, 42.

Frederick Guiteau also chaired the Instruction Committee of the WTH in 1880 and 1881 and sat on the Finance Committee and the Board thereafter until 1901. In Irvington he served on the Village Board and School Board and founded the Guiteau Free Public library. (His nephew

Despite the beneficence of her family and acquaintances, raising sufficient funds proved a formidable challenge. In 1880 Westchester County reimbursed the WTH at the rate of \$1.50 per child per week to cover the most basic costs for boarding, clothing, and schooling inmates. The county had paid \$.50 more for the mean services that it had provided for children at the Poorhouse. Yet it even failed to remit that small amount on time. On November 8, 1883, Anna Hoe reproached the chairman of the Westchester Board of Supervisors, Odle Close, with the complaint that

the appropriations for the support of the poor children of Westchester Co. has this year again fallen short and one month earlier than usual as the October boards of the children at the Temporary Home has (*sic*) not as yet been paid by the Superintendent of the Poor.

She appealed to Close to "tell me if we are to be without funds for these coming winter months, as heretofore," explaining that the Home wished to avoid the expense of borrowing money if possible.³⁵

A pattern of fundraising emerged. To supplement the penurious allotments from the county, the WTH accepted modest but steady annual contributions from the women involved with the organization, but turned to

Charles assassinated President James Garfield in July, 1881.) (No author), *Woolfert's Roost Irvington-on-Hudson: Portrait of a Village* (Irvington-on-Hudson: The Washington Irving Press, 1971), 84-85. Address, 7. WTH Annual Reports 1880 to 1901. Obituary in *Times*, October 6, 1903, 9.

³⁵Address, 8-9. Close letter.

In 1885, the weekly stipend of \$1.75 per child still left the Home with a recurring monthly deficit, but the Home found some relief when the Superintendents of the Poor raised the amount to \$2. WTH Annual Report for 1885, 8-9. Two years later the WTH benefitted when the Westchester Board of Supervisors voted to pay \$2.11 weekly for every child in a county institution. WTH Annual Report for 1887, 8.

wealthy male benefactors for the large donations needed for major improvements. In 1883, shortly after its inception, the WTH raised \$1,225 for a "Reserve Fund". Contributors included Irvington neighbors John Terry, a New York businessman, and Jay Gould, among the wealthiest men in the county, who each donated \$100 or more. Two women, Emily Butler and Margaret Dows (Anna Hoe's mother), also gave \$100. In 1885, when the WTH moved from rented quarters in Pleasantville and purchased their White Plains property, donations to the Building Fund brought in \$15,432 from Westchester supporters. This time the largest contributors, David Dows, Roswell Skeel, and H. M. Flagler, a co-founder of Standard Oil who had an estate in Mamaroneck and spent forty million dollars developing the state of Florida, gave \$1,000 each. John Terry, the stockbroker John Bond Trevor, and banker James B. Colgate each donated \$500. Subsequent appeals for a fund to build a hospital and a laundry on the premises, and to fit the buildings with steam heat met with continuing generosity.³⁶

³⁶WTH Annual Reports for 1883, 12-14; for 1885, 13-14; for 1887, 19-20; for 1888, 9-11; for 1889, 15-18; for 1893, 13-16; and for 1895, 16-24.

Samuel Tilden, Cyrus Field, and David Dows also contributed to the Reserve Fund Robert Burg, "Florida Founder All But Forgotten," *Gannett Westchester Newspapers*, October 19, 1986 A Section, 15. WCHS Vertical File - Biography.

Glenview, the Trevor mansion in Yonkers, now forms part of the Hudson River Museum; the Trevors also kept a home in New York City.

The 1880 Census identified John Terry, fifty-eight, as an importer of teas and coffee who lived at Pinkstone, his country seat described as the "Monticello of the Hudson valley," near Jay Gould. Five servants, one male and four female, waited on Terry, his wife Elizabeth, fifty-four, their son Roderick a thirty-one-year-old clergyman, daughter-in-law Linda, twenty-seven, and two grandchildren. Terry was the vice-president of a trust company and director of a bank, two trust companies, one life insurance company, four railroads, Western Union Telegraph, and a number of benevolent institutions. Scharf, 243. Elizabeth Terry had participated in the founding meeting of the WTH on February 12, 1880.

Jay Gould's gothic, grey stone mansion Lyndhurst boasted stained glass windows by

In 1895 a fire leveled the institution, and even in the midst of the bitterest depression the nation had known, the Home raised over \$10,000. However, the plans of renowned New York City architects Carrere and Hastings estimated the cost of a fireproof brick structure at \$55,000. This time subscriptions did not suffice to replace the white shingled building that had been destroyed. Nor did the insurance that the WTH carried on the premises; the organization only received \$17,000 from its policy. The WTH hired Rev. Leander Hall of New York to make a "house to house canvas" of the county to raise the needed funds, and treasurer Anna Hoe advanced \$35,000 as a mortgage on the premises.³⁷

Louis Comfort Tiffany (a summer resident of Irvington), a greenhouse and a dock along the Hudson from which he could commute to New York City on his yacht *Atalanta*. Comstock, 39. Gould left an estate valued at \$72,000,000 in 1892. Neither his wealth nor his philanthropy could expunge his unsavory reputation; the New York Yacht Club refused to admit him as a member. Homberger, 119, 194.

Gould's eldest daughter Helen pursued her own philanthropic work for needy children. She established Woodcrest, a home for sick and crippled children and the Lyndhurst Club and Industrial School on the grounds of the Irvington estate. On April 3, 1908 she announced the closing of both institutions from her Fifth Avenue address and "wouldn't discuss her reasons." *Times*, April 3, 1908. Yet she contributed to the WTH as a courtesy to women from her neighborhood who were more involved in the Home. She donated \$100 to help defray the cost of installing steam heat in 1893. WTH Annual Report for 1893, 13. (Helen Gould also donated \$100,000 to the United States government during the Spanish-American war and endowed a chair in Biblical literature at Mount Holyoke in 1902.) *Who's Who in New York*, s.v. "Gould, Helen Miller, 261-262.

In 1894, the United States imposed an income tax on annual incomes of \$4,000 or more. It is unclear whether this affected the charitable inclinations of wealthy Westchester residents. Derks, 8.

³⁷ "Westchester Temporary Home," *Eastern State*, July 25, 1896, 3. WTH Annual Report for 1895, 6-7; and for 1897, 12. Carrere and Hastings were best known for designing the city mansions and country estates of wealthy New Yorkers, but their accomplishments also included institutions such as the First Church of Christ, Scientist and the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue and forty-second street. "A Tale of 2 Warring Churches, and of One Woman," *Times*, February 15, 2004, RE 9.

After the fire, friends of the Home gave a "musical entertainment" to reimburse WTH attendants for the personal losses they sustained. WTH Annual Report for 1895, 10.

WTH Board members also solicited contributions from local merchants and business acquaintances. In 1880, they used their influence to obtain reduced rates for freight on the Harlem Railroad and free transport of "small packages" by the National Express Company. Three years later, local merchants Israel and Slagle of Irvington gave two dozen pairs of shoes to the Home. The following year, the Willets Manufacturing Company of Trenton, New Jersey donated 384 pieces of crockery. In addition, Board Members successfully appealed for aid to Sunday schools, churches, missionary societies, and ladies' aid and benevolent societies both in Westchester and Manhattan.³⁸

Annual Reports itemized and expressed gratitude for all gifts received. Men gave larger sums of money and livestock, loaned teams of horses for outings, and donated from the summer bounty of their Westchester estates to the Home. C.V. McNulty, the manager of Fox Meadow, the Butlers' Scarsdale estate wrote to Miss and Mr. Butler at the end of November, 1889 reporting that "Mr. Pierce was down . . . and I let him have one of the old horses." That January, McNulty "let Mr. Pierce . . . have the other old horse . . . which we have no particular use for at present." He indicated that the WTH would

³⁸Donors included the First Presbyterian Sunday School in Peekskill, the Presbyterian Sunday School in Irvington, the Riverdale Presbyterian Sunday School, the Sunday School of Zion Church in Dobbs Ferry, and the Aid Societies of the Presbyterian Church and Grace Church in White Plains. WTH Annual Reports for 1880, 14; for 1883, 14; for 1884, 15-16; and for 1885, 14.

provide "a good home for them until we want them."³⁹ The largesse of men and women of means often consisted of what they no longer needed.

Many women donated cast-off clothing and smaller sums of money to the WTH. They also contributed in more personal ways, cutting and sewing garments, organizing the quantities of articles donated, and arranging fundraising parties and cake sales. They also encouraged their youngsters to part with toys for the less fortunate and to run fairs and other events to raise money for the Home. Women's volunteer labor and skill at fundraising often made the difference in the survival of charitable institutions. With few exceptions, their donations, like their activities remained within the established boundaries of the domestic sphere.⁴⁰

Unlike their New York City counterparts, the WTH held modest fundraising parties. The Home eschewed balls and dinner dances. Instead, each Spring the WTH had an open house on its grounds to which it invited local officials, volunteers, donors, and supporters in the community. In 1899, the WTH gave a lawn party for more than two hundred guests. Two awnings sheltered the refreshments and the musicians. The *Times* sent a reporter who described vases of roses, daisies, and pansies in every room and jars of peonies on the porch and on the refreshment tables. These were seasonal flowers, not

³⁹C.V. McNulty to Miss Butler and Mr. Butler, November 24, 1889 and January 6, 1890 in "Scarsdale Historical Album of Fox Meadow," Scarsdale Public Library.

⁴⁰"Nine little children of White Plains" gave a lawn party and sent the \$25 they raised to the WTH. WTH Annual Report for 1895, 10. McCarthy, 144-145.

expensive hot-house arrangements.⁴¹

Individual women also opened their homes to raise funds for the Home. Mrs. James Colgate hosted a "Chrysanthemum Show" at Glenwood, her Yonkers home and donated the proceeds of \$172 to the institution. On September 21, 1886 Mrs. Dows opened Charlton Hall, her Irvington mansion, for a "Kaffee Klatsch" for the benefit of the WTH. The committee sold tickets for "One Dollar, which entitle (*sic*) bearer to a cup and saucer, and refreshments." Charlton Hall must have stocked a great number of cups and saucers, as the event raised \$1,199. Anna Hoe's sister, Mrs. Christian Herter, raised \$254 for the WTH by sponsoring a lecture at her New York City home. Anna Hoe held a doll sale at Charlton Hall in order to raise money for the Home.⁴²

WTH Board members also enlisted family, friends, neighbors, and acquaintances to help. Anna Hoe solicited donations from her siblings as well as her parents. They remained faithful Annual Subscribers of cash donations

⁴¹"Children's Temporary Home: Well-attended Lawn Party at the White Plains Institution Yesterday," *Times*, June 11, 1899, 3.

⁴²WTH Annual Reports acknowledged cake sales, doll sales, fairs, lawn parties, lectures, a chrysanthemum display, and a "musical entertainment." WTH Annual Reports for 1885, 12; for 1895, 10; for 1897, 16; and for 1898, 15.

Mrs. Colgate, the daughter of former Governor Colby of New Hampshire, sat on the Committee on Instruction in 1880 and on the Board of Managers of the WTH from 1880 to 1908. Her husband James had served as President of the Gold Board in New York during the Civil War. The couple founded Colgate University in Hamilton, New York and the Warburton Avenue Baptist Church and a WCTU organization, both in Yonkers. "Mrs. Colgate Dies at 101" *Times*, March 23, 1919, 25. WTH Annual Report for 1893, 13.

"Kaffee Klatsch" invitation 1887, in WCHS Vertical File: White Plains Organizations. WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 10; for 1895, 10; and for 1897, 16.

as well as contributors of used clothing, household items, and sewing skills. The WTH Treasurer also obtained donations from her husband's family. Her brother-in-law Stephen S. Hoe became an active worker for the WTH and donated a Mason and Hamlin cabinet organ to the Home in 1883.⁴³

Anna Hoe always donated more money to the WTH than her husband did, even though he left an estate worth over a million dollars when he died in 1925. She collected her inheritance in 1890, when her father died, and began to lavish even more generous gifts on the Home after that date.⁴⁴ Her mother's donations to the WTH also increased substantially at that time. While her husband still lived, Margaret Dows donated money, foodstuffs, and made "fancy articles" for sale on behalf of the WTH mortgage fund. After the death

⁴³Anna Hoe's unmarried sisters Mary and Susan, Margaret, who had married Dr. Carroll Dunham, and Linda (Mrs. George B.) Cooksey, as well as her brothers Tracy and David, Jr. and David's wife all gave to the Home. In 1886, Susan Dows married Christian A. Herter, a physician and biochemist who organized one of the nation's first medical research laboratories in their Manhattan home. In 1898, Herter served as chairman of the pathological chemistry faculty at Bellevue Hospital. As a friend of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., he helped to establish and served as a charter member of the Board of Directors of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in New York. *American National Biography* vol. 10, s.v. "Herter, Christian Archibald, by Stuart Galishoff, 685-686.

The WTH Annual Report for 1883, 15.

⁴⁴The will of Anna Hoe's brother David Dows, Jr., who died in 1899 at the age of forty-two, noted that although her father's will left the bulk of his estate to his namesake, it also provided that each of his six other children would receive \$100,000 at age twenty-five and the undesignated remainder of their legacies at thirty, suggesting both a very large fortune and a disposition to trust considerable portions of it to fairly young offspring. The will provided that minor children would not receive more than \$5,000 yearly. "In the Matter of the Estate of David Dows, Jr. Inventory and Appraisal," Surrogate's Court, Westchester County; Will admitted February 11, 1899, Liber 134, 32 in File No. 152-1899 Westchester Archives Estate Inventories, Series 16.

At the time of his death at age seventy-seven, Richard Hoe was a Trustee of the Bowery Savings Bank. He left legacies of \$327,570 to each of his three surviving siblings, but only \$107,581 to his widow. His will made no mention of children, which corroborates available census listings. *Times*, December 23, 1925, 19.

of David Dows in 1890, both Anna Hoe and her mother also loaned funds to the WTH, which enabled the institution to continue operating when the county did not meet its obligations in time. The two women often reimbursed the Home for the amounts necessary to repay their loans. In 1897 the WTH satisfied loans to the White Plains Bank in the amount of \$1,148 and to Mrs. M. E. Dows for \$1,200, for which she donated an equal amount. The WTH repaid a loan of \$287 from Anna Hoe and borrowed another \$3,107 from her and \$100 from Ann Skeel. The following year, the WTH repaid \$208 to Mrs. Dows, for which she made a \$208 gift to cancel the loan, \$100 to Ann Skeel, and \$2,000 to Anna Hoe, for which she donated a like sum. Anna Hoe granted the Home an additional loan for \$3,218 that year.⁴⁵

Helen Vincent and Ann Skeel served as the first auditors of the WTH. Thereafter eminent men of law and finance in Westchester filled that post. In 1887, David Cromwell, a White Plains banker and a member of the WTH Auditing Committee, "examined and found correct" a very odd entry in Anna Hoe's accounts for the WTH. From its founding in 1880, the WTH spent minimal amounts on what Hoe described as Incidental Expenses, sums representing no more than five percent of its total budget each year. Yet, in 1887 the total spent for Incidental Expenses reached \$2,452, a huge sum by

⁴⁵In 1897 Anna Hoe provided the Home with a \$35,000 mortgage for the new construction. WTH Annual Reports for 1897, 12, 22-23; and for 1898, 18-19. In 1901, Anna Hoe made a gift of a new brick school building to the WTH. In 1907, the year before the Home closed, she financed another brick building which housed an assembly room and a playroom for the boys. WTH Annual Report for 1907, 8.

comparison, for which the Treasurer offered no explanation. Since she accounted for every triviality that year, this item remains a mystery. Subsequent expenditures for incidentals reverted to much smaller sums that averaged four percent of the Home's annual budgets.⁴⁶

THE COMMITTEES

The stated object of the WTH was to

receive all such destitute children of Westchester County as may be legally committed to its charge or care, in a temporary home, in which such children may be maintained, nursed, and taken care of, and receive instruction, training, and discipline, and be taught to labor in such manner as may be most instructive and conducive to further usefulness of such children

while they resided in the institution. Since the Home also focused on placing the children in private homes so that they might be "speedily absorbed into the general population and become accustomed to self-supporting industry," the WTH claimed its further mission was to exercise guardianship over such children until they reached the age of majority. To achieve these ends, the WTH management initially divided itself into the following committees: House, Clothing, Instruction, and Placement of Children in Homes. All WTH committees had to report monthly to the Executive Committee, and quarterly

⁴⁶Incidental expenses totalled \$149 in 1880, \$217 in 1881, \$416 in 1883, \$270 in 1884, and \$481 in 1885. WTH Annual Reports for 1880-1908; for 1887, 18.

Cromwell, a Board member and auditor of the WTH from 1887 until the closing of the Home, descended from old Westchester families. He was president of the Home Savings Bank and associated with the First National Bank of White Plains, County Trust Company, and First National Bank of Mount Vernon. Cromwell was Westchester County Treasurer in 1878 and 1884. He also served as Treasurer of White Plains Hospital and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Presbyterian Church in White Plains. *Who's Who in New York*, s.v. "Cromwell, David," 398. Scharf, vol. I, 654; vol. II, 754.

to the Board of Managers, through their chairman or in writing.⁴⁷

HOUSING

The Board of Managers charged the House Committee with the oversight of the "health, comfort and management of the children," including inspection of their sleeping arrangements and clothing, ensuring good hygiene and nutrition, and seeing that they were vaccinated against smallpox. In addition, the House Committee had responsibility for the inmates' diet, the purchase of provisions and medicines, and the heating, ventilation, and sanitary condition of the institution. Its members visited the Home at least once a week to ascertain its needs and its progress.⁴⁸

From the beginning, providing adequate housing for an ever-increasing inmate population created a major problem for the organization. The WTH had grown from one residence with forty-four children in June, 1880 to three houses and seventy-three inmates by 1884. Within two years of taking the Shapter farm in 1880, the WTH had to rent a second house in Pleasantville. Then, in 1884, the Home placed ten nursery children with the nearby Baker family for six months and secured a third house to accommodate the overflow and provide a residence for Pierce and his family. Two unnamed Managers

⁴⁷By the Fifth Annual Report in 1884, the Board had added a Finance Committee and by the Eighth in 1887 a Committee on Membership in order to engage additional volunteers and supporters to keep up with the needs of a steadily growing institution. WTH Annual Report of 1887, 5-6.

⁴⁸WTH Annual Reports for 1880, 7; and for 1885, 5. Address, 15-16. See Chapter 3 for a more detailed description of how the House Committee fulfilled its obligations.

assumed the rent for the third house. Other problems with the Pleasantville facilities included a poor water supply. An Annual Report complained that when the brook froze, they had to melt ice in order to do laundry.⁴⁹ Housing inmates in so many different locations required duplication of resources, caretakers, and servants. The institution needed larger quarters.

In 1885, five years after founding the Home, the WTH purchased the estate of attorney Stephen Marshall described as a "fine old country residence surrounded by a fine growth of tall trees" located on sixteen acres on North Street in White Plains. The house and property cost \$14,000 and the WTH spent an additional \$3,000 to install a range, a cistern, a furnace in the cellar, additional dormitories to accommodate the increasing number of inmates, and a small hospital to isolate the sick. The Annual Report for 1885 acclaimed the proximity of the Home to the White Plains railroad station and the convenience of the new location for county officials and Board members. The emphasis reflected their small regard for the accessibility of the Home for visitation by parents of the inmates.⁵⁰

Even with the larger property, the Housing committee faced an endless need for upgrading, improving, and enlarging the facilities. In addition to housing the inmates, they needed added accommodations for the isolation of

⁴⁹WTH Annual Reports for 1880, 10; for 1883, 6; and for 1884, 17.

⁵⁰WTH Annual Report for 1885, 5, 6, and 12. "Pearce (*sic*) Under Fire" in *New York World*, February 6, 1894, French Scrapbook vol. 10, 87-88. Family members who came from outlying areas would not benefit from the train station, nor would those who had to take the cross-county trolleys. Chapter 3 will address parental visitation in greater detail.

the sick and the quarantine of new inmates to avoid epidemics of childhood diseases, quarters for the staff, and defined areas for inmates' schooling, worship, and play. In 1887, the committee resolved to build a new hospital. The institution then converted the former hospital space into a quarantine for new admissions. The following year with three new hospital pavilions completed, the WTH turned to the construction of a detached laundry building with eight stationary slate tubs, a steam drying room, ironing facilities, a Worthington pump that WTH boys operated by hand, and apparatus for heating water.⁵¹

The depression of 1893 did not curtail the continued improvement of the premises. Anna Hoe purchased and donated pasture land adjoining the Home that year. Although the WTH saved the annual rental fee of \$70 a year, it constructed a stable that cost \$1,347. The depression persisted into 1894, and the WTH Annual Report bemoaned the extreme frugality required to run the institution on a reduced income.⁵² Yet, extreme frugality did not extend to the physical appearance of the Home. During this period, wealthy donors expected

⁵¹WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 11-12; and 1889, 6. In 1892, H. R. Worthington Co. replaced the Home's hand pump with a three-horsepower steam engine, which also heated the three schoolrooms located above the laundry. Apparently, even after Sara Worthington no longer actively worked for the Home, her interest in the institution continued. WTH Annual Report for 1892, 6.

⁵²In 1894, the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School also acknowledged that despite the "hard times for millions," they avoided privation by using the produce of their farm and very careful management. History of the Wartburg, 98.

Wiebe notes that across the nation the very wealthy purchased both immortality and proof of their benevolence by endowing orchestras, libraries, universities, and churches, 41.

substantial and visible evidence of their generosity. Despite a reduced budget, in 1894 the Board of Managers remained very concerned with the image of the Home's public areas and spent WTH funds to recarpet the stairs, halls and lower floor of the main building. They obviously thought that welcoming visitors in well-maintained and gracious surroundings would aid them in attracting donors and volunteers. To that end, Margaret Dows donated additional carpeting for the Managers' meeting room. That same year the Home installed telephone connections between the main house and the hospital and other outlying buildings. Anna Hoe financed new flooring in the dining room, asphalt walks in the boys' playground, and a new fence separating the playground from the stable yard.⁵³

After the fire in 1895 destroyed the main building, the WTH completed a new brick edifice in March of 1896. The new construction included a sun parlor attached to the day nursery and a playground with a wooden platform and awnings, a piano in the dining room donated by some of the attendants, "neat rows of iron cribs and beds each covered by a snow-white spread," and a boy's playhouse for use in bad weather. In 1901 the Home completed a two-story, five classroom brick school building with a playroom and lavatories in the basement. The school connected to the main building by a corridor enclosed in the winter. The Annual Report of 1907 mentions installation of a swimming pool, fire hydrants to protect all buildings, and the construction of another brick

⁵³WTH Annual Report for 1894, 6-7, 9.

and concrete building used alternately as a boys' playroom and an assembly room that doubled as a chapel or auditorium. The new addition had a second story with a Slojd workshop, quarters for attendants, and "suitable, humane disciplinary rooms." The Annual Report neglected to specify how punishment was administered in those rooms.⁵⁴

INSTRUCTION

The responsibilities of the Committee on Instruction included arranging for the children's "proper instruction, religious, literary and industrial." In addition to basic schooling, this entailed ensuring that the inmates regularly attended church on Sunday, that the girls learned to sew and do housework, and that "the labor of the boys is properly directed." The WTH had classes for two or three hours a day and held Sunday School on the premises. The Home eventually provided kindergarten and some vocational training for its inmates. Chapter 3, "In the Home," will deal with the education of inmates more extensively.

CLOTHING

Providing clothing for large numbers of children, who usually appeared at the Home with only the one set of worn clothing on their backs, presented a serious undertaking for the volunteers. The duties of the Committee on Clothing consisted of purchasing, cutting, making, altering, and mending clothing, and creating an inventory of girls' and boys' clothing, shoes, and hats

⁵⁴WTH Annual Reports for 1898, 7-12; for 1901, 7-8; and for 1907, 8-9. See Chapters 3 and 5 for additional information on discipline at the Home.

in different sizes. The Clothing Committee noted that in order to keep fifty children properly clothed, the Home needed a stock of 635 garments in addition to hats, caps, shoes, and stockings. In 1884, the committee designed patterns to fit each size child in order to make the process more efficient. Year after year the Annual Reports recounted the huge task of assembling ample clothing for children of all ages and sizes, who came and went frequently throughout the year. WTH members cut hundreds of garments, sheets, and towels. They sewed many of them and drafted the older girls at the Home to help with the stitching of new clothes and the mending of old. Within a year of the Home's establishment, Board members arranged for the inmates of the New York House of Industry, a female reformatory in New York City, to accept some of their sewing chores. WTH members also recruited their friends and acquaintances in sewing circles throughout Westchester and Manhattan to assist with the escalating responsibility as the inmate population grew.⁵⁵

The Board expressed its gratitude for sewing assistance in a special category of acknowledgment in the Annual Reports every year. The itemized

⁵⁵Address, 16. Black, 71. WTH Annual Reports for 1881, 5, 8-9, and 15-16; and for 1884, 8.

In 1876, the thirty-one girls at the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School in Mount Vernon sewed 836 garments and other articles by hand, mended 8,109, and laundered 34,432. History of the Wartburg, 19.

During the Civil War, the need to produce large quantities of uniforms for soldiers led to the more widespread use of the sewing machine, which Elias Howe invented in 1846, and the use of standardized patterns rather than custom-fit clothing. Ellen and Ebenezer Butterick began their pattern business in 1864 with paper patterns for a man's shirt, a baby's dress, and a boy's suit. William Chauncy Langdon, *Everyday Things in American Life 1776-1876* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1941), 270-272.

listings confirm that women of means plied their needles for the less fortunate in independent sewing groups, as well as those affiliated with church, mothers' meeting, Ladies' Aid, and benevolent societies in every town in Westchester. Although wealthy Westchester families usually had their own seamstresses or sewing maids for personal sewing and mending, the WTH volunteers did the actual cutting and much of the sewing themselves. As women had for centuries, WTH volunteers turned menial tasks into social encounters. Sewing represented not only a very personal contribution for these women, but also an opportunity to join with other members of the organization in a distinctly feminine as well as benevolent occupation.⁵⁶

Even with donations of fabric and sewing skills, the WTH had difficulty managing the clothing expenses for inmates. The WTH finally appealed to the Superintendents of the Poor and received a clothing allowance of two dollars for each new admission. In 1892, the average yearly clothing expenditure per child reached \$9.40; the committee spent a total of \$1,035 that year.⁵⁷

PLACEMENT

In July 1880, shortly after the founding of the Home, Mrs. Henry R. Worthington of Irvington, the first chairman of the Placement Committee, and her cousin Charles W. Woolsey of Sing Sing initiated a letter writing campaign

⁵⁶Jennie Prince Black, 71.

⁵⁷WTH Annual Report for 1892, 8. The fire of 1895 destroyed the stores of clothing the women produced and placed severe strains on the Clothing Committee. WTH Annual Report for 1897, 14. By 1898, the Clothing Committee and its many helpers had produced 1,241 garments in one year. WTH Annual Report for 1898, 14.

to solicit assistance from prominent acquaintances. They sought placement homes for inmates with suitable families and hoped to arrange for the visitation of WTH children already situated. Their typewritten form letter outlined the main object of the organization as seeking to have WTH inmates "absorbed into the better part of the community, by securing homes for them in respectable families, in the hope of blotting out . . . the taint of pauperism, and of insuring to them a fair start in life."⁵⁸ It tactfully omitted the implicit expectation that these children would serve as unpaid workers in those respectable families.

The two wrote to influential and concerned Westchester residents, many of whom were already involved in charitable work with children. Although the form letter elicited gracious and cooperative replies from interested parties throughout the county, many wealthy volunteers travelled so much that they seldom had the opportunity to devote much time to the enterprise. Among these, Sarah Jay, the thirty-two-year-old great-granddaughter of John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, wrote from her family's estate in Rye agreeing to help, but noted that she had just returned from a month's absence and would be out of the country again from May to December. Even Woolsey wrote to Worthington from a Newport summer address to resign his association with the committee in anticipation of departure on a steamer voyage to Europe. But Woolsey assured his cousin that he expected that they would assemble "a valuable corps of assistants" from their

⁵⁸"Form Letter," in Williams Papers.

correspondence.⁵⁹

Isaiah Thornton Williams assumed the chairmanship of the Placement Committee from 1881 to 1883. A distinguished attorney, Williams appears in the 1880 census as a sixty-one-year-old widower. He lived with four sons and three servants at his farm in Chappaqua near his friend and client, Horace Greeley, editor of the *New York Tribune* and the Liberal Republican candidate for president in 1872.⁶⁰ Anna Hoe succeeded Williams in 1884 and continued as chairman for the remainder of the Home's existence, until 1908.

In 1882, the Placement Committee report fretted that the Superintendents of the Poor had complete control over placements, which limited the ability of the Home to carry out their "great purpose . . . to rear

⁵⁹We tend to think that caring about children derives from some innate or culturally-constructed maternal feeling. Yet Helen Gould was not the only person in Westchester to provide a home for needy children on her property. Orlando B. Potter, a wealthy lawyer who agreed to help Woolsey and Worthington, also had a home for poor children on his farm in Ossining. Potter assisted President Lincoln and Secretary of the Treasury Chase in establishing a national currency after the defeat of Union forces at Bull Run in 1861. Scharf, vol.1, 328. "An Honor to His Party," dated "Jan. to July '94" in French Scrapbook, 88.

After the Civil War, American tourism to Europe resumed enthusiastically. Wealthy New Yorkers encountered each other on trans-Atlantic ships and at European hotels, tourist attractions, parties, and the Protestant church services offered at American and English chapels. Ward, 37. Many WTH Board members also summered at Newport and divided their winters between their New York City homes and European travel. In 1898, Ann Skeel "spent the winter in Europe, returning to her duties in early summer with renewed health and vigor." WTH Annual Report for 1898, 14. Letter from Sarah Jay to Woolsey, dated August 9, 1880, in Williams Papers. Telephone interview with Eda Burne, Assistant Director and Archivist at the Jay Heritage Center, December 11, 2002. Letter from Woolsey to Worthington, dated August 10, 1880 in Williams Papers.

Additional discussion about the placement of WTH inmates will appear in Chapter 4.

⁶⁰Williams also enjoyed friendships with Ralph Waldo Emerson, A. Bronson Alcott, and Henry Thoreau. He was an original incorporator of the WCHS and one of its vice-presidents. Scharf, 547-550.

When he yielded his post on the Placement Committee in 1884, Williams assumed the chairmanship of the Finance Committee. WTH Annual Reports for 1881 - 1884.

these children . . . to a condition of moral and material well-being superior to that into which they were born." The committee sought to exercise guardianship over the children in their care "with full powers to enforce every right to which they may be entitled." At the time, the law denied them those powers.

Despite this slight friction with Westchester authorities, the WTH accomplished its original agenda with great success. They established the temporary home as an efficiently-run institution, providing inmates with food, shelter, clothing, medical care, and some schooling until such time as they could be returned to their families or placed in private homes. They achieved this while maintaining the goodwill and support of the community. Perhaps because of the presence of powerful men on the WTH Board or perhaps because the new institution encroached on no one else's territory, the WTH managed to avoid the intense acrimony that characterized the relationship between county officials and the women of the Poorhouse Visiting Committee.

CHAPTER 2 - COMMITMENT TO THE HOME

Across the nation, the proliferation of institutions for the temporary care of children enabled nineteenth century families to survive crises, sometimes caused by the uncertainty of business cycles, but more often the result of family emergencies and/or breakdowns. They also provided communities with sanctuaries for children who had been abandoned, neglected, or abused and places in which to confine truants and other youngsters who provoked concern by taking to the streets. The WTH, also founded to provide temporary care, served the many levels of Westchester society in similar ways. It primarily addressed the broad objectives of the community and the aims of families in distress, which often corresponded. The community, like families in need, required an institution in which to place Protestant orphans, half-orphans, children from destitute families, those in need of protection, homeless youngsters, boys whose parents could not control them, but were not criminal enough to send to reformatories, and girls who appeared sexually active or at risk.

During this period, elite Americans tended to judge the children of the poor as potentially dangerous. Consequently, youngsters, who had not committed crimes but whose presence on the streets caused discomfort to the comfortable classes, were arrested and sent to institutions such as the WTH. Westchester residents of the upper classes occasionally expressed their anxiety openly, but often translated what they feared about the poor into language that

masked their desire to protect themselves. They did this by focusing on the need to safeguard the children from lives of future crime and degradation. In the process, they developed a vocabulary regarding the children and their families that everyone from public officials to the families themselves eventually learned to employ for their own ends. The factors that motivated families to commit their children to an institution did not always coincide with those of the community. But those who needed to use the WTH learned to manipulate the system. By using the code words devised by the upper-classes, they ensured their children's commitment to the Home.

Although elite members of the community often equated destitution with moral deviance, the families of children sent to the WTH had a different understanding of their troubles. Few families whose children entered the Home admitted destitution. Yet, a great many inmates were committed for reasons that were exacerbated by financial distress.¹ Poor families were accustomed to struggling. Many managed to stay afloat until the occurrence of some truly dire incident, the most serious being the loss of a spouse. Most children arrived at the WTH when a parent died, was very ill, or absconded, or when a father deserted and a mother had to go out to work or enter the county poorhouse. Families compelled to enter the Poorhouse automatically lost their children over the age of two. These were taken from them and placed in institutions that

¹The WTH Ledgers did not relate the occupations of most of its inmates' parents. They occasionally mentioned that a mother worked as a domestic or had gone to the Poorhouse, and sometimes noted that a father worked on the railroad or in a foundry or factory.

cared only for children, as mandated by the New York Children's Law of 1875. In most cases, families attributed their inability to care for their children to the failure of family support. Women deprived of the family breadwinner frequently could not maintain their children alone. When they lost their wives, even working fathers often could not afford to hire someone to care for their offspring or board them out on their meager wages.²

The Disbrow family's story illustrates the way that the same narrative could be understood in entirely different ways, depending upon the background of the interpreter. In June 1880, nine-year-old Harriet Disbrow found refuge in her grandmother's home in Bedford after her mother's death. The widowed grandmother Clara Disbrow kept house for her son Charles, who worked in an optical factory, and raised his three small children. The family could remain intact and Harriet could attend school only as long as her grandmother ran the household while her father went to work. Between 1880 and 1884 some further crisis of care must have occurred. A WTH Ledger records Harriet's commitment to the Home on June 30, 1884 on charges of disorderly conduct. In the Ledger Pierce rated her father, who accompanied the girl to the Home, as "very intemperate," by which he meant habitually intoxicated.³

²Hacsi points out that the numbers of children in New York State poorhouses tripled between 1861 and 1866. The gravity of the situation led New York State to establish the State Board of Charities and to pass legislation that would remove children from the noxious atmosphere of the poorhouses. Hacsi, 29.

³1880 Census, District 84 Bedford. Harriet's sister Emma was four and her baby brother Charles, one, indicating that their mother may have died from causes related to childbirth.

Pierce's frequent assessment of parents as intemperate seems to denote excessive drinking rather than a lack of total abstinence. The WTH Ledgers relate when parents were

By the time Harriet entered the WTH, the Disbrow family no longer lived in Bedford with Harriet's grandmother, but were on their own in White Plains. Without grandmother's help, the responsibility for housekeeping and tending her younger siblings must have fallen on thirteen-year-old Harriet. According to the 1880 census, few families in Westchester expected a very young teenager to assume responsibility for running a household without adult female supervision, even in circumstances of serious family disorder. Only four examples appear in all the households of Bedford, Cortlandt, Eastchester, and parts of Greenburgh.⁴ As might be expected, things began to fall apart for the Disbrows. A drunken father and a girl incapable of performing a woman's work surely led to family tension, adolescent resentment, and possible rebellion. A month after Harriet's commitment, the School Census of White Plains included her younger siblings Emma and Charles as students. Then, two days after Christmas 1884, Charles Disbrow committed his two younger children (now ten and six) to the WTH. Either the ten-year-old Emma was no more adept at

jailed for drunkenness. One father "drowned while under the influence of liquor." A mother who accompanied her children to the Home "was so intoxicated she did not know where she was or what she was doing." Another mother was "taken to the county almshouse insane from drink." In contrast, Pierce noted that William Hennessey's father, who worked in a foundry, "takes beer occasionally but (was) not often intemperate." He also judged the father of the Groves children as a "fairly good man (who) drinks moderately." WTH Ledgers 15:48 (February 1, 1889); 15:2 (August 25, 1887); 15:84 (May 10, 1890); 14:48 (April 29, 1886); 14:32 (September 3, 1885); and 15:20 (March 28, 1888).

⁴1880 Census. In Cortlandt, one fourteen-year-old daughter of a widowed quarry worker kept house and cared for a younger sister and three younger brothers. In Eastchester, a girl of thirteen kept house for her widowed father, older sister and brother, while all three worked as tailors. Another thirteen-year-old kept house and looked after her ten-year-old sister and their seventy-one-year old widowed grandfather. The oldest daughter of a laborer with no wife tended her two-year-old brother while her younger sisters, twelve and eight, attended school. The census identified the fourteen-year-old's occupation as "keeping house."

running the household than her older sister had been or any older helper their father hired did not work out.⁵ From an elite perspective, this story confirms the upper-class belief that poverty led to moral collapse, as it ended with a "very intemperate" father and a daughter committed to the Home as a disorderly child. From the point of view of the family, it illustrates the sad consequences that children endured as a result of family disintegration. No matter how one interpreted the case, once all other avenues had been exhausted, only institutionalization remained.

THE COMMUNITY'S USE OF THE HOME

In New York State, every child had to be committed legally to an institution by an authorized official, even if brought by parents or guardians. Ledger information included the name, title, and town of the official responsible for each commitment and discharge. According to the WTH Ledgers, city and county judges, Superintendents of the Poor, Overseers of the Poor, Justices of the Peace, and Commissioners of Charities all had the authority to commit and discharge youngsters from the institution, as did an occasional constable or Police Justice. Any of these officials could determine if a child was in need of public support or public protection.⁶

⁵WTH Ledgers 14:6 (June 30, 1884); and 14:16 (December 27, 1884). 1880 Census. "Census of Union Free Village School, White Plains, Westchester County, August 1, 1884." 8. WTH Ledger 14:16 (December 27, 1884). By the time the WTH placed the nine-year-old Charles with a family in 1887, the Ledger reported his father's "whereabouts unknown." WTH Ledger 15:11 (May 5, 1887).

⁶In 1897 for example, twenty-four children were committed to the WTH by "Magistrates and Courts," twenty-three by "Commissioners of Charities," nine by a "Superintendent of the Poor," and sixty-eight by "Overseers of the Poor." WTH Annual Report for 1897, 18. See

The Westchester County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children acted with the courts to remove youngsters from dangerous environments. The surviving Westchester County SPCC Reports for the years 1902 through 1906 contain frightening examples of neglect and abuse, with far more graphic details than cases described in the WTH Ledgers. Dr. Galusha B. Balch, the president of the county SPCC, intervened on behalf of Janette Sargent, an eleven-year-old whose parents were "very intemperate and abusive" to the girl. When she entered the WTH, Dr. Balch sent word "to place her in a good home." When Janette was discharged to a family in Long Ridge, Connecticut, Pierce noted with satisfaction, "She has a good home." Others arrived at the Home bearing physical evidence of mistreatment. According to the WTH Ledger, six-year-old Sampson Schuyler's mother was dead and his father "worthless." He was committed to the Home on a complaint by Dr. Balch and taken to Children's Hospital in Albany with the notation, "He cannot use his arm . . . since it was broken."⁷

Some children escaped the notice of the Westchester County SPCC but appeared at the Home in severely neglected condition. The three Jones

"Afterword" for further discussion of problems created by such a diffusion of authority.

⁷In 1902, the SPCC rescued Richard Barker, a fifteen-year-old African-American boy placed by the WTH with an African-American family. The householder, Mr. Howe, whipped the youth on his face and hands with a horsewhip, drawing blood. Westchester County SPCC Report ending June 1902, 7. WTH Ledgers 14:12 (October 23, 1884); and 14:17 (February 19, 1885).

Charlotte Parks, a thirteen-year-old orphan had been living with her grandfather in Yonkers. The SPCC recommended her commitment to the WTH because her grandfather was "unable to care for the child properly," without specifying exactly how he failed. WTH Ledger 15:126 (February 4, 1892). WTH Ledgers 14:18 (March 7, 1885); and 14:25 (June 15, 1885).

youngsters appeared in "filthy, ragged" clothing after their mother died and their father abandoned them. The parents of Josephine and Isabella Johnson deserted the eight and five-year-old girls two months before they entered the WTH. In the interim, they lived with an aunt who brought them to the Home "with only one garment and in half-starved condition." The five-year-old orphan Mary Johnson lived with a half sister who neglected her to the point that the child was "half-starved and unable to walk." When the little girl died ten days after arriving at the Home, Pierce recorded that she was committed "in a dying condition - was in the last stages of marasmus," a wasting illness.⁸

Pierce also recorded in the WTH Ledgers those instances when the Westchester County SPCC and court officials advised permanent separation of families in order to protect children. We cannot know how they arrived at these decisions - in what condition they found the children or what evidence they received from neighbors, local police, or the parents themselves. Etta Brazel entered the WTH for the first time at the age of two, the illegitimate offspring of a white father, who deserted, and a black mother. When her mother married two years later, she removed Etta from the Home. After only a year, the Mount Pleasant Justice of the Peace who committed the girl to the WTH for the second time ordered that she "not . . . be given to the mother should she come for her as she is unable to care for the child." At the commitment of the Slagel brothers, Pierce's entry helped to explain the decision to keep the boys from

⁸WTH Ledgers 14:62 (December 10, 1886); 15:68 (August 22, 1889); 15:42 (December 19, 1888); and 15:23 (December 29, 1888).

their father. Their intemperate father was in Albany Penitentiary for abusing their mother, who was dying of consumption. Pierce agreed to abide by "the wish of the mother and friends of the children to keep the children from the father."⁹

The courts and the Westchester County SPCC also became involved in the commitments of girls whom they perceived as either potentially dangerous or at risk because of their sexual activity. During this period, American courts exhibited concern about controlling the sexual conduct of young females or protecting them from sexual exploitation by sentencing them to institutions. According to one local SPCC report, Dolly Douglas's mother sent the fifteen-year-old to the WTH to "get her away from a man." Unfortunately, she delayed too long. Dolly was already pregnant, and the WTH transferred her to the reformatory at Bedford.¹⁰

Few such incidents appear in the Westchester County SPCC Reports prior

⁹WTH Ledger 15:10 (November 8, 1887); 39 (June 18, 1889); 94 (August 20, 1890).

On January 17, 1888, the Westchester County SPCC recommended that William Roberts's and Seymour Clark's intemperate parents "not have control" of their sons again. WTH Ledger 15:16 (January 17, 1888). When Viola Finch arrived at the WTH at the age of thirteen, Pierce observed, "Mother depraved, Married a worthless drunkard. The child's moral character is endangered by contact with either." WTH Ledgers 15:84 (May 19, 1890); and 15:28 (July 5, 1888). An additional note at this entry stated that Mrs. Slagel "Died August 4th, 1888." A year and a half later, Robert and John's maternal grandmother removed them from the WTH, having "secured homes for the boys with some relatives." WTH Ledger 15:51 (February 13, 1890). A Mount Pleasant Justice of the Peace committed two of the Ferris children to the WTH for the second time with the order that they not be returned to their "intemperate and depraved" parents. WTH Ledger 15:26 (June 6, 1888). The Ledger that recorded that Alleck Williams's widowed mother was both "intemperate" and "depraved," insisted that "this child is not to be returned to the mother." WTH Ledger 15:104 (April 4, 1891).

¹⁰Odem, 1-4. Brenzel notes that a Massachusetts girl, who went out at night with a group of girls to talk and sing but "met no men," was labeled a "potential prostitute," 2-4. Case No. 1,595 in Report of the WCSPCC for the three months ending June 1902, 5.

to 1904. Thereafter, the numbers of sexual assaults on children grow more numerous. It is not possible to determine precisely why the SPCC records show increased reports of "indecent assaults," "vile crimes," "seduction" (which usually applied to older girls who were promised marriage in exchange for sexual favors), and outright rape of girls and boys. The local SPCC reported that in 1885 Yonkers had a population of 15,000. As the county's major industrial center at the end of the century, its population had increased to 60,000 in 1905. Yet, the organization emphasized that it did not encounter four times as many cases of sexually mistreated children, or even twice as many. The increased accounts of sexual attacks on children may have resulted from more frequent reporting of such assaults, a greater willingness on the part of the SPCC to acknowledge such behavior publicly, or increased anxiety about the sexual vulnerability of children rather than an actual increase in the percentage of incidents. During this period, public hysteria about white slavery had reached a feverish peak. Although records of criminal convictions do offer evidence of forced prostitution, the fear and frenzy greatly exceeded the actual existence of the practice.¹¹

The community also resorted to the WTH in cases when it judged that youngsters were in need of correction. The reasons for committing and retaining so-called dangerous children differed according to gender. Officials,

¹¹Westchester County SPCC Report for 1905, 3. Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 112-135.

parents, and guardians brought "uncontrollable" male and female teenagers to the Home, but officials only committed boys to the WTH as truants or for *petit larceny*. Boys often failed to meet family, school, or community standards of behavior, or associated with unsavory friends or bad influences. The Westchester County SPCC Reports repeatedly cite specific offenses to describe boys in trouble: "incorrigible," "stays out late at night," "ungovernable," "smokes cigarettes," and "will not work or go to school." In July of 1888 John Render's father committed the ten-year-old. The Ledger noted that with his mother dead and his father working in a factory, "the boy has no one to care for him." This should have been reason enough for the WTH to admit him. However, Render added "and the street influence very bad," which assured John's acceptance in the Home.¹²

Lack of financial resources sometimes propelled youngsters onto the streets. Homeless girls were committed to the WTH on charges of "vagrancy," "begging," being "disorderly" or a "nuisance," but these designations, while illegal, did not necessarily indicate criminal activity. Alice Pierpoint, an English girl of fourteen, was committed in Yonkers for "leaving home" and "begging." Eleven-year-old Katie Spearing, mentioned earlier, slept in barns and outhouses until arrested as a nuisance.¹³

¹²WTH Ledger 15:30 (July 7, 1888).

¹³The majority of girls sentenced to the State Industrial School at Lancaster, Massachusetts, who had not been convicted of property crimes fell into four other categories, namely the homeless, "those in need of moral guardianship, those who were immoral, and those in need of physical protection." Brenzel, 124. A few female inmates committed to the WTH also fell

Of the 559 inmates listed in the two surviving WTH Ledgers, only nineteen (about 3%) were committed for illegal behavior, and only fifteen (close to 3%) as truants. Of the seven girls in this group, two were homeless, two were committed as "disorderly," and the mother of the three remaining girls simply could not afford to keep them. Significantly, twenty-five of the thirty-four inmates (nearly 74%) committed on any charges returned to a parent or a sibling, suggesting that their families did not consider them so bad that they would not take them back when their circumstances (or the children) improved.¹⁴

A change occurred in 1895 with the passage of the New York State "Compulsory Education Law," which required "the arrest of all truant or unruly children found on the streets after the opening of the school year on September 1st, and their commitment by a properly appointed officer to such institutions as may be legally qualified to receive them." Under the new law, the WTH received thirty-two truants in one year (1897), more than double the total recorded in both surviving WTH Ledgers. This phenomenon had a great impact on the inmate population, which contained ninety-four children of school age

within these categories.

WTH Ledgers 15:10 (October 27, 1887); and 15:110 (June 11, 1891).

¹⁴Even this small number may have been inflated, as parents learned to level the accusation of "truant" as a means of ensuring the commitment of a difficult or disobedient son. See Appendix C "WTH Inmates Committed for Alleged Criminal Activity." In 1897, twenty-seven of the thirty-two truants were discharged within the year, leaving only five in the Home. The WTH Annual Report for 1897, 11, 13, and 19.

that year.¹⁵

One youngster avoided the reformatory because his father wisely begged to have the boy committed to the WTH instead of serving a criminal sentence. For five months fourteen-year-old George Emerson Lockwood had worked as an office boy for Attorney William Kellogg, who "trusted the boy in every way" until he discovered money missing. Kellogg hired a detective who discovered that George was the culprit, and had a warrant issued for the boy's arrest. Lockwood's father's intervention saved him. After only a year at the Home, George was released to his parents. Pierce noted that they "seem like very respectable people," implying that they appeared both sober and well dressed. The Lockwoods turned to the WTH to save their son from incarceration and a criminal record. As their case shows, parents used the Home in ways that sometimes differed from the intentions of the community.¹⁶

USES OF THE HOME BY THE CHILDREN'S FAMILIES

The death, abandonment, or serious illness of either parent threatened family disaster. The children in more than half of the WTH families registered in the two surviving WTH Ledgers had lost at least one parent; 10% were full orphans, and 41% were half orphans. The offspring from thirty-eight families arrived at the Home because a parent was too ill to care for them. Some parents had disappeared, abandoning their offspring entirely. More than twice

¹⁵The Board of Education of the county in which truants resided paid for their support at the WTH, rather than the local budget of the Superintendent of the Poor.

¹⁶WTH Ledgers 15:34 (August 13, 1888) and 15:43 (September 17, 1889).

as many fathers as mothers deserted. Sixty-nine fathers abandoned their families, as opposed to thirty-two mothers; and Pierce's records disclosed when a mother who left her family did so to escape from her husband's abuse.¹⁷

A few parents succumbed to despair, sinking into madness, turning to drink or crime, or even killing themselves. Three fathers committed suicide and another was found arranging to hang himself in the woods and was sent to an insane asylum. Some parents of WTH inmates responded to their misfortunes by relocating in the hope of finding better luck or at least a job. One father left his children in the WTH and went to North Carolina to work in the cotton mills. Another deposited his family in the Home and settled in New Jersey, where he joined the Methodist Episcopal Church and eventually reunited the family.¹⁸ Any of these misfortunes could plummet a family into crisis and its children into an institution.

¹⁷Out of a total of 352 families registered in the WTH Ledgers, the offspring of thirty-seven families were full orphans, and those of 144 families were half orphans.

In 1897, for example, the inmate population consisted of six full orphans, forty-five half orphans, and sixty-three children with both parents living. WTH Annual Report for 1897, 18.

¹⁸WTH Ledgers 14:22 (May 7, 1885); and 14:43 (April 2, 1886).

One father filled his pockets with stones and jumped in the Hudson River at Yonkers. His wife was about to deliver their fourth child; the other three children spent a month in the WTH before their mother could retrieve them. WTH Ledgers 14:30 (August 11, 1885); and 14:33 (September 24, 1885). Another man, who had lost his wife seven years earlier, left his ten and twelve-year-old sons orphaned when he hanged himself in the piazza of their house, while intoxicated. WTH Ledger 14:70 (April 9, 1887).

Two other fathers and six mothers were confined in insane asylums. Fifteen fathers and two mothers served time in jail while their children were in the WTH. In most cases, only one parent was in jail. A particularly unfortunate three-year-old girl was committed to the WTH while her father was in Sing Sing prison, her mother in the Albany penitentiary, and her grandmother in White Plains jail. WTH Ledger 15:60 (June 8, 1889). Within a few months, the Home placed the child with a family in Jersey City Heights, far from her family. WTH Ledger 15:47 (October 24, 1889).

The family backgrounds and detailed reasons for the children's commitments appear in their registration notes when they were admitted to the Home. The first group of thirty-one youngsters to arrive at the WTH when it opened in April 1880 came from the Poorhouse. By September of 1880 the Home housed forty-four youngsters, indicating that local families had begun to use the facility as well. Not surprisingly, the largest numbers of WTH inmates came from Westchester's industrial centers, towns most heavily populated with the laboring poor and immigrants. During the eight year period covered by the two surviving WTH Ledgers in which 352 families appear, children from seventy-five families came from Yonkers, thirty-two from Cortlandt, twenty-five from Mount Pleasant, and twenty from Rye. Only eleven families came from the more rural area of Bedford, and the same number from Portchester sent their children to the Home.¹⁹

In accordance with New York state law, children were sent to institutions whose religious affiliation matched that of their parents. Since the majority of Irish and Italian immigrants to the county were Catholic, their children went to Catholic institutions. For this reason, the Protestant WTH had an inmate population that was 72% native-born. Families appeared to understand and approve of the religious constraints set by the State. For example, the WTH Ledger carefully recorded the oath of nine-year-old Lewis Knapp's Irish mother

¹⁹The WTH Annual Report for 1881, 6. After 1880, destitute Protestant children, who had been committed to the Poorhouse with their parents, continued to be sent to the Home when they turned two, or were transferred at once if they were older.

that the boy had "never attended the Catholic church nor been baptized" in it. Institutions corrected errors originally made in identifying a child's religion and transferred inmates to an appropriate alternative. The orphaned George Threshie, thirteen, and his brother Frank, age ten, came to the WTH from the New York Catholic Protectory. Ten-year-old Thomas Henry Swan also arrived at the WTH after he had been "placed in the Catholic Protectory for a short time." In turn, the WTH sent the English brothers Robert and William Crompton to St. Francis Home for Children in Peekskill after the Home discovered that the boys were Catholic.²⁰

Most institutions for children established by white Americans excluded black children; the WTH accepted those who were Protestant. During the period covered by the Ledgers, ninety-one African-American children from fifty-seven families entered the Home. They represented 16% of the 352 families registered in the Ledgers. Children from eight of the families were full orphans; eighteen other families had lost one parent. Yet, children from twenty families (35%) returned to a family member, which closely resembled the percentage of other inmates (44%) who did so under the same circumstances. Comments in the Ledgers regarding the children and their parents resembled those of all other inmates, with one exception. At the admission of six-year-old Robert Scott, Pierce wrote a racist diatribe that also reflected his anger at the condition in which the boy arrived. He cited "negro slothfulness, want of practical

²⁰WTH Ledgers 15:58 (June 3, 1889); 14:22 (May 8, 1885); 15:68 (August 28, 1889); 14:18 (February 20, 1885); and 14:19 (March 10, 1885).

common sense, lack of will power" as the chief causes of the boy's commitment. African-American families continued to commit their offspring to the WTH even after St. Benedict's Home for Colored Children moved from New York City to Rye in 1891.²¹

Although many institutions refused to take black children, the WTH did not seem to discriminate against youngsters of color. In the Home, African-American children shared the same quarters, classes, duties, and discipline as other inmates. An Annual Report warmly described a nursery scene at nap time, noting that "for an hour and a half (each afternoon) the floor is covered with sleeping little ones, their black and white heads resting . . . upon pillows."²²

The Thomas family not only typifies the African-American families that used the WTH, it also illustrates the fact that the problems that propelled black children into the Home resembled those of all other children. Before he appeared at the WTH on April 22, 1886, Henry Thomas and his sister Florence and youngest brother George had been living with their maternal grandfather.

²¹New York and Ohio had the majority of institutions that accepted both black and white inmates during the nineteenth century. Timothy Hacsí, 35-36.

The almhouse in New York City received, but segregated black residents. Gunja San Gupta, 101. The Catholic Foundling Asylum accepted black babies. Julie Miller suspects that the majority were not Catholic. Miller, 228-229.

WTH Ledger 15:80 (March 7, 1890). Pierce recorded that children from five of the Home's African-American families were of mixed-race. Children from seven of the fifty-seven African-American families committed to the Home (12%) were identified as "illegitimate," compared to just under 4% of all other inmates.

²²WTH Annual Report for 1898, 8.

Their father was dead, and Superintendent Pierce condemned their mother for doing "nothing for the support of the children." Back in 1880 when his father Joseph was alive and working as a waiter, Henry's mother kept house and cared for him, his three older siblings, and baby sister Florence. The death of her husband and the birth of a sixth child may have overwhelmed her. Dealing with youngsters of five, eight, and nine likewise overwhelmed their grandfather, and he had them committed to the Home. After only two months, he removed the youngest child, but left Henry and Florence in the WTH. Although he understood that the older children could be placed as servants in the homes of strangers, he also knew that the WTH would provide what he could not - food, shelter, medical attention, supervision, and some schooling.²³

Historians have written of the large migration of former slaves and their descendants to northern cities between 1890 and 1930. But even in 1880 African-Americans were scattered throughout Westchester County; they also clustered in small communities. The largest of these included "Negro Hills" in Harrison which had thirty households; Portchester and Yonkers, each of which had thirteen families, and ten black families who lived in White Plains. Tarrytown harbored an enclave of reasonably successful African-Americans. Although the majority worked in menial occupations, the town had a pastor and two self-employed manufacturers and purveyors of confections. However they earned their living, all black residents in Tarrytown were dedicated to educating

²³1880 census, New Rochelle, District 114. WTH Ledgers 14:48 (April 22, 1886) and 14:49 (June 15, 1886).

their children. Five of the seven households had children of school age, every one of whom attended school. Over time, the village must have drawn other like-minded individuals; by 1897 Tarrytown had a lodge of African-American Free Masons with forty members. Like their neighbors of the laboring classes, black households took in relatives and boarders. However, the majority held nuclear families. This may have been because a large number of unmarried African-Americans lived in the homes of their employers.²⁴

The WTH Ledgers identified twenty-two inmates as illegitimate, representing less than 4% of the 559 children registered. During the nineteenth century, illegitimacy strained a mother's ability to provide for her child. As the fictitious aunt in Horatio Alger's *Jed, the Poorhouse Boy* explained, "I couldn't get a place with a baby on my hands, so I took it to the . . . poorhouse." Only four Westchester employers allowed their unmarried female servants to have their children live with them, all of them in Cortlandt. Although shame and employment restrictions made it harder for unmarried mothers to keep and support their children, a number of Westchester families sheltered unmarried daughters and their offspring. They further demonstrated their acceptance of the children by identifying them for the 1880 census-taker as their

²⁴Gilbert Osofsky's account of Harlem at the turn-of-the-century itemizes the occupations of African-Americans in New York. He records forty-two physicians and twenty-six lawyers. *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1963; second ed., 1971), 4-5, 8. No African-American doctors or lawyers and only two clergymen lived in the Westchester towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, and Eastchester. 1880 Census.

Renoda Hoffman Scrapbook, January 1, 1897, 106; Box 2 v.1, WCHS.

grandchildren. Only one family with three unmarried daughters and four unmarried sons assigned the label "bastard" to their year-old granddaughter.²⁵

Among the WTH inmates, the mothers of illegitimate children seemed as devoted to them, as concerned about their welfare, and as reluctant to have them placed out as the parents of other children in the Home. Pierce related that the mother of Percy Watson had been engaged to a man who refused to marry her. She worked as a domestic and had paid to board her son until she committed him to the WTH at the age of seven. Pierce appreciated the fact that she "seemed much attached to her child" and that she agreed to pay board, so that her son would remain in the Home.²⁶

Seven of the twenty-two youngsters whom Pierce identified as illegitimate (32%) returned to family members. The mothers of two of the four toddlers taken from the Poorhouse retrieved them as soon as they had recovered their physical or financial well-being. (The mother of a third died.) Others reclaimed their children when they later married. Although mothers often parted with children born out of wedlock because of the difficulty of finding and keeping work, putting a child in an institution not only gave a

²⁵Horatio Alger, Jr., *Jed, the Poorhouse Boy in Struggling Upward and Other Works*, Introduction by Russel Crouse (New York: Crown, 1945), 552.

1880 Census. An accurate tally of illegitimate children living with their families was not possible. In instances in which a grandchild had the same last name as the head of household, the child could have been the offspring of an unmarried daughter in the household or of a deceased son.

Miller writes of the shame that illegitimate birth conveyed both to the mother and the child, *passim*.

²⁶During the period covered by the Ledgers, the Home did not discharge Watson. WTH Ledger 15:12 (November 17, 1887).

woman the freedom to hold a job, but also to find a husband. Several mothers, who did not reclaim their children, paid board to the WTH to keep them from being sent out to work in private families. William Mann had been living with his grandmother before he entered the Home at the age of eleven. His mother remained "in service" in Massachusetts, but she agreed to pay \$1 a week for his board.²⁷

Although family troubles occurred at all economic and social levels, usually people with wealth could resolve or camouflage them more successfully. In one case however, a prominent Tarrytown family allowed their three grandchildren to enter the Home. The first two, eleven-year-old Nora Adams and her sister Estella, age six, arrived at the WTH on June 2, 1884. Pierce attributed their family's predicament to an "intemperate" father who had left his family. Pierce also recorded that their "depraved" mother was living in Tarrytown with her mother, Mrs. George Lewis. In 1880, the Lewis family lived in a mansion overlooking the Hudson River. Lewis, a retired merchant, and his wife, a donor to the WTH, lived with an unmarried daughter (twenty-four) and twin sons (twenty-one), attended by five adult servants. While they lived comfortably and magnanimously, the Lewises never received their granddaughters in their home.²⁸

²⁷WTH Ledger 14:54 (July 29, 1886). Mann was discharged to his mother's brother four years later. WTH Ledger 15:55 (May 10, 1890).

²⁸1880 Census, District 98 Greenburgh.

In 1885, Mrs. Lewis donated \$300 to the WTH Building Fund. WTH Annual Report for 1885, 12-14. In 1891, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis erected a "seven-foot-high Medallion vase fountain

Instead, the girls were shuttled between fourteen different placements around the county between 1884 and 1891. This could have been punishment for their daughter's "depraved" behavior, or perhaps she had married against their wishes. Evidence in the WTH Ledgers suggests that she was pregnant again when she returned to her parents' home. Four years after the two Adams girls entered the WTH, Pierce registered their three-year-old brother William with the notation, "Parents depraved and do not live together - Mother lives at Tarrytown."²⁹ Apparently any affection that blossomed between the grandparents and the little boy while he lived with them failed to secure him a permanent place at their table. Although the Lewises could well afford to support their grandchildren in their home or pay to board them at the WTH, they chose not to do so. Instead, they relegated the youngsters to the position of unpaid servants in the homes of strangers and the anguish of being placed out and returned repeatedly.

As the Lewis family story illustrates, the reasons that the families of

with double handles on a large pedestal" as a gift to the village of Tarrytown. Jeff Canning and Wally Buxton, *History of the Tarrytowns Westchester County, New York from Ancient Times to the Present* (Harrison: Harbor Hill, 1975), 74-75.

²⁹WTH Ledgers 14:2 (June 2, 1884); 14:9 (June 27, 1884); 14:6 (July 2, 1884); 14:19 (March 11, 1885); 14:47 (May 11, 1886); 14:54 (August 12, 1886); 14:73 (August 16, 1887); 14:77 (October 12, 1887); 14:78 (August 16, 1887); and 14:79 (October 24, 1887).

WTH Ledgers 15:6 (September 19, 1887); 15:8 (October 15, 1887); 15:40 (October 30, 1888); 15:19 (November 1, 1888); 15:46 (January 16, 1889); 15:31 (April 4, 1889); 15:58 (May 23, 1889); 15:37 (May 31, 1889); 15:45 (September 27, 1889); 15:74 (November 29, 1889); 15:47 (January 2, 1890); 15:55 (May 23, 1890); 15:86 (May 23, 1890); 15:88 (June 27, 1890); 15:63 (July 5, 1890); 15:100 (January 27, 1891); and 15:75 (March 5, 1891).

WTH Ledger 15:20 (April 12, 1888).

WTH inmates placed them in the institution were much more varied and complicated than those that activated the larger community. Despite the fact that a lack of money formed the basis of many of their misfortunes, the families of most WTH inmates - the destitute, the unemployed, and families that suffered the loss of a parent or caregiver - had multiple motivations for turning to the WTH. Sometimes their reasons corresponded with those of the community, as in cases of poverty, abandonment, and mistreatment of children. Other times, families pursued their own interests in their own ways. Many merely needed a temporary refuge for their children while they got back on their feet physically or economically or found other solutions for their children's care. A few needed a permanent home for orphaned children or half-orphans whom a parent could not raise alone. Some families required the medical attention for their children that the WTH could provide; others needed supervision for youngsters while parents worked. Some parents sought a pause from family tensions created by harsh stepparents, difficult adolescents, or the consequences of parental alcohol abuse. The majority suffered from some combination of shortage of money and lack of alternatives for their children's care.

Westchester families overwhelmed by the task of raising their children explored several alternatives before institutionalizing them. A number paid to board their children, a few found situations for older children, some left them

on their own while they went to work.³⁰ Turning to more secure family members remained the most common strategy. The numerous youngsters brought to the WTH by grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, or guardians suggest that many of the WTH inmates started out weathering their families' hardships in the homes of other family members, as the Disbrows and the Thomases did.

In times of crisis, most Westchester residents of all social and economic backgrounds dealt similarly with their problems. They turned to family first. Superintendent Pierce's family history illustrates the fluid nature of late nineteenth-century households. In his father's time, the Pierce farm appeared to accommodate any family member who needed a home - orphaned, widowed, and abandoned women, and grown children and grandchildren - in much the same way that other Westchester families accepted members in need. On the eve of the Civil War in 1860, the ten-year-old James lived with his parents, James and Mary, both forty-seven, two older sisters, Sarah, eighteen, and Caroline, fourteen, and an older brother, Thomas, sixteen, on a 114 acre property in Bedford. Three mature farm laborers and a nineteen-year-old female servant lived and worked with the family. Grandfather Thomas, eighty-three, lived next door with two unmarried daughters, Martha, fifty-eight, and Jane,

³⁰The Westchester County SPCC discovered a family of five children left alone while both parents worked; none of them attended school. In the same report, it noted that two children, the oldest of whom was eight, also were left alone by parents who worked in a factory. That investigation found that the children not only went to school, but also returned home to "a fire in the stove." Westchester SPCC Report ending April 1904, 12 and 14.

fifty-one, and a female servant.³¹

By 1870, of the four Pierce siblings, only twenty-year-old James remained at home. Martha Pierce had moved from next door and joined her brother's household. A sixteen-year-old boy served as the only hired help who lived on the premises. Perhaps during the postwar era with its shortage of manpower, the Pierces resorted to hiring additional farm laborers by the day.³²

In 1880 the family both contracted and expanded again. As superintendent of the WTH, Pierce resided at the institution. Another of James senior's older sisters, now widowed, had moved in with him. Son Thomas, a travelling agent, and daughter-in-law Sarah moved back home, as did daughter Caroline Hohoff with her six-year-old son, Ernst. The census listed Caroline as married, but having no husband living with her.³³ The fluctuations in this household's composition suggest both financial difficulties and marital disorder,

³¹United States Census for Westchester County, New York for 1860.

³²The United States Census for Westchester County, New York for 1870 does not list the value of property as the previous census did. It is possible that the Pierce family fortune declined, and they did more of their own work. The census listings of peoples' ages seem to fluctuate erratically. The 1860 census identified James senior as forty-seven; in 1870 he had aged twelve years. The earlier census listed James as twelve; ten years later he aged only eight years. (All subsequent census listings added an appropriate ten years to his 1870 age of twenty.)

Martha Pierce's moving in with her younger brother suggests that their father Thomas and sister Jane, absent in the 1870 census, may have died during the previous decade.

The absence of Pierce's sister Sarah from all subsequent records suggests that she too may have died rather than married. His oldest sister Bertha, who had married a Mr. Griffin some time before the 1860 census, appeared as a grantee in the three deeds that James Pierce, Sr. executed conveying his property to his four surviving children near the end of his life in 1896.

³³1880 Census.

from which the family farm provided a safe harbor. They also seem to resemble many Westchester families during the late nineteenth century.

According to the Census of 1880, at the tail end of the Depression of 1873 nearly one out of every three households in Westchester county of more than two people harbored residents outside their nuclear families. Westchester households absorbed the elderly, the young, and those without the means to care for themselves. In the villages and the countryside of the Westchester towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, Eastchester, and parts of Greenburgh, 27% of such families took in aging parents, unmarried, widowed, or abandoned siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews, in-laws, grown children, and others whom householders identified as adopted. In both urban and rural areas, among the wealthy and the poor, a considerable number of households contained a few extended family members and a boarder or two. Frequently widows took in a few boarders in order to make ends meet. Surprisingly often, widows with grown offspring living at home took a very young child, perhaps for company as much as income. Boarders included male and female workers, sometimes an entire family that had given up or never went into housekeeping, and children. Youngsters without parents appeared in all these categories.³⁴

³⁴1880 Census, Districts 83-86, Town of Bedford, included the villages of Mt. Kisco and Bedford Station. Within the Town of Cortlandt, Districts 87-92, lay the villages of Peekskill, Centerville, Montrose, Crugers Station, Crugers-on-the-Hudson, Verplanks, Verplanks Point, the Cove at Verplanks, George's Island, Croton Landing, and Croton Point. The Town of Eastchester, Districts 93-97, included the villages of Mt. Vernon and Washingtonville. The Town of Greenburgh, Districts 98-101, encompassed the villages of Tarrytown, Irvington,

In attempts to avoid institutionalizing their children, parents turned to a number of other alternatives when their families could not help. Some began by paying to board their youngsters so that they could continue working. If parents stopped paying board, however, the community considered the children abandoned. WTH Ledger information attributed the commitment of the McCullum children to the fact that their father had boarded them with a Mrs. Stoeckel, but abandoned them about a month earlier. Mrs. Stoeckel would not keep them for more than a few weeks without payment. When eleven-year-old Daniel Lawrence's widowed father remarried, the boy boarded with his aunt at Chappaqua. Daniel arrived at the WTH because his father failed to pay board, and his aunt refused to keep him any longer.³⁵

The interim care provided by other family members dissolved for other children eventually committed to the WTH as well. Some family members who may have taken a young relative with all good intentions, did not necessarily see the arrangement as a permanent commitment. The uncle who had accepted Ellsworth Strauss into his home, deposited the thirteen-year-old in the WTH in 1891. The WTH Ledger noted that the uncle's family was "going to

Dobbs Ferry, and parts of White Plains as well as the hamlets of East Tarrytown and Glenville.

1880 Census, District 91, Cortlandt. The brickmaking villages of Verplanks, George's Island, and Crugers-on-the-Hudson in the town of Cortlandt, were an exception to the general trend. Brickmaking provided seasonal labor that either attracted single men or paid so poorly that it prevented them from marrying and raising a family. Women in these villages took in large numbers of boarders - up to thirty - which provided a hedge against their own men's precarious wages. Even the foreman of the brickworks housed eighteen boarders.

³⁵WTH Ledgers 15:28 (June 19, 1888) and 15:126 (February 11, 1892).

move west and cannot care for the boy longer."³⁶

Another WTH inmate had been sexually abused in the home of a relative. Mary E. Lockwood was committed to the Home in 1887 after spending ten years with an aunt in Yorktown. Apparently she was safe there until puberty when, at the age of fourteen, she was "brought before justice on complaint of (her) uncle having criminal intercourse with her in the absence of her aunt." The uncle suffered the embarrassment of public exposure and possibly his wife's rage, but was "discharged after examination by a physician." The court, seeking to protect the girl from further abuse, expelled her from the only home she had known since the age of three.³⁷ Lockwood's aunt may have wished to protect her niece also; but she could have been equally relieved to get rid of the girl in the hope of restoring some semblance of harmony to her home.

In other instances, the prospect of raising someone else's child presented too great a challenge over time. George Bird Edwards, an orphan, was committed to the WTH in December 1884 at the age of fourteen. Pierce registered him as "colored" and "illegitimate," and noted that George had lived with a Mrs. Gilchrist "since a little child." The 1880 census identified the seventy-eight-year-old Chloe Gilchrist as an African-American woman who still

³⁶WTH Ledger 15:102 (March 17, 1891).

³⁷WTH Ledger 15:12 (November 22, 1887). The New York Penal Code of 1888, Section 278, defined rape as "an act of sexual intercourse with a female not the wife of the perpetrator committed against her will or without her consent." The offense was punishable by imprisonment for not less than five nor more than twenty years if the female was under the age of sixteen.

"works out" and George as her adopted child. Within the next four years Gilchrist either died, or at the age of eighty-two, could no longer raise a teenage boy.³⁸ These cases represent a small sample of the many families whose children entered the WTH when they had exhausted alternative solutions. But families had other motives beside a lack of alternative child care.

Several families placed their children in the Home in order to obtain medical care for them that they could not afford. This was an extension of a familiar practice. Before the establishment of a Westchester hospital for the indigent in 1920, the destitute sick and poor women about to be confined often entered the Poorhouse. There they received only minimal nutrition and care, but it was care nevertheless. Parents learned to use the WTH in the same way. An inmate from Albany entered the Home with a case of malarial typhoid fever so critical that the WTH notified the Committing Board at Albany, which sent someone to watch the case. An Annual Report noted that the boy recovered after many weeks and returned home.³⁹

In a number of cases, the reasons given for commitment masked a child's illness in order to obtain medical attention that the family could not afford. When Mary Murray's widowed father brought her to the WTH, he claimed that

³⁸WTH Ledger 14:14 (December 13, 1884).

Annie Atkinson's parents had abandoned her at the age of five and she lived with a family in Williamsbridge for three years. When she arrived at the WTH in 1890, "no cause was given for the family giving the child up." WTH Ledger 15:80 (February 25, 1890).

Five-year-old Edward Gilbert came to the Home with the comment that his parents' whereabouts were unknown and the boy had been living with a Mrs. Stone of Yonkers. WTH Ledger 15:10 (March 24, 1891).

³⁹WTH Annual Report for 1901, 10.

the twelve-year-old "acts very strangely" and that he could not manage her. His comments implied that she was a difficult or disobedient child, rather than a sick one. Yet, seventeen months later Mary died of consumption at the Home.⁴⁰

The widowed mother of the four Peterson children placed them all in the WTH so that Edward, the oldest, would receive necessary medical treatment. Pierce recorded that Mrs. Peterson was respectable, but sick and unable to care for the children. Once Edward was sent to the Laura Franklin Hospital for treatment at county expense, Mrs. Peterson removed her other three children from the WTH. A year later, Edward, healed after having his arm amputated, also returned to his mother.⁴¹

Other families purposely concealed children's poor health in order to have them admitted to the Home. Eleven-year-old Christopher Fuhrman entered the WTH subject to very frequent fits. "On close questioning" he admitted that he had scarlet fever two weeks earlier and was instructed to say nothing about it. After three years, his chronic condition led the WTH to transfer him to the Brunswick Home in Amityville.⁴²

⁴⁰WTH Ledgers 14:8 (August 2, 1884) and 14:37 (December 29, 1885). Consumption ravaged nineteenth-century families. A number of the parents of WTH inmates had died of the disease. On June 6, 1901, Eliza Barker died in the Home of "acute phthisis" or tuberculosis. WTH Annual Report for 1901, 10.

⁴¹WTH Ledgers 15:92 (July 31, 1890); 15:67 (October 18, 1890); and 15:93 (November 25, 1891).

⁴²WTH Ledgers 14:10 (October 10, 1884); and 15:5 (December 8, 1887). See Chapter 3 for additional discussion of the transfer of inmates to other institutions.

Although families in desperate situations committed their children to the Home, over 40% of them recovered sufficiently to reclaim them. During the period covered by the Ledgers, children from 144 of the 352 families returned to a parent or other family member. When families could not afford to retrieve all their children at the same time, they made both practical and sentimental choices about the order in which they would come home. Families frequently took the youngest first, perhaps calculating that older children would adjust better to the harsh regimentation of the institution. Occasionally they removed older children, who could provide greater assistance at home or be sent out to work and aid the family with their wages. Mrs. Turner, "a hard working woman" who committed her four children to the WTH when her husband was ill with consumption, removed them in stages. She took her two youngest children after eighteen days, but left the older two for another week.⁴³

The tone of some Ledger entries implied that some natural parents placed their children in the Home in order to protect them from stepparents. In some cases, their parents' remarriage enabled children to remain with their families or to return home from the WTH. In others, the presence of a stepparent created additional family discord. Annie Brown's mother had her committed at

⁴³Four years later, when Mrs. Turner placed her children back in the WTH, her husband had died and she had another child. This time she retained her oldest boy, now fifteen, and able to work. She placed the older children in the WTH first, and kept her baby at home for an additional two months with her thirteen-year-old daughter to look after him. WTH Ledgers 14:50 (June 1, 1886); 14:49 (June 19, 1886); and 14:51 (June 25, 1886). WTH Ledgers 15:94 (August 19, 1890); and 15:96 (October 18, 1890).

When the WTH placed inmates, neither the children nor their parents received compensation for their labor.

the age of four because her "Stepfather misuses mother and child." Two-year-old Anna Lamka arrived at the WTH when her "stepmother (was) sent to jail for cruelty to children." Daisy Rutledge's father sought shelter for the eleven-year-old at the WTH, because her "stepmother abuses Daisy." The evidence of their stepfather's mistreatment is less clear in the case of ten-year-old Marian Buchanan and her sister Jennie, eight. Marian arrived at the Home in May 1887; her sister followed that September. In both admissions, the Ledger recorded that the girls entered the WTH because their mother had remarried a man who "requires too much of the child." This cryptic memorandum could refer to anything from the unreasonable expectation of household work to physical or sexual abuse. It might also have concealed the stepfather's inability or unwillingness to support both step-daughters. Once Marian had been placed with a family, her mother removed Jennie from the Home. At that time Pierce remarked, "Stepfather willing to support her."⁴⁴

Apparently some parents also used the Home to safeguard their children from the abuse or neglect of the other parent. A few youngsters arrived at the WTH with suspicious injuries. George Shepherd entered the WTH with a broken arm which "has not been properly attended to - (his "very intemperate") Father would not permit the Dr (*sic*) to enter the house." A year later, his brother Jotham was committed with the remark, "The boy fell over a wash boiler April 11th 1888 which caused dislocation of the hip. The part injured

⁴⁴WTH Ledgers 15:45 (October 4, 1889); 14:76 (January 18, 1887); 15:124 (January 20, 1892); 14:72 (May 21, 1887); 15:6 (September 20, 1887); and 15:5 (January 17, 1888).

never receiving the needed attention makes the boy a cripple." In this case, as in other gravely suspicious situations, Pierce insisted in the Ledger, "Child not to be returned to parents."⁴⁵

Although the community removed children it considered potentially dangerous from the streets by committing them to institutions, families who considered their children troublesome did so for different reasons. Families used the WTH to provide a respite from (and for) youngsters who posed problems in their own homes. The institution provided temporary relief from family tensions and removal from undesirable companions. Many considered an intermission from family conflict or a short lesson in obedience outside their homes to be therapeutic for all concerned. Most of these families removed their children from the WTH after fairly brief intervals.

MANIPULATING THE SYSTEM

Most commitments to the WTH seemed quite straightforward. Parents absconded, died, fell ill, or were confined in the Poorhouse, jail, or an insane asylum. Youngsters required medical care or needed to be removed from abusive caretakers or dangerous settings. Some boys were in need of correction less severe than that meted out by reformatories. However, many families in need learned to manipulate the system in order to institutionalize youngsters they could not or did not wish to care for. Because so many local

⁴⁵WTH Ledger 15:16 (January 24, 1888). At the time of George's first placement on a small farm, the discharge record noted that his arm was "entirely recovered." WTH Ledger 15:9 (April 27, 1888); and 15:46 (January 11, 1889).

officials had the authority to commit a child to the WTH, parents eager to place their children could easily locate an official willing to accomodate them. It was important that they establish a recognizable need or problem, or risk being accused of sponging off the state. To do so they employed the vocabulary devised and understood by the upper reaches of society.⁴⁶

Some parents, suspecting that the WTH or officials would be more likely to accept children in need of correction than those requiring food and shelter, fabricated or exaggerated their character flaws. By claiming that a child was disobedient, dishonest, or disorderly, parents and guardians ensured their children's acceptance in the WTH. When their widowed mother and grandparents brought Fred Lockwood, age eleven, and his five-year-old sister Edna to the Home on September 25, 1886, they insisted that the children were "disobedient and as soon as corrected sufficiently they have homes provided for them." But their admission notes also indicate that their mother was not well. When the children returned to their mother the following June, the Ledger offered no indication whether she had recovered, her parents were more willing to help support her family, or the children had been sufficiently corrected.⁴⁷

Truancy was another term that always worked. It often concealed ill-health or other family problems. Pierce identified twelve-year-old Arthur McFall

⁴⁶Barbara Brenzel observes that parents in Massachusetts also used certain official charges to commit girls to institutions, even when the evidence indicated other reasons for their commitment. 130.

⁴⁷WTH Ledgers 15:48 (September 25, 1886) and 14:69 (June 18, 1887).

as an "Episcopalian truant" at his admission on November 12, 1885. His Scottish father, of "immoral character and intemperate" had deserted the family when Arthur was born. His English mother, whom Pierce labeled a "clairvoyant physician in Yonkers," raised the boy alone. Arthur's truancy seems a less likely reason for his commitment than another family crisis. After only eighteen days in the Home, Arthur was discharged to his married sister with the notation that his mother was not expected to live. Edward Bracey had been committed as a truant, but also had lung trouble and may have been removed from his home to protect him from an abusive stepmother. When his brother Henry entered the WTH later the same year, Pierce wrote, "Stepmother very cruel to the children" and confirmed scarring on the child's body as evidence of abuse.⁴⁸

Parents unable to cope with the behavior of their adolescent sons also employed the charge of truancy to commit them to the Home. Yet Pierce took issue with parents' evaluations of their sons on a number of occasions when they alleged truancy and bad behavior. From the tone of some of Pierce's Ledger notations, it appears that he thought that these parents did not understand how to handle their sons effectively. In 1888, the "sober, industrious" German parents of thirteen-year-old Frederick Rose placed him in the WTH with the observation that he was "a very bad boy, who would not attend school." Pierce may have been deceived by the parents' allegations

⁴⁸WTH Ledgers 14:38 (November 12, 1885); and 14:35 (November 30, 1885). WTH Ledgers 15:44 (January 9, 1889); and 15:74 (November 15, 1889).

when the boy entered the Home, but did not remain so for long. At Frederick's discharge to his parents after six months, Pierce specifically recorded that he was "a very good boy," rare praise indeed. Two years later, the same Yonkers family placed their eleven-year-old son Albert in the Home, again charging the boy with being "very disobedient" and unwilling to attend school. When they retrieved him a year later, Pierce again refuted their assessment with the remark "a good boy."⁴⁹ This family's sober, industrious appearance worked in their favor. Not all parents were convincing enough to persuade authorities to commit their children to the Home.

Even those who attempted to cite reasons for commitment that would guarantee that the Home would accept a child, did not always succeed. The Westchester County SPCC reported a father's complaint against his ten-year-old son, charging that the boy was "incorrigible, will not go to school, throws stones, and breaks windows." However the Society's investigation of the case showed that the father wanted to send the boy to an institution to avoid caring for him. The SPCC, wise to this gambit, advised the father to "take the boy home and care for him properly or we should have . . . him arrested."⁵⁰

⁴⁹WTH Ledger 15:40 (October 18, 1888) and 15:33 (April 16, 1889). WTH Ledgers 15:96 (October 18, 1890) and 15:87 (October 5, 1891).

To Pierce, Eugene Lockwood's parents also seemed like "respectable people." They committed their fourteen-year-old son for "running away from home . . . also dislikes attending school." At his discharge to his parents seven months later, Pierce once again noted "Eugene is a very good boy." WTH Ledgers 15:26 (June 11, 1888); and 15:25 (January 18, 1889).

Pierce recorded that a placement family valued John DeMuth, who had been committed for truancy, as a "very good boy, truthful and honest." WTH Ledgers 15:50 (February 9, 1889); and 15:98 (December 16, 1890).

⁵⁰WCSPCC Reports ending July 1904, Case 2,021; and June 1904, 16.

The characterization of "dishonest" usually ensured a youngster's commitment to the institution. Mary Horrigan's mother used the Home for her daughter for brief periods each time she lost a husband. The third time the girl entered the WTH, her mother claimed that Mary had been stealing and was "very untruthful." Pierce may have had his doubts; he added, "So said by mother." Actually financial problems triggered the commitment, rather than the girl's misbehavior. Mary returned home after only two months once her newest stepfather had found employment for the winter.⁵¹

Many people understood that court officials and the WTH would consider parental desertion a more serious and more acceptable reason for commitment than convenience. Consequently, the WTH Ledger reported that Robert, David, and Lizzie Hume's father had deserted his family. The fact that the Hume children were discharged to their father in New Jersey eleven months later indicates that he placed them in the Home while he established himself in a new location.⁵²

Desperate parents not only attempted to manipulate the system, but each other with regard to their children. By committing her two little girls to the WTH Mrs. Sketchley obtained support from her intemperate husband, who had abandoned the family. Within six days Pierce reported that she removed Grace,

⁵¹WTH Ledgers 14:13 (September 18, 1884); 14:34 (October 22, 1885); 14:47 (May 17, 1886); 14:78 (August 6, 1887); and 14:79 (October 21, 1887).

⁵²WTH Ledgers 14:22 (May 7, 1885) and 14:43 (April 2, 1886).

age eight, and Ada, age six, because their father promised to support them.⁵³

Just as parents found ways to exploit the system, so did one enterprising youth. Thirteen-year-old John Taylor committed himself to the WTH on February 20, 1889 for the second time. Taylor, who had been supporting himself as a newsboy in New York City, sought a warmer berth in Westchester during the bitterest winter months. A seasonably cold winter during which temperatures frequently dipped into the teens convinced the youngster to give up working on the street and sleeping at the Newsboys' Home on Pearl Street. Pierce observed in his Ledger entry that John had stayed with a family named Colran the first time he came to White Plains. He also noted that the boy had left New York City on the sixteenth and had taken four days to reach White Plains, adding that "the boy tells a crooked story." Despite Pierce's suspicion or reservations, he accepted him. John could talk his way into the Home periodically when his other arrangements proved too difficult. Having entered the WTH once before, he could be certain of shelter for a time until the weather improved or he tired of trying to please a family who accepted him for the labor he could provide.⁵⁴ Taylor, accustomed to being on his own, entered the Home when he wished and remained as long as it suited him. But Taylor was the lone exception.

Other children committed to the WTH had no say about where they

⁵³WTH Ledgers 14:74 (June 14, 1887) and 14:69 (June 20, 1887).

⁵⁴WTH Ledger 15:50 (February 20, 1889).

would go or how long they would stay there. Those children, especially the youngest taken from their mothers at the Poorhouse, not only suffered from the pain of the bewildering separations they endured, but also from the uncertainty of what would happen to them. Lee Nailling, who was sent West by the New York CAS at the age of eight, explained, "You never knew what the future held for you . . . (which caused) a great deal of worry and concern."⁵⁵ Despite any apprehensions the children may have had, the WTH offered their inmates a temporary haven. Until they could return to their families or find placements, the Home provided them with shelter, food, medical attention, clothing, supervision, and some schooling.

Many Westchester families appreciated the fact that the WTH would serve them on a temporary basis. They placed their children with the hope that their circumstances would improve and they could retrieve their young. Over 40% of them did. Parents who remarried could provide their offspring with financial support or a housekeeper and caregiver. Fathers and stepfathers found work. Mothers in service found jobs in factories which enabled them to be at home with their children at night. Sick parents left the hospital. Men and women who had deserted their families returned and tried again. Parents in jail completed their terms; those committed to insane asylums were released. Parents relented and reclaimed youngsters who had misbehaved. Although many of their problems were caused or intensified by financial difficulties, many

⁵⁵Janet Graham and Edward Gray, producers and directors, *The Orphan Trains* ("The American Experience", PBS Home Video, 1995) (hereafter "*The Orphan Trains*").

families eventually found ways to overcome both their immediate predicaments and their economic insecurity. Yet a number of children had to return to the WTH repeatedly when their families' troubles or debts mounted again. Those children had to face the separations, the re-adjustment to institutional requirements, and the uncertainties about their futures all over again.

CHAPTER 3 - IN THE HOME

On April 1, 1880, Westchester County Superintendents of the Poor took thirty-one children in horse-drawn wagons from the Poorhouse to the WTH on Bedford Road in Pleasantville. Six unnamed members of the WTH Board of Managers stood at the door of the newly renovated farmhouse to welcome the new charges.¹ The two groups greeted each other with very different expectations. The Board members were optimistic and determined to improve the children's current condition and future prospects. The children, newly separated from their mothers, were undoubtedly sad and confused as well as apprehensive about what would happen to them.

However unhealthy or unpleasant the Poorhouse may have been for the children, it had offered them the comfort of family attachments. Their transfer to the WTH may have been the first time that many (especially the youngest) were separated from their families, including their siblings; the WTH segregated girls and boys. The atmosphere at the Poorhouse was not only familiar, it more closely resembled the children's lives in their own homes, where they experienced a certain amount of freedom from adults otherwise occupied or indifferent. The regime at the WTH would be very different. For most of the children, this was probably the first time they would encounter the regimentation and strict rules of silence demanded by an institution with the avowed purpose of steering its inmates into orderly, disciplined, and productive

¹WTH Annual Report for September 1880, 6-7.

lives.

Although the WTH managers later aspired to maintaining an imposing and well-respected institution, their original goal was fairly modest. They began with the discreet assumption that they could offer care for the county's dependent children that would be superior to that provided by the Poorhouse. They expected to accomplish this by housing children in more sanitary and healthful surroundings, by providing medical and nursing care and a staff worthy of emulation, and by instructing inmates in a variety of ways they considered suitable for dependent children. This included elementary schooling, religious instruction, proper decorum and self-discipline, and training all inmates to earn their keep. Many of the first arrivals were vermin-infested and sickly, which confirmed the WTH founders' belief that they were rescuing these youngsters from truly dire conditions.²

HEALTH

Consequently, measures to ensure good health became the Home's first priority. During the late nineteenth century, twenty percent of American children died before their tenth birthday. Childhood diseases could be deadly during an era with few effective medicines and continued resistance, even from the medical community, to recent discoveries that germs cause disease. When municipal health authorities began to recognize that preventive measures could

²WTH Annual Report for 1880, 6-7. WTH founders maintained that the attendants they hired added a "refining and Christian influence" on the children in their care. WTH Annual Report for 1898, 13.

curtail the spread of disease, they concentrated on pure milk campaigns and improving water supplies and sewerage systems. They had good reasons to do so. The water in American cities was notoriously dangerous, leading to numerous typhoid deaths. Impure milk could spread typhoid also, as well as scarlet fever, diphtheria, strep throat, and tuberculosis. The death rate at the Infants' Hospital on Randall's Island in New York reached 44.36% in 1897. The following year, after a pasteurization plant was installed, the death rate dropped to 19.85%.³

Under these circumstances, the Home was understandably anxious about the health of its young inmates. The WTH claimed that its location in "the most beautiful and healthful part of Westchester County affords complete freedom from all disorders due to climatic influence." The Board of Managers knew that living in the country offered protection from disease, notably less congestion and the availability of clean air and water and pure milk from its own cows. As

³Samuel H. Preston and Michael R. Haines note that 88% of childhood deaths in the late nineteenth century occurred between birth and age four; 59% occurred in infancy. They also find that differences in race, residence, occupation of father, and literacy of mother were factors that affected children's mortality. White children had the advantage over black, rural over urban, the children of clerical and sales workers and farmers over those whose fathers worked in all other occupations, including professional, managerial, and proprietorial, or were unemployed. Native-born and literate women and those who did not work outside their homes had better child survival rates. Drs. Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch discovered that germs cause disease during the 1870s and 80s. Chlorination of water did not begin until 1902 and sedimentation in 1904. As late as 1911, only fifteen percent of the milk in New York City was pasteurized. *Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), xix, xxi, 3, 7, 22-23, 36-39, 119, 134.

In 1893, a *Mount Kisco Recorder* headline pleaded "Protect the Water Supply." Not only had typhus struck the town, but an outbreak of cholera threatened that summer. The paper warned that factories and stables pollute the water. *Mount Kisco Recorder*, February 2, 1893 in Renoda Hoffman Scrapbook, vol. 1, 21, WCHS.

Julie Miller, 338.

early as the 1860s, the first New York Board of Health recognized that

most of the fevers, diarrhoeas, dysenteries, and consumptions are caused by bad air, impure water, insufficient food, and ill-ventilated dwellings; and most small-pox, measles, and scarlatina . . . are aggravated by . . . these causes.

The Home also focused on sanitation as a means of preventing the spread of disease. Upon arrival at the WTH, the Poorhouse children had their vermin-infested heads cleaned, followed by a thorough bath and the distribution of clean clothes. Each child received a bath twice a week thereafter; and each was assigned a separate bed or crib.⁴

Dr. J. M. Brown from Pleasantville was the first of a number of local physicians to donate their services for the WTH children. Brown's observations about the children's health further confirmed how poorly they had been cared for at the Poorhouse. His recommendations underscored how much better the WTH intended to do. He noted that the skin, gums and "general system" of the first group from the Poorhouse were diseased when they arrived. Several

⁴During the latter decades of the nineteenth century, a number of New York City institutions for the care of children re-located to Westchester County to avail themselves of this healthier and less expensive site.

Once the Home moved to White Plains, Mr. E.C. Onderdonk, whose son would marry Superintendent Pierce's daughter, owned the neighboring farm. His daily milk deliveries supplemented the Home's supplies for its growing population. By 1887 the WTH owned six cows, had the loan of two more, and purchased sixty quarts a day. WTH Annual Report for 1887, 13.

Metropolitan Board of Health Annual Report, 1866, 11 and 1868, 522, quoted in Miller, 128.

WTH Annual Report for 1880, 7-9. At the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School, inmates were made to wash three times a day, but had only one bath a week, and that in cold water. History of the Wartburg, 102.

required extraction of their baby teeth from behind the second set.⁵

Sometime between April and the beginning of September, Dr. Brown vaccinated forty-five of the inmates against smallpox, charging the Home only for the serum. Whether Brown acted on his own initiative or at the suggestion of the WTH Board, this preventive measure was crucial in maintaining the good health of the inmates. Before the widespread use of smallpox vaccine, the disease took a dreadful toll on children. In 1876 William P. Letchworth, the Commissioner of the New York State Board of Charities, found that two young brothers in the Westchester Poorhouse each had lost an eye from small-pox.⁶

Dr. Brown also recommended a careful diet to overcome the "chronic inflammation of the bowels" that afflicted so many of the children. At his suggestion the Home served "soup or meat once a day, potatoes and other vegetables, baked apples, home-made bread, rice, oat meal, hominy, eggs, and milk." Brown's prescribed diet eliminated raw fruits and vegetables, which would cause further gastric irritation. Cabbage soup, which is both cheap and

⁵WTH Annual Report for 1887, 7-8.

Serving the WTH without pay was an act of true charity for a small-town doctor. During this period, physicians earned less than any other profession. Preston and Haines point out that nineteenth-century lawyers, college professors, and surveyors all earned more than doctors, 12.

In 1885, just before relocating to White Plains, the Home also thanked Dr. Swift of Pleasantville "for his largely gratuitous services." WTH Annual Report for 1885, 10.

⁶WTH Annual Report for 1880, 7-8.

Smallpox had begun to decline in all the American colonies by 1750 with the widespread use of variolation, the precursor to inoculation. By 1764, the Selectmen of Boston noted that only forty-six of the 4,977 people inoculated (roughly one-third of the city's population) that year had died. John Duffy, *Epidemics in Colonial America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 23-24, 35, 65-66.

Letchworth, 82. By 1897 New York City required compulsory vaccination for school children. Preston and Haines, 24.

filling but can irritate the digestive system, may have figured prominently in the diet of the Poorhouse. The Visiting Committee had discovered to their surprise and dismay that children at the Poorhouse were fed "rye coffee" instead of milk. In 1881, a donation of three cows supplied a large percentage of the milk and butter the WTH used. The Home's second Annual Report pleaded "at this harvest time when you are stocking your cellars with winter fruits and vegetables, spare a moiety for our children," and also begged for a share of hay. The summer bounty shared by local farms provided the WTH with corn, beans, squash, tomatoes, and other fresh vegetables. In subsequent years, food grown by the WTH and donations from friends and neighbors of the WTH improved the quality of the inmates' diet and increased its variety.⁷

Medical attention, nourishing food, sanitary surroundings, and careful supervision had the desired results that first summer. Despite a bout of whooping cough that required hiring a special nurse to care for forty-two infected inmates, by September 1880, the first WTH Report announced with satisfaction the marked improvement in the children's health. It described the "growing look of intelligent happy childhood in (their) formerly listless,

⁷First Annual Report, 12. WTH Annual Reports for 1880, 9; and for 1881, 8.

Payments from the Westchester County Superintendents of the Poor never sufficed to run the Home, and the Board of Managers sought donations in goods as well as money. Wealthy Westchester residents and New Yorkers with estates in the county did not raise produce or animals for income, but to feed their families and staff. As part of their wages, the families of gardeners and coachmen with quarters on these estates received portions of food produced by the estates' farms, orchards, dairies, and poultry houses. These gentlemen farmers shared their surplus with the Home, as did local farmers. One WTH neighbor allowed inmates to pick apples from his orchard. WTH Annual Reports for 1881, 11; for 1894, 18; and for 1908, 9. *Woolfert's Roost*, 83.

expressionless faces" within the few months they spent in the WTH.⁸ Even if the WTH exaggerated its success, it had achieved a conspicuous improvement in a relatively short time. This substantiated the Board's belief that its health measures were correct.

The Home succeeded in improving the state of the children's health despite the challenge of a rapidly changing and steadily increasing inmate population. During the first five months of the Home's existence, an additional six children arrived from the Poorhouse and thirty-seven more came from the general population of the county. During the same period, a dozen returned to their parents, fourteen were placed in private homes, one ran away, and five were transferred to Roman Catholic institutions.⁹ In subsequent years, the inmate population continued to increase, so that by 1885 it had grown to 161, by 1890 the number of inmates reached 212, and by 1895 the WTH housed 264 inmates.

Ever-greater numbers and a pattern of children continuously coming and going posed numerous difficulties for the WTH staff. These included problems with integrating new inmates into institutional life, acclimating them to new surroundings and caretakers, and establishing and maintaining order. It presented even greater problems for children unable to settle into any one place for very long, to make friends, and to adjust to the expectations and

⁸WTH Annual Report for 1880, 9.

⁹WTH Annual Report for 1880, 9.

requirements of different settings and caretakers. Above all, the steady influx of new children introduced the increasing probability of new illnesses.

Under these conditions, childhood diseases continued to plague the Home. In the second year of its existence, fifty-six inmates contracted laryngitis and fifty-four had the mumps. An additional sixty inmates received smallpox inoculations that year, with the ominous notation that only forty-five of them had "taken well." Despite attempts to isolate infected children, contagious illnesses circulated throughout the Home each year. In 1882, scarlet fever raged through the Home's inmates, followed by measles. Yet, the children received adequate medical care and decent nutrition. No deaths or serious after-effects occurred that year.¹⁰

The prospect of the death of small children living in close quarters particularly threatened institutions that cared for them. By 1885, the WTH reported that there had only been three deaths at the Home in the five years of its existence. The WTH record compared favorably with the general state of health in many institutions that housed children in New York State. In the forms they filled out annually for the New York State Board of Charities, larger institutions, urban facilities, and foundling homes in New York State posted the greatest childhood mortality records during this period. This data corroborates findings that the younger the child and the more congested the living conditions, the higher the rate of mortality. For example, the populous Roman

¹⁰WTH Annual Reports for 1881, 7; and for 1883, 5.

Catholic Orphan Asylum Society reported fifty-two deaths in 1885. Some of the inmates burned in a fire that enveloped the premises the previous December; several perished "from the effects of exposure in their removal to other institutions" after the fire, and others from an epidemic of measles that spring.¹¹

Despite its reasonably good record, the WTH was sensitive about its mortality rate compared to other institutions. From 1880 to 1895, State Board of Charities Reports reveal that the WTH suffered a total of sixteen deaths. During the same period the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School in Mount Vernon recorded only one death. That institution had an inmate population that contained only 172 youngsters in 1895, a much smaller group than the WTH with its 264 inmates. In addition, it admitted only children between the ages of six and ten, who were less susceptible to the consequences of childhood disease than WTH inmates, who might enter at the age of two. The WTH Annual Report for 1889 attempted to deflect responsibility from the Home for the three inmates who died that year by claiming that all were "of feeble scrofulous constitutions . . . and in two cases the diseases . . . were

¹¹Among other things, the State Board of Charities Annual Reports itemized the number of deaths at each institution. Preston and Haines, 3.

The State Board of Charities Report of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum for 1885 listed a total population of 2,051 plus 874 new admissions. Most institutions merely filled in the requested information in the appropriate blanks. Occasionally, one would add explanations or excuses for its data.

undoubtedly contracted before admission to the Home."¹²

Like the WTH, other institutions in the state began taking precautions to preserve the health of their inmates and prevent the spread of disease. The Mission of the Immaculate Virgin announced in 1885 that it had erected four separate buildings on its farm at Mt. Loretto on Staten Island, including a nursery for younger boys, an infirmary, a separate building for children with contagious diseases, and quarters in which to quarantine incoming inmates. In addition, the institution furnished each child with a separate washstand, basin, soap, and towels "at very great expense," which helped to prevent the spread of contagious respiratory and eye diseases. Ophthalmia, a highly contagious inflammation of the eyes could cause blindness. Like the WTH, The Mission also obtained an oculist to attend to its inmates.¹³ These institutions anticipated legislation in New York State that mandated similar precautions in all

¹²Because the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School was privately funded, it was free to accept only children from a very select group, members of the the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Wartburg inmates may have received better care or may have been healthier to begin with. History of the Wartburg, *passim*.

WTH Annual Report for 1889, 9.

The State Board of Charities Reports for other Westchester institutions show that Shepherd's Fold located in Elmsford, St. Christopher's Home in Rye, and St. Joseph's Home in Throggs Neck had no deaths in 1895. Yet this data does not prove better care conclusively, since only one inmate died at the WTH in 1885 and none during the years 1890 and 1895.

¹³State Board of Charities Report for the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin for 1885.

A serious outbreak of ophthalmia among children in the New York City almshouse in 1831 drew public attention to the condition of the children and the need to relocate them. Folks, 17, 130-131.

In its Annual Report for 1887 the WTH thanked Dr. Norton, a New York City oculist for his gratuitous services to its inmates during the year, 16. WTH Board members with Manhattan residences and connections did not confine themselves to Westchester when seeking assistance for the Home.

institutions that housed children.

On June 14, 1886, the New York State Legislature passed the law, "An Act for the Better Preservation of the Health of Children in Institutions," to take effect on October 1 of that year. The law required every incorporated charitable institution to retain a regular physician of good professional standing, and to post his name and address in a conspicuous location. According to the new law, each physician had to examine every new inmate and deliver a certificate in writing stating whether the child was free from any contagious or infectious disease and specifying the physical and mental condition of the child, the presence of any hereditary or other constitutional disease, and any deformity or abnormal condition. Upon arrival, every child had to be quarantined until released by the physician. The law also ordered quarantine for every child with a contagious or infectious disease. A physician's further duties included inspection of the institution every month and written reports to the Board of Managers as well as to the local Board of Health. These monthly reports were to assess the condition of the children, the institution's provision of food, clothing, sanitation, sufficient nurses and attendants, and to offer recommendations for improvement. By the time the law went into effect, the WTH had moved its location from Pleasantville to White Plains. Accordingly, the WTH appointed Drs. Orrin D. Kingsley and Alfred M. Haight of White Plains

to act as the Home's physicians.¹⁴

The new law also prescribed the physical layout of dormitories to ensure adequate ventilation as a health measure. It required separating children's beds by a two-foot passageway and providing room for the free circulation of air beneath them. Although technically complying with these requirements, the Home could not avoid the congestion that led to the rapid spread of disease. A photograph of the boys' dormitory in the Annual Report of 1898 showed over fifty metal cots in one room. Despite their immaculately clean white pillows and coverlets, the beds appear so closely spaced that there was only one main aisle down the length of the room.¹⁵

Even with the implementation of state-directed measures, epidemics of childhood diseases persisted in the WTH as they did in other New York institutions that cared for children. During the winter of 1886 and 1887, the WTH endured outbreaks of chicken-pox, measles, and German measles. The Home's tiny hospital could not accommodate all the children who were stricken,

¹⁴Drs. Kingsley and Haight served the institution at least until 1901, the last Annual Report in which they were listed. Kingsley, an elder of the Presbyterian church, was acclaimed as a "progressive" physician who sought "every discovery of science." *Biographical History*, vol.1, 16-17.

The Home also thanked a New York physician, Dr. E. E. Smith who contributed "pathological diagnoses" and Dr. Henry Schmidt who sat on the WTH Board of Managers and made himself available for consultations. WTH Annual Report for 1908, 7. Schmidt was president of the local Board of Health and a member of the Board of Education of White Plains. *Biographical History*, vol.1, 136-138.

In 1897 the Home noted with appreciation the receipted bill for \$100 for services performed by Dr. Platt, a White Plains dentist. Dr. Platt's generosity extended beyond free dental care; he also invited fifty boys from the WTH to an "entertainment" in White Plains. WTH Annual Reports for 1897, 8; and for 1898, 15.

¹⁵WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 8; and for 1898, 13.

allowing the contagion to spread among both inmates and staff until forty-three were seriously ill. The Annual Report noted that two children suffered from inflamed eyes as a result, but that "careful and judicious nursing" ensured that all recovered. Until such diseases worked their way through the Home, institutional routines and discipline must have been completely disrupted. In addition, no one dared to take an inmate from the Home during such a time, because the child might be in the early stages of contagion.¹⁶

WTH Managers feared more serious epidemics because of increasing numbers of young inmates vulnerable to the dangerous consequences of childhood disease. The Home used its Annual Reports as public relations instruments and portrayed conditions in ways that would enhance both its reputation and its fundraising efforts. Although prompted by state legislation the previous year that required quarantine, Secretary Hoe WTH attempted to tug at Westchester's heartstrings in order to loosen its purse strings. In 1887, the Home's Annual Report fretted that children under three years of age were still babies, and wondered, "What could we do in case of a serious epidemic, such as scarlet fever or diphtheria?"¹⁷

¹⁶During that same year, two more children died, one little boy from consumption, aggravated by an attack of pneumonia, and a three-and-a-half year old from meningitis. WTH Annual Report of 1887, 6. Because of the prevalence of contagious diseases, the number of discharges declined in summer. WTH Annual Report of 1888, 6.

¹⁷Diphtheria produced a "pseudomembrane," a lesion usually in the larynx that caused a toxic reaction. This poison could damage kidney, heart, and nerves, and resulted in a very high mortality rate. In 1890, the death rate in New York City was 123.44 per hundred thousand; the number of recorded deaths that year reached 1,870, with the greatest number of fatalities among children under five. Evelyn Maxine Hammonds, *Childhood's Deadly Scourge: The Campaign to Control Diphtheria in New York City, 1880-1930* (Baltimore: John Hopkins

The Home recognized that even with the best possible care and sanitary conditions, sickness would occur, and began a campaign for a larger hospital building. The structure they had been using as a hospital had only six beds for boys and an equal number for girls. By the time the inmate population had grown to an average of ninety children, this proved inadequate both for nursing sick children and isolating them from the other inmates. The Home's pleas for aid produced a large fund for construction from its supporters. The WTH actually built a series of hospital pavilions, providing the one for infectious diseases with its own kitchen and laundry. By 1888, a new hospital pavilion contained twelve to fourteen beds. The following year, Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Taylor, Jr. and two chapters of the Circle of King's Daughters, a women's philanthropic organization, donated the funds for a pavilion called the Sandy Memorial in memory of the Taylors' little boy. The WTH began construction on a third pavilion, a gift from an unnamed manager. New hospital quarters would also free their current facility for another practical use. The Board of Managers claimed that every epidemic had been introduced by new inmates to the Home. Consequently they proposed to use the present structure as a building to receive and quarantine new inmates. The Managers understood the efficacy of

University Press, 1999), 3, 4, 8, 16.

The disease was so contagious in close quarters that it raced through families, institutions, and schools. In 1880, a farmer in Batavia, New York lost five children to diphtheria, and had three children still sick. Fourteen years earlier, this family had lost four children from the same disease. "Five Children Dead in One Family," *Times*, December 9, 1880, 1. With "fewer than a dozen cases" of diphtheria diagnosed in 1896, New Rochelle closed all elementary schools to prevent a major epidemic. "Schools Closed by Diphtheria," *Times*, January, 14, 1896, 9.

quarantine; it had been used since the colonial period as a means of reducing epidemic diseases.¹⁸

Even with expanded medical facilities, the WTH did not have the personnel or the equipment to care for children with chronic or severe medical problems. Yet, because the Home accepted public funds, it did not have the right to turn them away. Secretary Richard Hoe observed, "had we discretionary powers we could . . . refuse admission to some of our applicants, as for instance idiots and cripples." Some children presented too great a strain on the resources of the institution, drawing attention and energy away from the growing numbers of healthy residents. The Home transferred these inmates to hospitals better prepared to care for them. The WTH sent a child with "chronic sore eyes" and another with a "deformity" in her legs to the Children's Hospital in Albany. In 1898, the WTH reported that it sent several "feeble minded" children to Syracuse, Newark, and other institutions. According to the Annual Report, Pierce visited them all and found them to be doing well,

¹⁸WTH Annual Report for 1887, 11-12. The Hospital Fund collected \$2,266 and spent \$551 on the first pavilion. WTH annual Report for 1888, 5. The Taylors and the King's Daughters donated \$825, and the Home spent \$849 for the Sandy Memorial, which contained sixteen to eighteen beds and two single rooms. The Home shifted surplus funds to other construction projects. WTH Annual Report for 1889, 7-9. By 1898 the Home had four hospital pavilions. WTH Annual Report for 1898, 10.

By 1717 Massachusetts colonists built pesthouses or quarantine hospitals. During the eighteenth century several North American ports passed laws requiring that incoming ships observe a ten to twenty day quarantine period, especially if they arrived from Europe or the West Indies. Duffy, 101, 103.

suggesting the possibility of a genuine and on-going concern for children.¹⁹

Sending inmates to distant locations for treatment or permanent relocation presented obstacles for parents unable to travel to see their children. In addition, some of the transfers suggest that the Home tried to rid itself of the most serious cases in order to preserve its good record. The WTH applied for the transfer of an eight-year-old boy to the Syracuse Asylum for the Feeble-minded in 1889, but the transfer papers did not come through before the child died of convulsions. Four years later, the Home admitted "a bright, interesting colored child . . . in almost dying condition, suffering from severe abscesses and neglect." They kept the child isolated in one of the hospital buildings with a special nurse for nine weeks while she recovered from whooping cough, then transferred her to Laura Franklin Hospital in New York City, where she died.²⁰

Despite the Home's best efforts, childhood diseases remained a continuing *bete noire*. In 1908, during the last year of the WTH's existence, an epidemic of diphtheria provoked a profound disagreement between Mrs. Mary E. Jordan, the WTH superintendent who succeeded Pierce, and its current physician, Dr. Edward Weber. Weber had begun practicing medicine three

¹⁹WTH Annual Reports for 1883, 9; and for 1884, 8. The WTH transferred three inmates to the "Idiot Asylum, Syracuse," four to the Child's Hospital, Albany, five to the Albany Orphan Asylum, and two to the Brunswick Home in Amityville, Long Island, which accepted children who were lame or had chronic diseases. "Statistical Record of the Children Received at the Home from April 1st, 1880 to September 1st, 1889" in WTH Annual Report for 1889, 12.

²⁰WTH Annual Reports for 1889, 7-9. The WTH Annual Report for 1892 did not reveal the girl's name, 10.

years earlier at the age of twenty-four and was recognized as particularly knowledgeable about the newest medical procedures and therapies. In 1907 Weber was appointed physician to the White Plains Public Schools and organized the first School Health Service in Westchester County. A year later, he announced to the press that twenty-five children at the WTH had diphtheria and that he expected to treat them with anti-toxin, which had proven effective in combatting the disease. Research in bacteriology discovered that the "deadly scourge" of diphtheria could be controlled by an anti-toxin, the discovery of which won the first Nobel Prize in medicine shortly after the turn-of-the-century. The fact that the high rate of death from diphtheria continued indicates that many still viewed the anti-toxin with suspicion. The anti-toxin had to be administered during the first three days of the disease in order to be effective, proved less useful in cases with complications, and produced unpleasant but relatively mild side effects. Skin rashes and erythema (redness), and swollen joints could be tolerated, but newspaper reports of the few deaths that occurred after use of the anti-toxin alarmed many. Superintendent Jordan was among the doubters. She contended that the anti-toxin was "too severe" for children, and prevailed in her preconception by dismissing the doctor. The final Annual Report omits what happened to the afflicted children.²¹

²¹Because symptoms of the disease could resemble other inflammations of the throat, New York City mandated bacteriological testing for all suspected cases, and the anti-toxin was introduced in New York during the winter of 1894-1895. Hammond, 7-8, 11, 88, 124, 134.

The availability of diphtheria anti-toxin during the 1890s accounted for a decline in the fatality rate from diphtheria at Boston City Hospital from 47% in 1888 to 10% in 1899. Preston and Haines, 13.

EDUCATION

In addition to concerns about maintaining the children's health and well-being, the Home's other main objective was to "rescue" them from dependency and to train them for an independent life. To that end, WTH Managers focused on the children's education. The stated object of the WTH was to provide an institution in which inmates would receive "instruction, training and discipline, and be taught to labor in such manner as may be most . . . conducive to the future usefulness of such children." This, they judged, should include elementary schooling, religious instruction, training in proper decorum, and learning to do household and agricultural work as well as other gender-appropriate tasks such as sewing and carpentry. The way in which the Home determined how much emphasis it should devote to each area of training reflected nineteenth-century considerations about shaping children's character and behavior. It also demonstrated tensions over conflicting expectations that all American children should be educated and that dependent children should work for their caretakers.²²

An examination of the United States Census for 1880 reveals that despite the fact that the New York State Compulsory Education Law of 1874, requiring that children between the ages of eight and fourteen attend school, was poorly enforced, attendance in Westchester public schools improved.

"Doctor Dismissed," in *Eastern State*, April 18, 1908. J. Franklin Jones, *Gannett*, July 29, 1974, in WCHS Vertical File.

²²WTH Annual Report for 1898, 5.

Three towns examined in this study show similar patterns of school attendance; all had high percentages that varied according to the age of the child. A close review of the 1880 census for the towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, and Eastchester reveals little disparity in school attendance based on gender, race, ethnicity, or occupation of the father; rather the age of the child and the community in which the child lived proved the most significant factors. In 1880, 86% of the 407 children between the ages of eight and fourteen in the town of Bedford, a mainly rural area that encompassed the villages of Bedford Station and Mount Kisco, had attended school during the previous year. The town of Cortlandt, which included the industrial base of Peekskill, had 75% of its 1,470 eight to fourteen year olds attending school. Between 85 and 86% of the 1,289 children in this age group who lived in Eastchester, in which Mount Vernon was located, attended school.²³

The total numbers only convey part of the picture. In each of these towns, there was a curve of school attendance that peaked between the ages of ten and eleven, then declined sharply at thirteen and fourteen. In Bedford, for example, nearly 88% of the eight-year-olds attended school. The percentage

²³1880 Census. In mid-century, the dirt roads in Westchester farming areas made travel so difficult that towns scattered one-room schoolhouses within their boundaries. In 1867, the town of New Castle had eight. Frances Cook Lee, *New Castle Historical Records, Minutes of Town Meetings 1791-1850, Maps, Census, and Cemetery Lists with a Pictorial History of the Town*, (Town of New Castle, Chappaqua, New York, 1977), vol.2, 4.

During the school year of 1878-1879, only 447 out of the 1,095 Westchester youngsters of school age attended school; and they were excused during spring planting and fall harvest. Comstock, 28.

Not all of those who did not attend school were untaught. The very wealthy, such as the Dows family, had governesses; others, such as Superintendent Pierce, were home-schooled.

increased steadily to between 92 and 93% of twelve-year-olds, then declined to 69% of children age fourteen.²⁴

Rich and poor, black and white, immigrant and native-born, most Westchester families valued education for their children. Although children from laboring families attended school for fewer years and with less regularity than those from wealthier families, Westchester residents who sent their school-age children out to work started the education of their younger ones at much earlier ages than average. As a result, nearly 50% of the five-year-olds listed in Mt. Kisco were in school, compared to 30.7% of children that age in the rest of Bedford. Likewise, the ten, eleven, and twelve-year-old boys working in the brickworks of Verplanks had five and six-year-old siblings in school. In contrast, those families that did not send their children to work outside the home started their schooling later; the majority of eight- and nine-year-olds had not started classes. Furthermore those who could afford to keep their children in school often did so beyond the age of state requirements. In Mt. Kisco, with its greater opportunities for working youngsters, only 27.7% of sixteen-year-olds attended school. In contrast, in all other areas of Bedford,

²⁴The numbers in Cortlandt were lower in every category, but presented a similar curve. 65% of the eight-year-olds were listed as students; the percentage escalated to 87% of eleven-year-olds, and fell to 59% of youngsters of fourteen. The curve in Eastchester began with a high percentage of eight-year-olds (91%), climbed to nearly 96% of ten-year-olds, and plummeted to 57% of fourteen-year-olds. 1880 Census for Bedford, Districts 83-86; Cortlandt, Districts 87-92; and Eastchester, Districts 93-97.

79% of sixteen-year-olds were still in school well past the required age.²⁵

Few children in these three towns who worked also attended school. The village of Croton Landing in Cortlandt stands out as singular in its dedication to the education of its young. Every working child of school age, three of whom worked in the brickworks, also attended classes. Croton Landing also had inordinately high percentages of children both younger and older than the required ages in school. In Peekskill, two child workers also went to school; both labored for farmers. Yet, according to the 1880 census, only one fourteen-year-old female servant in Peekskill could not write and a fourteen-year-old boy, who lived at home and worked at odd jobs, could neither read nor write.²⁶

The scarcity of children between the ages of eight and fourteen who

²⁵1880 Census. High attendance rates of such young children in Westchester could also be attributed to neighborhood custom (if all other five-year-olds were at class, how could one occupy a child of that age at home?), proximity of the school in an urban setting, and the possibility that mothers welcomed the opportunity to rid themselves of these youngsters in order to be able to earn money at sewing, working in a factory, or caring for boarders.

Stuart Blumin, *The Emergence of the Middle-Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900* (1989), 189.

²⁶In 1880, twenty-one of the thirty-one six-year-olds (or 67.7%) and seventeen of the eighteen seven-year-olds (or 94%) in Croton Landing went to school, as did eight of the twelve (or 66%) youngsters of fifteen. Comparable figures for Verplanks, another area devoted to brickmaking, indicate similar early starting ages for school: twenty-two of the thirty-one six-year-olds (or 70%) and twenty-five of the twenty-eight (or 89%) of the seven-year-olds. However census data also register a much sharper decline for fifteen-year olds in Verplanks; only three out of fourteen (or 21%) still went to school.

1880 Census, District 87, Peekskill. Although the American-born parents of the boy who could not read or write were literate, their other two sons were also illiterate. They sent their eight-year-old daughter to school.

Daniel J. Walkowitz notes that in 1880, working children did not remain in school beyond the age of twelve in Troy and Cohoes, New York. *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 115.

attended school while working as servants in these three towns did not bode well for the education of WTH children who were placed with local families. Bedford had the best record, with six of the twenty-two school-age servants (or 27%) attending school. None of the twenty-four servants in this age group in Cortlandt and only one of the thirty-one in Eastchester received any schooling at all. In an exception to the general rule, the "Census of Union Free Village School White Plains, Westchester County 1899" listed both the fourteen-year-old WTH former inmate Cassie Campbell and ten-year-old Velda Baxter, the daughter of the family in which Campbell had been placed, as students. By the turn of the century, the Westchester County SPCC intervened in a number of cases brought to their attention of WTH inmates who had been placed in homes and given no schooling.²⁷

Despite his family's affluence, Superintendent Pierce did not attend school as a boy, as the majority of his contemporaries in Pleasantville did. His experience may have affected his attitude regarding the education of the Home's inmates. Undoubtedly Pierce and many of the WTH Managers admired local men who had succeeded in life without extensive formal schooling. One example was Ffarington (*sic*) M. Thompson, a White Plains lawyer who served

²⁷Westchester County SPCC Report for January 1904 related complaints against a Tarrytown woman who took a child from the WTH to work in her boarding house and did not send the child to school, 2. In October of that year, the SPCC investigated charges against placement families who took boys from the WTH and did not allow them to attend school, 11. A similar indictment appeared in June, 1906 against the family that had taken a thirteen-year-old girl from the WTH, 3.

on the School Commission and as a Justice of the Peace. He only attended school until the age of fourteen. After working for the postal service for seven years, Thompson studied law at the office of a local attorney. Likewise William F. Cochran of Yonkers began his business career at the age of fourteen and became the largest carpet manufacturer in the world.²⁸ However, the WTH Board understood both the law and their responsibility.

In 1880, when the first Committee on Instruction determined that inmates had "no claim upon the District School," the WTH hired Miss B. A. Whitlock, a young Pleasantville woman and a member of their committee, to teach the children. She taught the inmates for three hours a day, except during the summer vacation months of July and August. But the WTH placed greater emphasis on older inmates completing their chores than it did on school attendance and admitted that many inmates "were occupied during school hours in domestic duties." The Home subsequently reduced school hours to two and a half a day for all but the youngest children.²⁹

²⁸Of the twenty-nine other farmers in Pleasantville in 1860, 93% sent sons between the ages of eight and fifteen to school that year. Like the Pierces, the three others whose sons didn't attend school were not poor, but owned considerable real estate and personal property. United States Census for Westchester County, New York for 1860.

Cochran was a director of Western Union Telegraph Company and Continental Trust Company; he built St. John's Hospital in Yonkers and the rectory and parish buildings of St. John's Episcopal Church. Mrs. Cochran served on the WTH Board. *Biographical History*, vol.1, 328-329, and vol. 2, 844-848.

²⁹In an effort to send WTH children to public school, the Committee on Instruction interviewed school trustees, applied to the county School Commissioner, and wrote to the New York State Superintendent of Education, all without success. WTH Annual Report for 1880, 10.

In 1883, the WTH employed another Pleasantville woman, Miss Banks, and Miss Merrick, an attendant at the Home, to teach at the main house and the "branch" house, respectively. WTH Annual Reports for 1883, 9; 1884, 9; and for 1887, 9.

WTH Annual Reports for 1884, 9; and for 1889, 10. In 1887 the WTH instituted

In addition to abbreviated hours, a number of other factors undermined the children's education. Many inmates only remained in the Home a short time before being returned to their families, discharged to placement homes, or transferred to other institutions. The WTH admitted that "the older children remain as a rule so short a time in the Home, that the standard of scholarship could never be brought to a very high point." In addition, epidemics of childhood diseases suspended all classes periodically. The inmates' schooling suffered even more after the fire in 1895 that destroyed the main building. Laboring under makeshift and overcrowded conditions, the Home cancelled lessons for several months that winter. When fluctuating school attendance led to their "discouragement," teachers frequently left in frustration, impeding the inmates' education even further.³⁰

As always, Richard Hoe, Jr., the WTH secretary, managed to describe the Home's educational deficiencies in the most favorable light in his Annual Reports. In 1884, he related that the Committee on Education "feel that they can claim . . . a fair comparison with the attainments of children of the same age in many of our District Schools," which probably says more about the

evening classes for youngsters employed at the Home. WTH Annual Report for 1887, 9.

³⁰The Wartburg Orphan's Farm School in Mount Vernon did not discharge inmates until the age of fifteen, so their education continued uninterrupted. History of the Wartburg, 71. Likewise, Nurith Zmora notes that the inmates of the Baltimore Hebrew Orphans Asylum were not sent out to work before the age of fourteen, 35.

In 1890, scarlet fever was the culprit that discontinued classes at the Home. WTH Annual Reports for 1890, 9-10; for 1894, 10; and for 1895, 9-10.

According to the 1880 census which recorded such data, one twelve-year-old male inmate could neither read nor write. Accepting youngsters with such different educational capabilities created an additional challenge for WTH teachers.

inadequacy of District Schools than the excellence of WTH instruction in its one-room school. Public schools during the 1870s and 1880s were so "sorry" that even non-wealthy parents preferred to send their children to private schools. In 1887, the Annual Report recorded the satisfactory progress of students despite the difficulty of inmates coming and going "before it is possible to awaken an interest in study." Yet Secretary Hoe presumed to claim that "the foundation of a good English education is laid" in the Home. None of the WTH Annual Reports elaborate on what the Home thought constituted a "good English education." Based on the curricula of other contemporaneous institutions, it appears that WTH teachers endeavored to impart little more than the three "Rs" to their younger students. The Wartburg Orphan's Farm School in Mount Vernon offered lessons in German as well as English, spelling, arithmetic ("both written and mental"), and geography. Inmates also studied religion, drawing, calligraphy, and singing. A Board of Visitors consisting of twenty to thirty Lutheran pastors and laymen examined the children and evaluated their progress once a year.³¹

³¹WTH Annual Reports for 1884, 9; and for 1889, 10.

Frances R. Duncombe, *Katonah: The History of a New York Village and Its People* (Katonah, New York: The society, 1961), 180.

In 1873, the Children's Friend Society in Albany included in its report to the State Board of Charities the curriculum for its two industrial schools established to provide basic instruction for children "too poor to attend public school." In addition to supplying students with food and clothing, these schools gave lessons in reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and geography, as well as training in sewing and household work between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M.

According to George Paul Jacoby, the Catholic Protectory in the village of Westchester offered reading, writing, arithmetic, and religious training for four and a half hours a day for those receiving vocational training and seven and a half hours for others. However the *Christian Advocate* observed that the Catholic Protectory kept inmates "at labor quite as long

By 1860, most states had established public school systems, and Europeans acknowledged universal education as a uniquely American practice. At the end of the nineteenth century, most states passed compulsory education laws, which led to impressive progress in national literacy between 1890 and 1900. The *Times* claimed that census figures from 1900 indicated that New York was one of the eighteen states in which more than 99% of children between the ages of ten and fourteen could read. Five years earlier, elite New Yorkers concerned about children on the streets with neither supervision nor occupation had passed a truancy law that created a new class of criminals. Unlike the New York State Compulsory Education Law of 1874, which was poorly enforced, the state legislature equipped the Compulsory Education Law of 1895 with teeth. The new law not only required the arrest of all truant or unruly children on the streets after school started on September first each year, but authorized the State Superintendent of Education to withhold state school funds from any city that failed to enforce the law. Although many Americans were ambivalent about the value and importance of compulsory school attendance, Westchester towns employed local constables and truant officers to apprehend youngsters who were not in school. The new legislation further dictated the commitment of truants to an institution legally qualified to receive

as physical strength will permit . . . about eight hours per diem," before classes. Part of the discrepancy may have resulted from equating inmates' labor with vocational training and vice versa. *Catholic Childcare in Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: Arno Press, reprint 1974), 142, 275-276.

History of the Wartburg, 21-22.

them.³²

The WTH positioned itself to qualify. The Home constructed a much larger and more expensive brick building when its White Plains residence burned in 1895. It also actively engaged in attracting truant commitments. Pierce spoke at a New York Education convention and displayed exhibits of WTH inmates' Slojd work (a type of woodworking). As a consequence, the October 1898 issue of "New York Education" announced that the Home had been officially endorsed by the State Department of Public Instruction as a desirable place to send truants and delinquents from cities without adequate facilities for that purpose.³³ The new law dramatically affected the composition and tenor of the WTH.

The Home no longer just aimed to serve the needs of the local community, but endeavored to draw a statewide clientele. In 1898, Boards of Education paid \$4 per week for the support of each child they sent to the

³²Lawrence Cremin, 13. "Schoolhouses for Truants," *Dobbs Ferry Register*, February 15, 1893. By the early twentieth century, New York and states in the West and in New England had the best rates of literacy. "Illiteracy Among Children," *Times*, September 16, 1902.

The *Mount Kisco Recorder* argued that local parents should send their children to school regularly, since the amount of state funds to the district depended on attendance. The article actually named thirty-two students who were absent "last Monday," and warned that taxes would increase in order to pay for any budget deficiency. *Mount Kisco Recorder*, February 3, 1893, Renoda Hoffman Scrapbook, Box 2, vol. 1, 21 at the WCHS.

David Tyack and Michael Berkowitz note that although compulsory education laws appeared across the country, the ambivalence of most Americans did not begin to decline until after 1900, after which even southern states passed such legislation. Contrary to earlier ideas that bad character contributed to truancy, social scientists during the Progressive era determined that poverty and family problems kept the majority of youngsters out of school, "The Man Nobody Liked: Toward a Social History of the Truant Officer, 1840-1940," in *American Quarterly* 29, 1 (1977), 31-46.

³³WTH Annual Report for 1898, 10-11.

Home; Westchester County Superintendents of the Poor only paid \$3.50 for all other children. Ironically, the increased income did not enable the Home to operate within budget, and Anna Hoe frequently had to loan or donate money to cover the shortfall. Yet the WTH, basking in the warmth of official state praise and eager for the extra funds, accepted seventy-seven truants that year - sixty more than all truants accepted between 1884 and 1892. In so doing it entered a new era.³⁴

Although the Home had always accepted the offspring of immigrants, the majority of its inmates and staff shared last names with some of Westchester's oldest families. The invasion of truants from all over the state caused several demographic shifts. In addition to accepting many inmates who were not Westchester residents, the truant population was older than typical WTH inmates and had a far greater proportion of boys. These changes led to greater problems in controlling and training the children. It also became more difficult to conscientiously monitor the enlarged staff that the increased population required. Both of these factors would have serious long-term consequences for the Home.

The demographic changes also necessitated additional construction projects. In 1901, the WTH built a two-story brick schoolhouse with five classrooms to accommodate the larger numbers of youngsters specifically committed to the Home as truants. Public school districts throughout the state

³⁴WTH Annual Report for 1908, 9.

faced the same problem; many did not have enough room for students already enrolled.³⁵

Whatever formal leadership positions they held at any time, Ann Skeel and Anna Hoe involved themselves in all aspects of running the WTH. Although they did not sit on the Instruction Committee, the two women shared an interest in providing extra educational opportunities for WTH children. In 1890 Skeel and Hoe established and financed a kindergarten for the Home. The kindergarten movement had grown in popularity after Americans viewed exhibits at the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. The premise of training very young children through play activities and physical movement extended to children of the poor in the 1870s, especially in New York City and Boston. Hoe and Skeel first engaged an experienced kindergarten teacher from New York for three days a week, then offered her a full-time position. A photograph of the nursery room showed over thirty little ones seated at a horseshoe arrangement of tables in individual chairs. A wall of tall windows presented a very bright, but otherwise unadorned, environment.³⁶

Other supporters of the Home attempted to add to its basic elementary

³⁵WTH Annual Report for 1901, 8. "Schoolhouses for Truants."

³⁶In 1894, after paying two-thirds of the educational extras for the Home for four years, Skeel and Hoe appealed to the WTH to assume greater responsibility for these educational expenses, without success. WTH Annual Report for 1894, 8.

Women's colleges began to offer specialized kindergarten training courses during the late 1880s and 1890s. Barbara Beatty, *Preschool Education in America: The Culture of Young Children from the Colonial Period to the Present* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 52-53, 68, 73, 114.

WTH Annual Report for 1898, 6.

education through the contribution of books and supplies. WTH volunteers obtained a donation from A. S. Barnes and Company for five dozen schoolbooks, three dozen writing books, and one-and-a-half dozen slates. Donors gave schoolbooks, story books, picture books, scrapbooks, and subscriptions for children's magazines to encourage reading and interest the inmates. "Two friends of the Home" contributed a library of 113 volumes and a bookcase in which to hold them. In 1898, a donation from Mrs. Charles Eddison of Irvington enabled the WTH to equip school rooms with regulation desks. During the previous eighteen years of the Home's existence, students sat at long tables and benches without backs, "allowing of almost any carelessness of position." Secretary Hoe reported that suitable desks and chairs with backs led to a "vast improvement in general bearing and conduct," but neglected to mention any improvement in scholarship. In a photograph of a WTH school room, nearly sixty neatly-attired children sat two to a desk with their hands folded. In the last year of its existence, the WTH Annual Report boasted of "the most modern textbooks."³⁷ But book learning was not all the Home undertook to teach the children in its care.

Learning to perform household and farm chores also constituted part of

³⁷WTH Annual Reports for 1881, 13; and 1890, 9-10. In 1890, the Wartburg Orphan's Farm School boasted of a library of one thousand "juvenile" volumes. History of the Wartburg, 83.

Mention of the anonymous "two friends of the Home" and their generosity appears frequently in the Annual Reports. Given that Ann Skeel and Anna Hoe were the most generous and dedicated of all WTH workers, I have inferred that the phrase refers to them.

WTH Annual Reports for 1898, 4, 8; and for 1908, 8.

the inmates' education. From the beginning of the institution, its Annual Reports related that the Home "operated with as little hired assistance as possible." Children did almost all the work - with boys assigned to outdoor work, both boys and girls doing some housework, and all "encouraged to learn the practical duties of life." Inmates rotated chores every two weeks, so that they learned all aspects of housekeeping. Older boys had to take turns in scrubbing floors, drawing water, and preparing vegetables, and performed "regular duties" in the dormitories and the dining room. Both girls and boys took daily sewing classes. Girls worked at making and mending clothing; boys sewed flags.³⁸

Boys also had responsibility for outdoor work. One Annual Report portrayed this as enjoyable as well as instructive. It explained that children were given seeds to plant in small garden plots along the borders of the playground, and allowed to cook their vegetables in the kitchen and invite friends to share "the feast." Other Annual Reports reveal the heavy labor that boys had to perform as part of their so-called education. During construction of the hospital pavilions and the laundry, boys moved foundation stones, cleared litter, and graded and drained the grounds. WTH inmates also dug foundations, laid concrete walks, and did all the painting of the institution's buildings, inside and out. In addition to cutting trees and trimming shrubbery,

³⁸WTH Annual Reports for 1881, 9; for 1889, 8; for 1892, 7; for 1893, 7; and for 1897, 15.

WTH boys planted vegetables, weeded, and cared for the lawns and roadside. In 1887, their farming chores produced seventy-five bushels of turnips and forty of carrots, twelve tons of hay, four loads of oats, two acres of potatoes, two of fodder corn, plus additional vegetables for the table.³⁹

In 1890, an unnamed manager (quite probably either Skeel or Hoe) subsidized a class in dressmaking for older girls. Three years later, Ann Skeel and Anna Hoe organized and outfitted a workshop with equipment for teaching WTH boys the Slojd system of vocational training, which involved carving items out of wood. The two women also assumed the expenses for a special teacher, who supervised the Slojd classes and the carpentry shop. In an 1898 photograph, tall windows illuminated the Slojd workshop. Boys stood at workbenches and finished products, including wagons, cradles, swings, and a small decorative table hung from the ceiling.⁴⁰

This vocational training, which would offer slim prospects for future employment in an age of industrialization, earned the Home a great deal of public praise. The WTH exhibited Slojd work done by its boys at the Industrial and Food Exhibition at Madison Square Garden in New York City in 1895 and at a New York Education Convention in 1898. In 1901 the Home added a forge to teach blacksmithing, another occupation about to become extinct.⁴¹

³⁹WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 13, 15; for 1889, 8; for 1890, 6; and for 1893, 7.

⁴⁰WTH Annual Reports for 1891, 8-9; for 1893, 9; for 1895, 10, 13, 16-17; and for 1898, 15.

⁴¹WTH Annual Reports for 1897, 16; and for 1898, 10-11.

During an era when boys of the middle-classes were being prepared for careers in business through more extensive formal education, and industrialization had created a greater need for clerks and bookkeepers as well as factory workers, the WTH trained the sons of the poor for farming, woodworking, and blacksmithing, occupations better suited for an earlier era. While young urban women began to work in offices and department stores, the WTH taught girls housekeeping and sewing to prepare them for lives of domestic service or marriage. In contrast, by 1900 the Catholic Protectory offered boys classes in electrical engineering and wireless telegraphy as well as shoemaking, printing, machinist skills, plumbing, and masonry. Girls at the Protectory could take classes in stenography and typewriting in addition to more traditional skills of dressmaking, millinery, glove-making, embroidery, knitting, and crocheting. The WTH Board acted on the assumption that farming and housekeeping work was appropriate for dependent children. Rather than train their inmates for a future in the modern world, the WTH prepared them to earn their way by serving the community in the least skilled jobs.⁴²

Some Westchester residents criticized the lack of vocational training at

⁴²George Paul Jacoby, 143-144.

Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry provided training in printing, woodworking, tailoring, plumbing and shoemaking. Children's Village was founded in 1851 as a juvenile asylum and moved to Westchester in 1905. Harry J. Phillips, 52-54.

Although the Wartburg Orphan's Farm School also prepared its inmates to "fill positions of service in the world," insisting that "it is well that they early realize this," it established a printing office in 1876 to prepare its boys for an occupation other than farming. The Wartburg also sent several of its bright boys on to Wagner College, and several promising girls to study further at the Mary J. Drexel Girls' School in Philadelphia. History of the Wartburg, 70, 132.

See Chapter 4, "Placement" for a comparison of occupations at which young people of the laboring classes in Westchester were employed.

the WTH. Attorney Henry Henderson condemned the WTH where "they teach no trade and only have some wood carving," arguing that in the Catholic Protectory "every boy learns a trade." Henderson asserted that "this is a destruction of a whole life; with no effort made to instruct the inmates in any useful art or trade." As counsel for the prosecution at a hearing investigating questionable practices at the WTH, Henderson had an interest in portraying the Home in negative terms. Part of the Home's vocational focus may have resulted from a class bias on the part of the Managers, but the ages of the children also may have prevented higher training. For most the WTH's existence, the average age of its inmates hovered around nine, making them unsuitable for much more advanced technical training. In 1895, for example, twenty-eight of the inmates were under the age of five, and 118 under the age of ten, leaving only thirty-six over ten years of age.⁴³

Religious instruction also comprised an important element of the inmates' education as WTH Managers hoped to instill moral behavior in their charges as an essential part of their upbringing. Children attended prayers twice a day and morning Bible readings by Pierce. In Pleasantville, the WTH children attended services at the Methodist Episcopal Church on Sunday mornings, and Sunday school classes that Pierce taught at the Home on Sunday afternoons. When the

⁴³"Pierce Investigation Ends," in *Eastern State*, July 17, 1897.

Referee's Decision, 8.

In analyzing nineteenth century institutions for the care of children, Hastings Hart considered that industrial training for boys under the age of thirteen or fourteen was impractical, 71.

Home relocated in 1885, older children walked to the village of White Plains on Sundays, where the Methodist Episcopal Church reserved fifty seats for WTH inmates.⁴⁴

From the beginning, Pierce's religious zeal impressed the WTH managers. Although he was not an ordained minister, he was considered an "earnest Christian" who taught Sunday School at the County Poorhouse. He had converted to Methodism at a young age - a process that entailed both a public declaration and a deeply personal commitment - and remained a faithful adherent. Pierce had grown up in a hotbed of religious fervor in Westchester County. The Mount Pleasant Methodist Episcopal Camp Meeting Society established its Camp Woods on an eight acre parcel in neighboring Ossining, New York in 1834. Thousands of ardent attendees of various Protestant denominations from New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut frequented the evangelical camp meetings held in the "cathedral in the woods" each summer, enjoying both the "hell-fire and damnation" preachers and exposure to nature. Among other things, observers noted that strife over doctrinal differences threatened the meetings and created interreligious rivalries and intolerance. Living just a few miles away, it seems likely that Pierce would have attended these meetings and had his religious principles, practices, and prejudices shaped

⁴⁴When the WTH opened in 1880, the Westchester Bible Society gave fifty Bibles to the Home. The Methodist Episcopal Church in Pleasantville donated the Home's Christmas tree. WTH Annual Reports for 1880, 11; for 1884, 16; and for 1908, 9.

by the experience.⁴⁵

The Home's original name indicated that it had been founded for Protestant children, and the managers represented a variety of Protestant denominations. With the WTH managers and volunteers, many of whom attended Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Unitarian churches, Pierce managed to curtail any prejudices he may have harbored against other Protestant denominations. The Superintendent had to maintain the good-will and approval of the WTH leadership in order to retain his post, which offered higher status and greater financial security than anything else he might have done without formal education or training. However, he allowed his preference for Methodism to surface in his dealings with those over whom he wielded control - the staff and inmates at the WTH. Mrs. Boardingham, who had charge of the WTH children's quarantine, explained why she never complained about Pierce's harsh disciplinary methods. "I'm an Episcopalian. Mr. Pierce has no faith in Episcopalians, so I held my peace." A former inmate, who had married a White Plains policeman, testified that Pierce first whipped her for talking in church when she was thirteen. He told her, "If I did not care to join the Methodist church, I could go to the devil."⁴⁶

⁴⁵Bill McGrath, "Camp Woods, Ossining New York: Methodist Camp Ground to Secular Suburb 1831-2001," unpublished paper (2002), WCHS.

⁴⁶In its Annual Report to the State Board of Charities in 1873, the Children's Friend Society in Albany described its religious instruction as "the simplest and least sectarian possible," explaining that their Board of Managers (like the WTH) came from "nearly all the Protestant denominations." "He Scourged Naked Children," *New York Journal*, February 4, 1896. "A Talk With the President of the Trustees of the WTH," (no newspaper identified) February 19, 1896. French Scrapbook, 15.

At the Home, Sunday School exercises consisted of singing and "simple instruction in the Bible." In June 1880, the Baptist Church choir of Tarrytown performed at the Home, for which occasion Pierce borrowed a melodeon (a small reed organ). Several neighborhood families joined the inmates and staff for the musical service. Once the number of inmates necessitated renting other facilities in Pleasantville, Sunday exercises were held in two separate buildings. Pierce continued to conduct Sunday School classes at the main residence and "some young ladies of the neighborhood, who have kindly volunteered their aid," did so at the "Branch." The donation of two cabinet organs provided musical accompaniment for the exercises at both locations.⁴⁷

Learning about charity also figured in the children's religious training - and not just as recipients. In 1895, the older girls formed their own Circle of Kings Daughters, a charitable organization whose various branches often assisted the Home with sewing chores. In turn, the WTH girls made aprons and other garments for St. Christopher's Home for Children in neighboring Dobbs Ferry. Two years later, WTH children held a fundraising fair and cake sale at the Home, and donated the proceeds of \$65 for a child's bed at the White Plains Hospital.⁴⁸ The Home taught its inmates to give to those even less fortunate, which may have bolstered their self-esteem and their sense of involvement in the community. But the WTH was more concerned with

⁴⁷WTH Annual Report for 1883, 9-10; and for 1885, 9. Sunday School classes used "The International Lesson Leaves" as their text. WTH Annual Report for 1884, 9-10.

⁴⁸WTH Annual Reports for 1895, 10; and for 1897, 16.

teaching inmates self-control and good conduct than bolstering their self-respect.

The Home established rules to "enforce truthfulness, to prevent or break the habit of profanity, (and) to prohibit quarrels and fighting." Teaching decorum and self-discipline to WTH inmates involved strict rules and occasionally harsh enforcement. The constant ebb and flow of children made it necessary to impress rules on children quickly both to integrate them into the institution and to maintain order. Living by the clock and in silence had become a trademark of industrialization. For institutions, these restrictions not only seemed efficient but up-to-date, and the WTH insisted on silence as the best means of controlling large numbers of children. No evidence exists that the Home employed the whistles or bells to denote changes in activities as some institutions, even elite boys' schools, did. But WTH inmates did learn to eat, sleep, work, learn, and play by the clock. An Annual Report related that a "stirring march" played on the piano ushered inmates into the dining room for meals, the tap of a bell signalled saying grace, and inmates ate their meals in "orderly silence." One new boy at the WTH expressed surprise at being struck for talking in the dining room, which he did not know was forbidden. Edward Groves, a clerk in a White Plains store, recounted that as an eight-year-old he received a severe beating for talking at the table after two days at the WTH. Other WTH inmates told of being whipped for talking in bed. When the abolitionist Lydia Maria Child visited the Long Island Farms institution that

housed about 600 children and saw the long rows of beds, she inquired "whether there was not a merry buzz in the morning." The superintendent told her that the children were "not permitted to speak at all in the sleeping apartments." Child reported that "the answer sent a chill through my heart." The Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry also required silence during meals, in the dormitories, and while inmates were "on parade," moving from place to place.⁴⁹

Officially, the WTH granted the authority to punish inmates only to the Superintendent. Not only did Pierce not hesitate to enforce his rules with the whip, but his staff used corporal punishment on inmates at will. A matron described using "all the strength of her arm in spanking" inmates. An attendant in the sewing room acknowledged that she used a switch to hit girls on the hand during lessons. Another teacher used a "cat" on students, but claimed

⁴⁹Referee's Decision, 10.

When Franklin Delano Roosevelt's father James attended Union College in 1843, a bell summoned students for roll call and prayers at 6:30 A.M. The boys' not only hated the bell that tolled for changes in activities all day, but Chester Arthur (the future president) led a raiding party that tossed it into the Erie Canal. Later, bells started at 6:45 A.M. to fix the rigid schedule at Groton Academy for FDR himself. Ward, 29, 179.

A "Time Table of the Lowell Mills" from 1853 recorded the bells that summoned workers to waken, take meals, start and end work. In 1879 a Massachusetts factory worker complained that during working hours the men were forbidden to speak "on pain of instant dismissal." Mary Beth Norton, et al, eds., *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States*, 4th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1994) vol. I, 263; vol. II, 536.

At the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School, although inmates called the director, Rev. Dr. Berkemeier, and his wife "papa" and "mama," that informality did not extend to the daily schedule. Bells roused everyone at 5:30 A.M. and announced meals, school hours, and vespers in the evening. History of the Wartburg, 170.

The *Eastern State* published Groves's affidavit, sworn to before a notary, on January, 18, 1896. WTH Ledger 14:62 (December 23, 1886).

Lydia Maria Child, "Letters from New York, number 29," quoted in Miller, 102. Phillips, 35.

that she "never struck a hard blow, only a smart one" on the hands or legs. Even a kindergarten teacher admitted that she hit the youngest students with a ruler, a common schoolroom practice during this era. As a contemporary Vermont schoolteacher confessed, "moral suasion's my belief but lickin's my practice."⁵⁰

A letter from the New Rochelle Board of Education to the Principal of a boy's elementary school outlined the prevailing attitude about corporal punishment in schools during this period. The Board of Education insisted that "ill-mannered boys be made to understand that they cannot insult the teachers with impunity," and authorized use of the rod when other methods of discipline failed. The New Rochelle Board suggested giving students fair warning by reading aloud portions of its letter, and expressed the hope that a few public examples would bring the other students into line.⁵¹ In addition to corporal punishment, public schools could resort to a number of techniques for controlling students' behavior that were not available to institutions. Entries in

⁵⁰"Many Charges Refuted; Defense of Superintendent Pierce of the Children's Home," *Times*, March 19, 1896; and "Pierce's Use of the Cat. Superintendent Didn't Flog Unless Necessary, a Witness Avers," in *Times*, September 2, 1896, 9. "'Please Chain Us, Dear Mr. Pierce.' Written Plea of Little Lewis Hall an Inmate of the Westchester Home," in *Mount Kisco Recorder*, April 17, 1896. For the more bizarre punishments that Pierce inflicted, see Chapter 5, "The Scandals."

Vermont schoolteacher quoted in Ashby, 20.

⁵¹Letter, dated December 18, 1871 from the Board of Education to the Principal in New Rochelle Principal's "Black Book" of Punishments.

As late as 1978, a U.S. Supreme Court decision in the North Carolina case of *Baker v. Owens* affirmed the right of teachers to use corporal punishment on students even over the objection of parents and without procedural due process. Cited in Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason, eds., *Childhood in America* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 227-228.

the New Rochelle Principal's Black Book of Punishments indicate that when a student did not respond to verbal reprimands or a ruler across the knuckles, the school sent a letter home to parents or guardians. If this tactic did not succeed, then public schools had recourse to a day's dismissal or a longer suspension. Because the WTH acted *in loco parentis* toward its inmates, it could not appeal to parents to influence childrens' behavior, nor could it suspend inmates who lived on the premises.

Like the public schools, the Home used an escalating progression of punishments to regulate and discipline inmates - lectures, warnings, and second chances sometimes preceded slapping, smacking, and striking. Only Pierce inflicted whippings and more serious discipline. On the other hand, as a stimulus for good behavior, the Home offered prizes for scholarship and good conduct. The dining room held a chart, "an ingenious arrangement," that showed the comparative standing of inmates' deportment. Inmates who managed to decipher and obey the code of behavior expected at the Home, received special treats as incentives and rewards. As a married woman, former inmate Annie Chadwick remembered the whippings she received from Pierce and blows on the hand with the "cat." She also recalled enjoying several seaside vacations with other girls as a reward for good behavior.⁵²

⁵²WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 9; and for 1898, 8. In 1908, the WTH Annual Report reiterated that the Home posted a "system of merits for deportment and scholarship," 8.

Some inmates learned not only "to save their earnings, . . . (but) cleanliness, lessons in honesty and religion." Five alumni brought their savings to Pierce to hold for them, acknowledging him as a trusted father figure. WTH Annual Report for 1887, 14.

"Witness for Mr. Pierce," *New York Tribune*, March 27, 1896.

WTH Managers and friends of the Home supplied various seasonal entertainments for the children, with "bountiful feasts" at Thanksgiving and Christmas, a tree and presents for each child at Christmas, and a sleigh-ride "planned and carried out" by Pierce in February of the Home's first year. Alice Cock, a volunteer Sunday School teacher at the WTH "Branch" in Pleasantville treated her class to a sleighride and lunch. The Home celebrated the Fourth of July with ice-cream, lemonade, and "torpedoes;" and marked Decoration Day with speeches, songs, and flags. The Westchester community joined with WTH managers and volunteers in an attempt to make the children's lives more pleasant. Neighbors and supporters donated fresh fruit, sweets, cakes, and ice-cream, and offered their teams of horses and wagons to transport inmates on various outings. In August 1884 and for several years thereafter, the Purchase Sewing Society hosted a picnic at Rye Lake, inviting not only the Home's inmates, but also the Board of Managers, Pierce and his family, and every employee. Mr. Tilford, the owner of the Rye Park and Lake, made his grounds and boats available for the outing. Dr. Kingsley and his wife offered a cottage at Oakland Beach to Mrs. Pierce, who took several inmates and attendants to the beach for a few days. Some of the older girls were "given a sail" on a private yacht at Oakland Beach. Pierce took sixty-two inmates to the county fair, and a neighbor treated them all to a ride on the carousel. In addition, WTH inmates sometimes enjoyed stereopticon lectures, trolley rides, and evenings of games. The return of WTH alumni on Sundays and holidays confirmed that

some formed attachments to the Home despite strict discipline and stringent rules. Several former inmates returned to the WTH to celebrate their weddings, and in 1893 several brought their babies to the Home to be christened on Easter Sunday.⁵³

As the WTH population and staff grew larger and its physical layout turned increasingly institutional, even the children's recreation changed. Children who were accustomed to loose supervision in their own homes and at the Poorhouse, occasionally enjoyed free-form, spontaneous play at the Home during its first decades of operation. At first, even though they were separated by age and gender even at play, inmates could engage in impromptu expressions of imagination and competition. In 1893, financed by the "kindness of two managers," the WTH hired a teacher to oversee the boys' playground in order to keep the boys occupied, amused, and out of trouble for the summer. The Home intended that the teacher would regulate the boys' play by setting up teams and rules, and would govern their conduct, language, and social interactions. As the Annual Report related, the teacher "by constant

⁵³WTH Annual Reports for 1884, 15; and for 1881, 9-10.

Listings of donations suggest celebration of other holidays as well. In addition to cakes and pies for Thanksgiving and Christmas, N. A. Cushing Company contributed cookies for New year's Day and July Fourth, 400 cakes for Washington's Birthday and hot cross buns for Easter. WTH Annual Report for 1908, 14.

The stereopticon or magic lantern show projected enlarged pictures on a screen or wall. WTH Annual Reports for 1894, 11; and for 1897, 16.

Hacsi alleges that institutional outings demonstrate that orphan asylums during the late nineteenth century increased interactions between inmates and the outside world. The WTH experience does not support this; during their occasional outings, WTH inmates remained within their own group. Hacsi, 204-205.

WTH Annual Reports for 1891, 9; for 1893, 9; and for 1901, 10.

supervision and instruction . . . (would) cultivate in them habits of obedience, neatness, and observation."⁵⁴

According to the surviving WTH Ledgers, between April 1884 and February 1892, the WTH housed a total of 372 boys, exactly twice as many as girls. The Home may have considered that girls did not need such close supervision because they were fewer in number, better behaved, more skilled at manipulating adults in authority, less likely to run away, or all of the above. The Wartburg Orphans' Farm School had equal numbers of boys and girls, but Rev. Berkemeier observed that "boys are not quite as amenable to regulations." In an effort to keep its male inmates actively occupied and well-supervised, the WTH added a uniformed band, classes in calisthenics, and military exercises for which the boys carved wooden guns in Slojd classes. Improvised play at the Home gave way to carefully monitored and highly regimented leisure time.⁵⁵ If the children perceived a loss of freedom in these innovations, the Board of Managers considered themselves modern, progressive, and generous.

IN LOCO PARENTIS

The WTH faced challenges both from local officials and the children's parents regarding the custody of inmates. The law granted the WTH the right

⁵⁴WTH Annual Report for 1893, 9.

Cary Goodman observes that late nineteenth and early twentieth-century playgrounds, controlled by middle-class adults, served as agents of social transformation, as the public schools did. Both taught obedience, respect for the rules of the game, and conformity. *Choosing Sides: Playground and Street Life on the Lower East Side* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 15, 24, 50, 85, 108, 116-117, 165.

⁵⁵WTH Annual Reports for 1890, 8-9; for 1897, 15; and for 1908, 8. History of the Wartburg, 93.

to act *in loco parentis* with regard to inmates; once children were committed to the Home, the WTH assumed control over them. But city and county officials retained a voice in their futures. Only an order of a city or county authority could discharge a child, which gave these officials ultimate control over the future placement of inmates. The Home chafed at this limit to their absolute control. Isaiah T. Williams, a chairman of the Placement Committee, wrote that he thought that once a child had been committed to the Home by a city or county official, the responsibility of the Superintendents of the Poor should be limited to paying for the child's support. Board members' irritation at the limits to their control posed by Westchester officials was minimal compared to their annoyance at the challenges to their authority by the parents of inmates. In 1881, the WTH complained that the claims of parents made permanent placements difficult. Parents stubbornly persisted in demanding their rights with regard to their children. The WTH continued to have mixed, but predominantly negative views of those rights.⁵⁶

Pierce had no qualms about challenging parents' rights to the custody of children committed to the WTH. If Pierce ingratiated himself with the management and volunteers at the WTH, state and local officials, Westchester clergymen, and county residents who might assist the Home, he took a different tack with the children of the WTH and their families. With the approval of the Board of Managers, the Superintendent exerted the full force of

⁵⁶Report of the Placement Committee to the Board of Managers, 1882, in Williams papers. WTH Annual Reports for 1881, 6-7.

his authority on them. He exercised complete control over visitation, and denied parents and relatives access to their children whenever he wished.⁵⁷

The WTH strictly limited the times that parents and relatives could see children to two hours a month. They were "allowed to visit . . . on the third Tuesday of each month only, between the hours of half past one and half past three." These rigid regulations made it difficult for most parents to maintain contact with their children. In contrast, at the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School, relatives and friends could visit the children every Thursday between the hours of 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.⁵⁸

At a time when women of the middle and upper classes were encouraged to remain at home, respectable poor women were expected to work. Although some "good" women who worked outside their homes worked in factories,

⁵⁷The name that Pierce chose for his son offers possible evidence that he curried favor with his wealthiest supporters. Pierce did not name his son (born in 1888) James after himself and his father or to continue any other Pierce family name, but "Charlton", possibly inspired by Charlton Hall, the Irvington estate of the Dows and Hoe families, among the Home's most devoted benefactors.

When James Gilbert came to the WTH to visit his cousins, Theresa and Emily See, Pierce denied him entrance, because Theresa had accused Pierce of mistreating her. "Supt. Pierce Under Fire: Investigation Begun of Charges of Cruelty to Poor Children Under His Care; Admits That He Whipped Girls," in *New York World*, February 24, 1894. See Chapter 5 for further details of Theresa See's case.

⁵⁸Scattered transportation services in Westchester compounded the problem for poor families. A cross-county horsecar (and later trolley) line connected the lower Westchester communities of Yonkers, Mount Vernon, Pelham, and New Rochelle. Further north, the first trolley from Tarrytown to White Plains did not replace the stage coach line until 1897. The following year, that line extended east to Mamaroneck. Mike Schreiber, "Steetcars North of the Harlem River," in *Branford Electric Railroad Journal* vol. 36, 1992, WCHS Vertical File. "Half a Century of Trolley Tales," *Gannett*, November 23, 1980, G3-G4.

History of the Wartburg, 131. Children at the Wartburg came from members of the same church, a group that the institution would have considered a beneficial influence on their children.

Hyman Bogen notes that the Hebrew Orphan Asylum in New York City only allowed a visiting day once every three months, 110.

most did household work. Some took in laundry or worked out by the day. Others entered domestic service, which not only prevented most of them from keeping their children, but also from visiting them. According to the 1880 census, of the 874 female servants over the age of sixteen living in private homes in the towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, Eastchester and the villages of Tarrytown and Irvington in the town of Greenburgh, only twelve had a child living with them. Since domestic workers traditionally received Thursday afternoons as their day off, establishing Tuesdays as visiting day almost assured that the majority of working mothers could not see their children. Men working in factories or as casual laborers would have equal difficulty arranging for time off on a weekday afternoon.⁵⁹

After restricting parental visitation, WTH Annual Reports announced with unconscious arrogance that, "Other visitors and friends of the Home are cordially received at any time." After 1889, the Home altered that invitation and denied them access on Sundays. The WTH encouraged visitors in the hope that their interest and approval of the institution would ensure a continuing flow of contributions. Touring institutions was a common phenomenon during the nineteenth century, and visitors considered the WTH an interesting or worthwhile place to see over fifteen hundred times in a year.⁶⁰ While the

⁵⁹The children of two couples in service and the granddaughter of another such couple lived with them. An Eastchester milkman listed the nine-year-old daughter of his domestic servant as a boarder. 1880 Census.

⁶⁰Miller points out that Europeans toured American institutions as part of their sightseeing, and *vice-versa*, 276.

children may not have enjoyed being displayed for visitors, it is possible that not all of them saw themselves as objectified in that way. Some may have appreciated visitors' compliments on their neat schoolwork, sewing, and woodwork.⁶¹

The institution's policy of making everyone except parents welcome resulted in a skewed record of visitation. From October 1, 1897 to September 30, 1898, the number of visitors to the Home totalled 1,702. Of these, only 155 were Managers and 363 parents and friends of the inmates. Many of the other visitors may have appeared on a few occasions each year during fundraising parties held on the WTH grounds. Some may have come as volunteers to do sewing or to sort donations, but the numbers suggest a large flow of tourists. These figures illustrate that the WTH unquestionably attempted to restrict the children's contact with their families. It is unclear whether the Home feared that families would exert a negative influence on inmates, complain about their treatment, disrupt discipline, or make the children homesick and more difficult to control.⁶²

Yet, Pierce commented disapprovingly when parents never visited their children in the Home. When the WTH placed twelve-year-old William Hennessey with a family, Pierce observed in the Ledger that his father had not

⁶¹A newspaper article reporting that the WTH "children and their accomplishments were objects of interest to . . . visitors," suggests that inmates received praise for their work. "Children's Temporary Home: A Well Attended Lawn Party at the White Plains Institution Yesterday Afternoon," in *Times*, June 11, 1899, 3.

⁶²WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 5; for 1889, 6; and for 1898, 12.

been to see the boy since he entered the Home a year earlier. Charles Bailey's father had not visited him since his mother's death, and Lucy Jane Groves's father had neglected to see her since she was committed. Every Ledger entry regarding placement of William, Melinda, and Ward Van Tassell noted that their mother never came to see the children.⁶³ One notation indicates that Pierce informed parents when children returned from placements and were available for visitation because the WTH wished to encourage at least some contact with their young. Three months after Renie Gedney returned to the WTH from an unsuccessful placement, she was discharged to another placement family. Her record included the information that notice of her return to the Home had been sent to her mother, but she had not appeared.⁶⁴ The scarcity of these negative comments in the WTH Ledgers suggests that most parents did manage to visit their offspring occasionally.

Some parents faced difficulty not only visiting their children, but reclaiming them. The courts, the Westchester County SPCC, and Pierce could determine that children should not be returned to their parents. The WTH not

⁶³WTH Ledgers 14:77 (October 13, 1887); 15:6 (November 23, 1887); and 15:10 (March 28, 1888). WTH Ledgers 14:7 (May 7, 1884); 14:27 (June 29, 1885); and 14:39 (January 19, 1886).

The mother of Doretta Reuter, a two-year-old illegitimate child transferred from the Poorhouse, had died, and Pierce recorded that her father had never visited her. WTH Ledger 15:8 (October 8, 1887). The same comment appeared with regard to Arthur Fisher's father when the boy was sent to Kansas with the New York Children's Aid Society. WTH Ledger 14:39 (January 19, 1886). John Reynolds, age twenty-four, had been in the Home since its founding in 1880 when he was identified as "idiotic." His mother was dead, but his father still lived. Yet Pierce noted that "no one has visited the boy since he has been in the Home." WTH Ledger 15:57 (May 31, 1890).

⁶⁴WTH Ledger 15:5 (January 28, 1887).

only stood behind Pierce's decisions in this regard, they explored the possibility of seeking legislation that would curb the power of the Superintendents of the Poor over the discharge of inmates.⁶⁵

In the WTH Ledger entries, Pierce appraised inmates' parents with characteristics ranging from "good," "honest," "industrious," "hardworking," and "respectable" to "very intemperate and depraved." He apparently obtained his impressions from court proceedings and hearsay from officials who committed children, local constables who escorted them to the Home, the charitable women of various communities who identified and took an interest in needy children, the parents themselves, and his own observations. Throughout the Ledgers he sprinkled such phrases as "reported to be intemperate," "seem like" respectable people, and "claims to be respectable."

It is difficult to know how Pierce and the WTH Board of Managers understood the term "depraved," a verdict he bestowed on both women and men. One aspect of that judgment seems to include any behavior that would earn a jail sentence. Pierce identified the mother of the Parkerson children as "intemperate" and "depraved." He added that when she was arrested, she had Emily, age five, and Harry, age four, with her. A constable took the children to the WTH. Likewise, the label "depraved" seemed fairly clear when referring to the family of three-year-old Mary Miller mentioned earlier. Her father, mother,

⁶⁵ William Mullins remained in the WTH for three or four months. When Superintendent of the Poor Tompkins ordered his release to his mother, Pierce delayed discharging the boy for a week. "Report of the Committee on Putting Out Children, 1882," in Williams papers.

and grandmother all were serving time in different prisons. The term also suggests sexual activity outside of marriage. Pierce disclosed that a "depraved" mother, whose two small children entered the Home two days before Christmas, had left her family to live with another man.⁶⁶ But Pierce frequently used the term without details, assuming that any member of the WTH Board of Managers privy to the information in the WTH Ledgers would comprehend his meaning. The designation "intemperate" can be more readily deciphered. (See footnote 3 in Chapter 2 regarding Mr. Disbrow.)

Not all reports of community oversight and family observations were negative. Some even enabled parents to retrieve their offspring. Pierce heard that the father of the four Barker girls promised "to do better, give no further trouble." Likewise, the Camren girls' father "returned to his family and has behaved himself well since his return." A WTH Ledger reported that Edward Conkling's father had been intemperate, but noted that he "has been doing better for the past two months," prior to reclaiming his children. The Heady girls' mother came from a good family but was not "thought to be a good character in the earlier part of her life." By the time she brought her daughters to the WTH, the domestic worker seemed to be "doing much better now."⁶⁷

Many parents defied the obstacles raised against regaining custody of

⁶⁶WTH Ledgers 15:108 (May 25, 1891); 15:74 (November 10, 1889); and 14:62 (December 23, 1886).

⁶⁷WTH Ledgers 15:83 (June 20, 1891); 14:5 (April 21, 1884); 14:77 (October 13, 1887) and 14:40 (December 21, 1885).

their offspring and asserting control over their lives, their labor, and their futures. Mrs. Nau, the mother of an inmate, related that when she came to retrieve her son, Pierce refused to deliver him until she paid two months board, which he claimed she owed. Some parents agreed to pay part support for their children when they could. It is not clear whether Mrs. Nau had obligated herself in advance, but she produced paid receipts, which Pierce confiscated. Only when Mrs. Nau told Pierce that she had shown the receipts to others, who could prove that she had already paid, did he return them and release the boy. Pierce similarly attempted to intimidate Harry Weeks's father, threatening to sue for Harry's support paid by the county if Mr. Weeks took the boy from the Home.⁶⁸

The WTH Board of Managers concurred with Pierce's conviction that he knew what was best for any child who came under his control. What the Superintendent failed to achieve through the force of his authority, the strength of his personality, or the power of his connections, they encouraged him to seek in the courts.⁶⁹

⁶⁸*Times*, February, 25, 1896. In the case of the Weeks boy, Pierce was engaged in damage control. See Chapter 5 for the WTH scandal precipitated by Pierce's treatment of Harry Weeks.

⁶⁹Other institutions for the care of children acted with equal assurance that they knew what was best for their inmates. The Albany Orphan Asylum recorded what it considered a success story. A nine-year-old girl was removed from a "den of harlots" (which her father ran and her mother worked in) and placed in the Asylum. When her parents sought to reclaim their child with a writ of *habeas corpus*, the institution sent her "a thousand miles away" from her family in order to "establish her on the right path" and eradicate "the evil tendencies of her early life." Phelps, 40.

Pierce also refused to release the two Groves children whose mother had been arrested for keeping a house of prostitution. He surrendered them only when their father obtained a court order. WTH Ledgers 14:62 (December 23, 1886); and 15:20 (January 28, 1889).

In 1883, Pierce sued unsuccessfully to regain custody of Ellen Mallinson, an eleven-year-old girl committed to the WTH and then placed in a private home. According to the WTH Annual Report, Ellen had been sent to the Home in 1881 on a charge of vagrancy when she and her mother were found begging by day and sleeping in barns and outhouses at night. Two years later, the child's mother, who had found employment as a domestic, made several efforts to reclaim her daughter. She failed because of Pierce's indictment that she lacked the ability care for her child properly. She then removed the girl from her placement without Pierce's permission or a formal discharge by an appropriate official. Pierce took the matter to the WTH Managers, who instructed him to "consult counsel." The Superintendent filed a writ of *habeas corpus*, bypassing the mother and suing the mother's employer, William G. Valentine. He charged that Valentine "desired to obtain the services of the child . . . being a clever bright industrious child" and had refused to deliver Mallinson to Pierce. Court papers reveal that Justice J. O. Dykman of the New York Supreme Court judged that the girl was "not imprisoned or unlawfully detained by her mother" and dismissed the writ. The WTH Annual Report gave a different interpretation of the matter, denying the court's ruling against the Home. Instead, Secretary Hoe claimed that since the case was "not valuable as a precedent, (WTH) counsel were instructed to discontinue proceedings." Throughout the Home's history, Richard Hoe would continue to limit any damage to its reputation by omitting or rewriting negative events in the Annual

Reports to reflect as favorably as possible on the institution.⁷⁰

The following year, in response to her mother's inquiries, Pierce refused to reveal the whereabouts of Carrie Fox. Carrie had been an inmate in the Poorhouse with her mother when she was transferred to the WTH in 1880 at the age of four. After two years, the Home placed the child with "a very desirable family," and Pierce determined that she would flourish there better than in her mother's care. Parents did not accept Pierce's decisions without a fight. Carrie's mother served Pierce with a writ of *habeas corpus* to produce the child before the "Court at White Plains." WTH counsel responded that the Home no longer had custody of the child. The court accepted that defense and dismissed the case.⁷¹

A WTH Ledger related another of Pierce's successful fights to keep an inmate from his family. In 1890, S. H. Thayer, City Judge of Yonkers discharged inmate Irving Brower to his father, "a local Methodist preacher." Pierce refused to obey Judge Thayer's discharge and disregarded subsequent orders issued by Judge Dykman to produce the boy. On October 18, Judge Dykman had Pierce served with an order to appear before him on October 25 for contempt of court. After a hearing, however, the Judge dismissed the case.

⁷⁰"In the Matter of the Petition of James W. Pierce; Petition for *Habeas Corpus*" filed May 26, 1883; and "Order Dismissing" the writ, filed June 23, 1883 in the Supreme Court of the State of New York, No. 875 SP.

WTH Annual Report for 1883, 8.

⁷¹WTH Annual Report for 1884, 9.

The father persevered in his efforts to regain his son, and sought relief in another court. On October 30, he served Pierce with a writ to produce young Brower in court before Judge Barnard of Poughkeepsie. A WTH Ledger reported that "after an Examination of papers and Affidavits from both Sides, the Judge dismissed the writ and remanded the boy to the Home." Considering the status of the boy's father, Pierce's fight to keep the child, and his success, remains mystifying.⁷²

Some parents who could afford to pay board for their children did so in order for them to remain at the WTH, rather than having them placed with a family. Paying board lifted children from the category of pauper, which parents hoped might improve the treatment they received. Parents' payments assured that inmates would receive certain bare levels of medical care, nutrition, and schooling at the Home, which they feared might be less certain in placement homes. In addition, although children in the WTH were expected to perform chores as they were in their own homes, they were not considered servants as they would have been in many placement families.⁷³

Parents also may have preferred having their children in the institution, so

⁷²WTH Ledger 15:71 (November 12, 1890). An earlier entry disclosed that when twelve-year-old Irving was committed to the WTH the previous June, his mother was dead and his father had remarried. The WTH Ledger reported that the child would not attend school. WTH Ledger 15:88 (June 18, 1890).

When a Superintendent of the Poor ordered William Mullins returned to his mother, Pierce initially refused to discharge him, but relented within a week. Among notes in the Williams papers, 1882.

⁷³Parents of youngsters committed to the New York Juvenile Asylum also objected to their children being indentured, possibly for the same reasons. Phillips, 48.

that they would have the possibility of visiting them. Even if Pierce would reveal where their children had been sent, there is no evidence to suggest that parents had any right to visit their children in placement homes. In addition, youngsters placed in far-flung locations in the county or even other states would have been even less accessible to their parents than they were in the Home. Perhaps even more important, parents who paid board for their children could reclaim them from the WTH more easily. Placement did not always prevent a parent from regaining a child, but it may have made it more complicated. During the summer of 1885, William Ackerly's widowed mother placed him in the WTH twice. The first time, the six-year-old remained in the Home for a week, was discharged to his mother for a week, then returned to the WTH for two months until his mother could retrieve him again. Pierce explained that she paid board "to be enabled to take him out when she chooses."⁷⁴

According to the two surviving WTH Ledgers, of the 352 families whose children entered the WTH between April 2, 1884 and February 16, 1892, 37 (over 10%) had lost both parents and an additional 144 (nearly 41%) had lost one parent. An additional 25% of WTH families had one parent who deserted and another 12% had a parent institutionalized in jail, an insane asylum, or the county poorhouse, totalling 88% that had at least one parent missing. Yet, children from 154 families (or nearly 44%) returned to surviving parents or

⁷⁴WTH Ledgers 14:26 (July 6, 1885); 14:29 (July 13, 1885); 14:28 (July 20, 1885); and 14:31 (September 16, 1885).

other relatives, suggesting both strong family ties and the administrative presumption that, in most cases, children were best cared for by their own families. Inmates who did not return to family members were sent to various private homes or, according to a practice not used by any other institution in New York State, officially discharged to the WTH.⁷⁵

Apparently the institution did more than teach its inmates useful skills; it also relied heavily on their labor. It "discharged" some of the oldest, most capable, and most experienced youngsters not to their families or to placement homes, but to the WTH. This enabled the Home to continue using the labor of older inmates while deferring payment of their salaries. The WTH withheld the wages of these workers until they left the Home, which gave the institution complete control over their release. In 1893, an Annual Report complained about having to hire attendants because seven "girls" left, one to be married and the others for "suitable situations," as paid domestics. Three years later, twenty-year-old Elizabeth Thomas ran away from the Home when she discovered that Pierce had been detaining her illegally. Pierce had refused to release her when she turned nineteen and wanted to obtain a position that paid wages. Instead, he paid her three dollars a month for her work at the Home.

⁷⁵During the period covered by the Ledgers, three children died, many were placed with private families, some younger children remained in the Home, and nineteen boys were sent to the New York CAS for shipment out West. The WTH also transferred eighteen inmates to other institutions; two went to the Syracuse "Idiot" Asylum, two Catholic brothers to St. Francis Home for Children in Peekskill, five to the Albany Orphan Asylum, three chronically ill youngsters to the Brunswick Home in Amityville, Long Island, three girls to the House of Mercy, and four boys to the House of Refuge.

In the 1905 New York State Census, the WTH listed nine teenage girls as houseworkers and a boy as a "helper," rather than as inmates.⁷⁶

The WTH administration did its best to provide good care for its inmates. It paid attention to the children's nutrition and hygiene, engaged doctors and dentists, and nurses to tend the sick. The Home educated its inmates within the limits that it considered appropriate for children of their station. Although class bias informed many of the WTH managers' decisions about the training and discipline of these youngsters, apparently race bias did not. Protestant children of color received the same treatment in the Home and were discharged to private homes with the same frequency as other inmates.

In addition to retaining inmates or returning them to their families, the Home placed many children in families who were generally more interested in their labor than their company. Most of them remained in Westchester, but a number were placed upstate, in New York City, Connecticut, or New Jersey. Some were even sent out West with the Children's Aid Society. Placement provided protection and security for some, an actual home. It also created the possibility of exploitation of their labor, repeated rejection as placement families returned them to the Home, and outright mistreatment.

⁷⁶WTH Annual Report for 1893, 7. "Held Illegally by Superintendent Pierce; Elizabeth Thomas Creates a Sensation by Escaping from the Home," (hereafter "Held Illegally") in *Mount Kisco Recorder*, March 30, 1896.

The WTH record in the New York State Census for 1905 included two fourteen-year-old girls, two fifteen-year-olds, a girl of sixteen, and two of seventeen as houseworkers; the boy helper was sixteen.

CHAP. 4 - PLACEMENT

The Home's decision to act only as a temporary shelter for Westchester's needy children and to discharge them to private homes if not returned to their families took place within a contemporary discussion about the benefits of institutionalization versus placement. During the early nineteenth century, institutionalization was hailed as an improvement over farming-out even very young children as helpers to anyone who would accept them. Before compulsory education laws and the widespread increase of public schools, institutions provided a means of educating the children of the poor as well as allegedly improving their health, safety, and morals. Yet by the last quarter of the century, that attitude had begun to reverse. Some of the backlash in New York may be attributed to the proliferation of asylums constructed after the New York Children's Law of 1875 provided public funding to private institutions, and the subsequent increased expense to taxpayers. But the reversal occurred nationwide.¹

¹In his 1823 report, New York Secretary of State J. V. N. Yates encouraged the education of destitute children in institutions. Folks, 36-37. In 1857, a report of New York's "Select Committee of the Senate Appointed to Visit Charitable Institutions" concluded that many children who had been bound out "never received an hour's education during their apprenticeship." Robert H. Bremner, vol. II, 582.

Gunja San Gupta records two instances in which African-American youngsters had themselves committed to the New York House of Refuge so that they could attend school, one in 1841 and another in 1870. 112-113.

Sophie E. Minton, Chairman Committee on Children, State Charities Aid Association, New York, "Family Life *Versus* Institution Life," in *History of Child Saving in the United States*, National Conference of Charities and Correction Report of the Committee on the History of Child-Saving Work to the Twentieth Conference Chicago, June 1893 (Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith, 1971, reprinted with a new introduction by Anthony Platt) (hereafter "History of Child Saving"), 50-51.

Those who supported institutions argued that they provided a sense of security, discipline, and structure in the lives of inmates and afforded the community the opportunity to educate them, reshape their characters, and keep them out of trouble. The Wartburg Orphans' Farm School, for instance, retained inmates until they reached fifteen, so that they could complete their education in the shelter of that asylum.² Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children favored institutions, based on evidence they gathered that asylums offered children greater protection from mistreatment than poorly-monitored private homes. Defenders of institutions criticized the lack of adequate supervision of families that took youngsters from institutions, and the problems that ensued. Lyman P. Alden, superintendent of the Michigan State Public School, cited testimony from around the country when he reported in 1885 that the "great majority of those who apply for children . . . are looking for cheap help." He quoted the president of Girard College for Boys who confirmed that "the average family . . . wants a child for what they can get out of it in the way of work." Agents of the Wisconsin State Public School likewise found that in nearly half of the placement homes they visited children were too exhausted by endless work to attend school with any regularity.³

²The Wartburg Orphans' Farm School did not seem concerned about saving taxpayers money, a factor which motivated other institutions, including the WTH; it received no public funds.

³Folks, 176. Hart, 62-64.

Lyman P. Alden, "The Shady Side of the 'Placing-Out System'," *Proceedings* of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections, 1885, in Bremner, vol. II, 298-299.

"Children Indentured by the Wisconsin State Public School (U.S. Children's Bureau Publication no. 50, Washington, D. C., 1925), in Grace Abbott, *The Child and the State: Legal*

Opponents of institutional life cited the negative aspects of regimentation on the development of the child. Sophie Minton, chairman of the Committee on Children of the New York State Charities Aid Association, declared that "the same drill which makes a good soldier annihilates the individuality of the child." Then the cramped perspective of the privileged crept into her argument with the objection that institutionalized children "given the comfort of steam-heated halls" would be too spoiled to handle the realities of their future lives. She also cheered the prospect that the placement of children from institutions would repopulate rural areas from which farm youth had fled. From the time of its establishment, WTH managers were convinced that "home life is preferable to institutions." They did not base their ideology on a preference for a more home-like atmosphere in which to raise children, but on the penurious presumption that "one can hardly learn self-dependence too soon."⁴

President Theodore Roosevelt's affirmation that private homes were best for destitute children seemed to close the discussion. On Christmas eve 1907 the president published a letter he had sent to 100 "prominent men" inviting them to attend the National Childrens' Conference that would take place in

Status in the Family, Apprenticeship, and Child Labor, Select Documents (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938) vol. I, 255-257.

⁴Minton, 36-53.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, young people left rural areas lured by the promise of opportunity and advancement in the cities. The town historian of Temple, New Hampshire recorded in 1860 that "there has been a constant emigration of young men dissatisfied with farm life, and imbued . . . with the enterprising spirit of today." Quoted in Edward K. Spann, *The New Metropolis: New York City, 1840-1857* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), 243-244.

WTH Annual Report for 1883, 7.

Washington, D.C. on January 15, 1908. According to Homer Folks of the New York Children's Aid Society, in 1904, 50,000 dependent children had been placed in private homes, but institutions sheltered nearly 100,000. Folks urged that the utmost care be taken "to exclude all undesirable applicants" in placing children in families and that conscientious supervision be established to prevent neglect, overwork, or insufficient education. But neither Roosevelt nor Folks clarified how they expected their system would improve on the methods then in use across the country.⁵

In Westchester, members of various levels of society not only had different objectives when committing children to the WTH, but their goals diverged once the children had been admitted to the Home. Because the WTH was established as a temporary haven for needy youngsters, few adults expected children to grow up in the institution. A number of children did remain as long-term residents, but that was not the community's intention. Most families hoped that they would be able to weather a crisis and reclaim their offspring; many succeeded. A few parents, who could afford to, paid board to ensure that their children would not be placed out. They believed that their offspring would receive better supervision, medical care, and education at the Home and were less likely to be overworked or abused than they would be

⁵"Roosevelt's Views On Children's Care: Says the Family Home is Best Place for Destitute but Worthy Youngsters . . . Many Orphan Asylums Discontinued and Child-Placing Agencies Formed," *Times*, December 25, 1908, 3.

in private families.⁶

The WTH held a different view. As avidly as the WTH managers wished to demonstrate that they could provide better care for Westchester's needy children than the County Poorhouse had done, they just as eagerly sought to transfer inmates from the institution into private homes. In order to maintain their preferred pose of beneficence, they emphasized integrating WTH inmates into the community and providing them with good homes. Although they downplayed the economic benefit that the children's labor would contribute to county families eager for their labor, WTH founders and managers proudly claimed that placement would relieve Westchester's tax burden both for the short and the long term. The county would save not only on the children's immediate support, but also would eliminate them as a future drain on the public purse by teaching them "self-supporting industry."⁷

The children in this study had their own ideas about what constituted acceptable places to live and reasonable treatment. Although they could not

⁶During the period from April 1884 to February 1892 covered by surviving Ledgers, some children remained at the WTH, as they did in institutions around the country. Often placements could not be found for the very young who did not return to family members. Susan L. Porter, "A Good Home: Indenture and Adoption in Nineteenth-century Orphanages," in *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives*, ed., E. Wayne Carp (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 31.

Harry Weeks's father told a newspaper reporter that he never whipped his son. He affirmed that he had committed Harry to the WTH because he feared that if he indentured him, the boy would be beaten. "No More Whips."

⁷"For Homeless Children." Foster care, which provided funding for those who agreed to care for dependent children in their homes, did not begin in Westchester county until 1914. (See "Afterword" for further details on the commencement of that system.) Prior to that time, the county contributed to the support of children residing in institutions, but not for those placed in private homes.

control where they were sent, they reacted in a variety of ways when they found conditions unbearable. Like other non-dominant groups, these children found ways to avoid or mitigate harsh treatment and to express their resentment at it. Some not only resisted their caretakers, they retaliated. As a last resort, they ran away - from their own homes, from the WTH, and from placements - in order to find more tolerable situations.

ADOPTION, INDENTURE, AND PLACING OUT

Although a great many WTH inmates eventually returned to their families, the WTH considered the placements of Mary Jane Torry and Mamie Clark the best that could be expected for an institutionalized child. They were just two of a handful of very young WTH inmates accepted by families that were not primarily interested in their labor. These families intended to keep the girls. The Home and the community applauded, despite the fact that both children had living parents. Mary Jane's mother brought the two-year-old to the WTH when her husband died. A month later, Mr. and Mrs. James Webb of Mount Vernon took the little girl. The WTH Ledger recorded, "They have no children of their own and take her as their own." Mary Jane's young age precluded her from being much help to the Webbs, yet they accepted the girl by indenture, a contract that bound them and the child legally, and which implied a strong commitment to keep her. Mamie Clark was another little girl who found a home that the WTH considered fortunate. In accordance with the New York law of 1875 that forbade children over the age of two in state almshouses, Mamie,

who had entered the Westchester Poorhouse with her mother, was removed to the WTH. Within a month the WTH discharged her to a Mrs. Clayton of Patterson, New Jersey, at the recommendation of the chaplain of the Poorhouse. Mrs. Clayton said that if the four-year-old "proved satisfactory," she wished to adopt her.⁸

Not more than half a dozen of the 207 WTH placements recorded in the surviving Ledgers even mention the possibility of adoption or indenture. Yet, from the perspective of the managers of the Home, the larger community, and occasionally the children's parents, the experiences of Mary Jane and Mamie represented the ideal solution for dependent children - placement in respectable families who intended to keep them and care for them as their own. This implied the promise of a level of care and affection not envisaged for children taken as workers.

During the nineteenth century, American families did not always recognize a distinction between adoption and indenture. Both were expected to create permanent homes for children and to secure the rights of the family who took them. Before the institution of legal adoption, indenture was the only means by which to legally bind an unrelated child to a family. Indenture contracts had term limits. They usually lasted until the child's maturity, after which "masters'" obligations ceased, whereas adoption allegedly bound the child and the family permanently.

⁸WTH Ledgers 14:48 (April 22, 1886); and 14:47 (May 26, 1886). WTH Ledgers 14:61 (February 28, 1887); 14:68 (March 8, 1887); and 14:63 (March 18, 1887).

Beginning in 1851 when Massachusetts passed the nation's first adoption law, adoption spread rapidly as a legal instrument based on sentiment, eventually replacing indenture, a contractual agreement based on economic obligations. New York passed its own adoption law in 1873. Even after that date, Westchester residents made use of indenture, as the Webb family did with Mary Jane. During this period of transition, far fewer families used indentures to apprentice their children to learn a trade as such contracts traditionally did. But institutions continued to use indentures to legally attach a child to a family, thereby diminishing the custody rights of any surviving parents. Westchester families also continued to accept children into their families through informal arrangements that they called adoption. However, these adoptions were based on emotional attachments rather than legal ties, as in the case of Ann and Roswell Skeel, prominent supporters of the Home.⁹

⁹Courts upheld the authority of masters in early apprenticeship indentures; their rights to apprentices outweighed those of parents. John Demos wrote that a colonial court threatened parents with punishment if they received their five-year-old son who ran away from his master. *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 113.

Michael Grossberg, *Governing the Hearth: Law and Family in Nineteenth-century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 271-2.

Porter notes that well after the decline of apprenticeship, the managers of the Boston Female Asylum continued to indenture about half of its inmates, 29-31.

San Gupta reports that the New York House of Refuge indentured their inmates, but notes that 68% of them left before the end of their terms, 115.

According to the 1880 Census, in the Westchester towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, and Eastchester residents harbored stepchildren, grandchildren, younger siblings, nieces and nephews, cousins, young boarders, and some youngsters they designated as "adopted." In Bedford, only nine children were identified as adopted, in Cortlandt, nineteen, and in Eastchester, fifteen. Eighteen of them had the same last name as the head of household. In many cases, the adopted child was the only one in the family; in others, families appear to have adopted a youngster after their own had grown up.

The Skeels' experience as adoptive parents reinforced the WTH board's belief in the possibility of finding permanent homes for at least some of its inmates. They identified Rose Skeel as their daughter in the 1880 Census, even though they never legally adopted her. Yet, according to Roswell Skeel's will, for twenty years prior to his death she lived "as one of his family and for more than fifteen years until her marriage, bore his name and was always treated . . . as one of his children." Although Roswell Skeel's will left Rose a small inheritance compared to the bequests left to his wife and son Roswell, Jr., the Skeels clearly had adopted her emotionally, if not legally.¹⁰ That relationship favorably colored Ann Skeel's attitude toward the children of the WTH and the families who accepted them. It also may have helped to cloud the judgment of the WTH management, who clung to the hope that inmates would be accepted by good families "as one of their own," in spite of the considerable evidence they had to the contrary.¹¹

¹⁰Roswell Skeel's will, dated November 28, 1888, left his wife Ann Augusta their home and furnishings at 27 Park Avenue, New York as well as their Tarrytown country property situated on the Hudson River just south of Lyndhurst, Jay Gould's seventy-five acre estate. At Roswell's death in 1895, Ann Skeel also received \$150,000 and the income from real estate mortgages in Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, Washington, and Colorado. The will left \$100,000 to Roswell, Jr., \$45,000 in trust for Rose, the principal of which would go to her children, and the remainder in trust for Ann, with the principal to revert to her son at the time of her death. Roswell Skeel's Will, admitted November 11, 1895 in Liber 125, page 359 at the Westchester Archives Estate Inventories Series 16. Leaving money to Rose in trust would keep the principal out of the hands of her husband; the same would hold true in the event of Ann's remarriage.

Ann Skeel left Rose an outright legacy of \$15,000 in her will. Ann A. Skeel's Will, admitted January 15, 1900 in Liber 136, 58 at the Westchester Archives.

¹¹Ann Skeel recommended the placement of two-year-old Lucinda Jane Conkling with a couple of her neighbors in Irvington. Lucinda had arrived at the Home with two older brothers when their mother died of consumption. Both boys returned to their father when he remarried, but the WTH complied with Skeel's suggestion regarding Lucinda. WTH Ledger 14:54 (August

Even formal adoption offered no assurance of security for a child. The WTH gave Annie Kitson "for adoption" at the age of eight to Mrs. Curnow of Scarborough. But five years later, the New York SPCC had to rescue the girl and return her to the Home; Mrs. Curnow's husband and son had badly "misused" Annie after her adoptive mother's death. The less credulous or more experienced managers of other institutions also gave inmates for adoption or indenture, but harbored no illusions about the motives of many would-be parents. The managers of the Boston Female Asylum protested that "adoption is only another name for service."¹²

Yet, according to Superintendent Pierce's entries, pleas to find children good homes appeared throughout the WTH Ledgers. These came from various local officials, the Westchester County SPCC, and occasionally from the parents themselves. Although the stories of Mary Jane and Mamie implied a willingness on the part of a few isolated families to welcome a child - at least a very young female one - into their lives, most Westchester residents who used the phrase a "good home" generally understood it to mean one with a kind employer,

23, 1886); and 14:59 (January 19, 1887).

Anna Hoe's sister Margaret, who married Dr. Carroll Dunham, accepted a fourteen-year-old boy from the WTH in 1885, possibly at her sister's suggestion. George Auer had been left homeless when his mother died and his father abandoned him. Since Margaret Dunham did not inherit her fortune until her father's death in 1890 and the lad was too old to be a cuddly adoptee, the Dunhams may have wanted the boy as a helper. In any event, the arrangement must have proven satisfactory because the Dunhams never returned George to the Home. WTH Ledger 14:27 (June 30, 1885).

¹²WTH Ledgers 14:51 (July 31, 1886); and 15:122 (November 27, 1891). Porter, 45.

rather than loving parents.¹³

Mary Jane Torry and Mamie Clark may have represented the ideal, but actually were the exception. Although children as young as two entered the Home, few families desired such little ones. Very young inmates generally returned to a parent or other family member or remained in the institution until they had grown enough to be useful.¹⁴ The WTH claimed to be searching for good homes for its inmates, but most prospective placements did not seek additions to their families. Although applicants may have given lip service to WTH intentions, the majority wanted unpaid labor - youngsters to lend a hand as domestic help and babysitters, errand boys and farm hands. A great many placement families repeatedly returned the youngsters of eight or nine whom they took from the WTH with the complaint that they were "too small to do the work required." This raises a number of questions: why did they ever accept such young children, and why did the Home continue to place the same little

¹³For example, Etta Ackerman's widowed mother declared that she "wishes her (ten-year-old daughter) to get a good home." WTH Ledger 14:73 (August 12, 1887).

Porter notes that according to *The Orphans' Advocate and Social Monitor*, a mid-nineteenth-century Massachusetts publication, seven out of ten adoptive families requested girls, 41.

The 1880 Census for the Westchester towns of Bedford, Cortlandt, and Eastchester confirms this preference for female children. It registered twice as many adopted girls as boys.

Adoptive families may have considered that girls would provide greater assistance around the house or would eventually marry and be less likely to claim inheritance of the family's assets.

¹⁴In addition to parents, a number of siblings, aunts and uncles, cousins, and grandparents removed children from the Home. Louisa May Standen's grandmother took the three-year-old by adoption, agreeing to "all reasonable requirements" and promising to give her \$25 when she came of age. WTH Ledger 14:43 (March 27, 1886). An aunt in New York City took Louisa's brother George and an uncle took her brother Horace. The WTH placed her youngest brother Edward with a family in Tuckahoe when he turned six-and-a-half. WTH Ledgers 15:33 (April 22, 1889); 15:37 (June 1, 1889); and 15:15 (July 26, 1888).

ones in different families only to have them returned again and again for the same reason?¹⁵

Most families who took children from the WTH expected their labor in exchange for care. Mrs. Hardy of Sing Sing accepted six-year-old Emma Bailey with the comment that the girl was younger than she wished, but that she was "willing to try her." Mrs. Hardy returned Emma to the WTH in less than two months. This was another case in which the child could not do the work expected. A few months later, the Home discharged Emma to Mrs. Henry Brooks of New York City. She kept the child for three and a half years, then brought the nine-year-old back to White Plains. Mrs. Brooks conceded that Emma was a good girl, but she "was obliged to give up housekeeping because of ill-health and had no further use for Emma." Mrs. Brooks' ill-health may have prevented her from caring for the child, but that was not her excuse. She gave the explanation that the WTH expected; she had only wanted someone who would help her keep house. Once Mrs. Brooks could no longer maintain an independent household and faced the prospect of moving in with relatives or boarding with another family, she was either unwilling or unable to include the child in either scenario. Yet, within four months of her return to the WTH, Emma was discharged to a Mrs. M. Brooks, this one in Orange County, New York. The similarity of names may have been a coincidence, or possibly Mrs. Henry Brooks retained an interest in the child and convinced a relative to accept

¹⁵A common variation was "not large enough to fill the situation."

her.¹⁶

A few other instances of successful placements helped the WTH put a benevolent face on their practice of placing out young inmates. The WTH discharged the orphaned Helen Thomas to a family in Mount Vernon at the age of eleven. Three years later, that family returned her to the Home with a special request from their neighbor, who wished to adopt her. That same day the WTH discharged Helen to the neighbor Mrs. Barquet, who "was an orphan and knows how to sympathize." Herbert and Joseph Whited had a similarly fortunate experience. After their mother's death and their father's disappearance, the boys boarded with George Hunter's family in Chappaqua "for some time" before they entered the Home. Five days later, George Hunter took the five- and ten-year-old brothers by indenture, indicating a long-term commitment. The Hunters apparently wished to formalize their relationship with the boys. Taking them from the WTH pursuant to an indenture contract gave them rights to the youngsters that their father could not supersede, should he ever return. A few other families seemed to be motivated more by good will than self-interest when they took pairs of siblings from the Home, even when only one of them was old enough to be of much help. Isaac Lent of Tarrytown took both Ferris girls, six-year-old Flora and her sister Hattie, age four. Likewise, Mrs. Elizabeth Howe of Sing Sing took Mary White and her brother

¹⁶WTH Ledgers 14:47 (May 26, 1886); 14:52 (July 2, 1886); 15:84 (April 10, 1890); and 15:65 (August 4, 1890).

The woman who took eleven-year-old Margaret Fuller also decided to give up keeping house and had "nothing for Maggie to do." WTH Ledger 15:102 (March 3, 1891).

Edward, a pair of African-American children ages eight and six, respectively. Pierce noted that "the home promises good." Yet, most ledger entries that declared "an excellent home" glossed over the fact that the Home released the majority of inmates to the homes of strangers as servants.¹⁷

In part, WTH managers acted on the assumption that placing children out to work had a long and well-regarded tradition in America. From the earliest European settlement of North America, the labor of children contributed not only to the economic well-being of the families for whom they worked, but also to the profit of the larger community. Although variations in the economic status of families, the region in which they lived, and the race and sex of the child affected the ways in which people utilized children's labor during all periods of American history, most children worked - for their parents and for others who were expected to train them. Under the system of formal apprenticeship, the customary way to learn adult skills and duties during the colonial and early national periods, apprentices of all ages left their families to live with their masters. During this period, apprentice indentures generally provided for terms of seven years, and most began their apprenticeships at a young age. Boys received training in a variety of crafts and trades, ranging from

¹⁷WTH Ledgers 14:5 (April 21, 1884); 15:4 (September 14, 1887); and 14:75 (September 14, 1887). The Whited boys' mother had died and their father disappeared. WTH Ledger 14:49 (June 16, 1886).

WTH Ledger 14:41 (February 4, 1886). Mrs. White, "a smart and industrious woman," removed her youngest son, four-year-old William, from the WTH the following year. WTH Ledgers 14:11 (September 2, 1884); and 14:27 (July 1, 1885).

The WTH Annual Report for 1893 (after the date that the existing Ledgers ended) announced that another child had been adopted and two more had been indentured to the family with whom they had been placed, 8.

goldsmith to cordwainer. Parents indentured daughters to learn housekeeping and sewing skills from other women. New England families sent children to be raised in other households as part of their education, even when their fathers had to pay for their keep. The 1633 will of Samuel Fuller provided that his daughter Mercy "be and remaine to goodwife Wallen so long as she will keepe her at a reasonable charge."¹⁸

Local authorities regulated the conditions of apprenticeship by requiring that contracts be executed in the presence of witnesses and the youth's parents or guardians, acknowledged before a local official such as a mayor, justice of the peace, or alderman, and formally recorded in town, county, or colony records. In 1731, New York law set the termination of apprenticeship at the age of twenty-one (or twenty four for immigrants repaying their passage to America) and preserved masters' rights by compelling runaways to serve double the time they were absent after completion of the original term. In turn, a master typically contracted to provide the apprentice with room and board, apparel, washing, some vocational training, and basic education in reading. Additional provisions for boys might include writing and arithmetic. Most contracts agreed to deliver a suit of new clothing at the expiration of the indenture and, less commonly, livestock or some tools the apprentice would

¹⁸Edmund S. Morgan notes that Puritan parents set most children to "some kind of useful work" by the age of seven in *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth Century New England* (New York: Harper & Row, 1944, new edition, 1966), 66, 76. See also Carl Bridenbaugh, *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America 1625-1742* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1964) 199-200.

need to practice his trade. Commitments made at the beginning of a term might not be kept at the end; young people did run away and masters reneged on their promises.¹⁹

For centuries, the practice of "putting out" children to live and work with other families also served as a solution for the maintenance of orphans and the poor. While apprenticeship indentures provided specific benefits, such as elementary education, vocational training, and possibly a grant at the end of the term, "putting" or "binding out" only offered room and board in exchange for labor. In colonial Massachusetts, children of the poor could be removed from their parents and bound to another family who would provide for their education, put them to work, and serve as a better example than their parents, whom the community labelled "idle". Most poor children were bound out for house and farm work, a pattern that would persist through the nineteenth century. After the northern states abolished slavery, free African-American children born to parents who were still enslaved and the offspring of free women and enslaved men also were bound out as servants, not contracted as

¹⁹Bremner, vol.I, 149-151.

"Indentures of Apprentices (in New York), October 12, 1718 to August 7, 1727," New York Historical Society Collection, 113-180, at the WCHS. When fifteen-year-old Ira Sarles apprenticed himself to Ezra Webb, a shoemaker in North Castle, on April 7, 1829, Webb promised to send the boy for "three months . . . to some good English school to be instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic" during the period of his service. Box 12, #62 WCHS.

Eleven-year-old James Burns's indenture also promised three months of schooling. In 1809 he reported back to the institution that indentured him, that he "has not had much schooling and makes some complaint on this score." Records of the Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry, Reel 1, WCHS. Children's Village records also suggest that youngsters complained when masters failed to fulfill their part of indenture contracts. One entry noted that "Christian writes that Mr. Reel promised to give him a team of colts when his time expired, that his time is nearly up and Mr. R. refuses to give him anything." Reel 1.

apprentices.²⁰

This tradition continued in Westchester county during the first half of the nineteenth century as residents took children from the County Poorhouse to live and work with them. In 1851, Arnell F. Dickinson, a Westchester Overseer of the Poor, took seven-year-old James Mullin from the Poorhouse, indenturing the boy to work on his farm until the age of twenty-one. At seventeen, Mullin ran away and enlisted in the Union army, inflating his age to eighteen in order to qualify.²¹

²⁰From the great number of suicides and runaways that he found, Gary Nash surmises that the life of a young servant was often unbearable. *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), 15, 184-190.

In 1784 the Abolition Statute of Rhode Island provided for the indenture of free children born to enslaved mothers until the age of twenty-one for males, and eighteen for females. Similar statutes in Pennsylvania in 1780 and 1788 bound such children to the person who would have been entitled to their service until the age of twenty-eight, well beyond the age when a child born to free parents would be released. Ante-bellum court cases in Virginia and Kentucky held that the children of a free mother and a slave father could be bound out by overseers of the poor. Bremner, 324-326, 389-390.

²¹During the early nineteenth century, traditional apprenticeship persisted in Westchester as some youngsters still chose to learn specific trades in that fashion. In 1808 Peter Cornell took Peter Hart as his apprentice to learn to be a saddler. Box 12, #282, WCHS. See note 19 regarding Ira Sarles's indenture to a shoemaker.

Farmers eager for helpers took boys from reformatories as well. David Hanes of Rye took thirteen-year-old Hiram Dawson from the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents of New York City in 1830. The formal indenture extended seven years, five months, and a day exactly until Dawson turned twenty-one. Box 12, #32, WCHS.

Mullin wrote to Dickinson, "I suppose you are very angry with me for leaveing (*sic*) the way I did." Yet he closed, "my love to all." Despite having lost the most valuable years of Mullin's indenture, Dickinson apparently continued to write to the young man. Later Mullin protested that he had not received "any letter from you lately," and sent his "love to Grandma and the children." Although the tone and frequency of the ongoing correspondence suggests that Mullin's relationship with the family had grown into something beyond that of a mere servant in the household, this was not necessarily the norm with youngsters taken from the Poorhouse.

When Dickinson's father died, the fourteen-year-old boy ran his parents' farm. He later served as president of the Bedford Farmers' Club and vice-president of the County Agricultural Society, secretary of the local Temperance society, Bedford Town Supervisor, and member of New York State Assembly in addition to a number of other civic and town offices. Duncombe,

By the mid-nineteenth century the unfree labor of indentured servitude and apprenticeship began to decline. Although the abolition of slavery made forced labor an anomaly in America, the absence of civil liberties for children meant that the labor of impoverished youngsters could still be coerced.²² Their unpaid work in homes, farms, and institutions was rationalized as a reasonable exchange for their care, just as their work for their parents was "presumed to be gratuitous," even in the twentieth century. Both law and custom supported this presumption. In 1833, Article 67 of the New York Statute stated: "A father, and after his decease a surviving mother, is entitled to the services of their children, and to the products or earnings of such children during their minority." During the nineteenth century some Americans began to consider their children emotional rather than economic assets, but this was largely a middle- and upper-class concept. Even those who regarded their children as priceless undoubtedly expected them to perform household chores

101, 127, 157, 384-385.

A generation later in 1886, Dickinson's son Arnell took ten-year-old Freddie Denike from the WTH to help on his farm milking forty cows twice a day. WTH Ledger 14:53 (September 10, 1886).

²²The use of apprenticeship indentures subsided during the 1840s as craftsmen took advantage of the surplus of cheap adult labor available after the depression of 1837. In addition, factory work not only required less training, but children could earn wages as factory workers, rather than receive maintenance as apprentices, adding more to the family income. Stansell, 203.

Folks observes that by 1875 industrialization decreased the value of learning a trade from a master. He also records that some Americans argued that the abolition of involuntary servitude in 1865 made indenture unconstitutional, 41.

Amy Dru Stanley examines the aberration of the compulsory labor of paupers and beggars in America at a time when the nation was dedicated to the ideal of "free contract," in "Beggars Can't Be Choosers: Compulsion and Contract in Postbellum America," *Journal of American History*, March 1992, 1265-1293.

unless they had a large staff to do all the work. For all but the most privileged children, laboring for their families continued to be expected and performed through the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.²³

WORKING CHILDREN IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

Many Westchester parents continued to exact work from their children in their homes, workshops, and farms. When necessary, needy parents took advantage of the demand for their children's labor and found them positions in the homes and farms of others, so that they could claim their small wages. Putting children out to work also relieved poor families of the need to feed them during hard times. Sarah Woodruff wrote to the WTH Placement Committee that she had "a little girl of eleven years who is very smart, but I fear her mother will . . . want her back." Miss Woodruff expressed an interest in taking a WTH inmate, in the hope that this would diminish the rights of her parents to remove the child and place her elsewhere. In this respect Miss Woodruff was mistaken. Without an indenture contract, the child would not have a long-term commitment to her employment. Actually, few parents removed children from

²³Family Law, Section 198, 32 Cal Jur 3d, 240-241. G. W. Field notes the change that came to include a mother having legal economic rights in her children in *The Legal Relations of Infants, Parent and Child, and Guardian and Ward* (Littleton, CO: Rothman & Col, 1981), 68. Beginning in the West during the 1850s, several states passed legislation providing for equal rights for women and men in the possession of their children. Abbott, vol. 1, 75.

Zeliser contends that the shift in values was part of a cultural process, rather than one based economic causes, and that it increased the value of poor children as well.

Mary Ryan explains the gendered nature of this process for middle-class native-born families. She argues that sons gained the initial social, psychological, and material advantages as a result of changing attitudes. The labor of mothers and sisters supported the privileges and prolonged education of the young men in the families she studied. Mary Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 173.

the WTH and placed them in situations themselves, despite the fact that doing so would have entitled them to their children's wages. Mary Palmer's mother was an exception; she retrieved the fifteen-year-old and arranged for her to work for a family in White Plains.²⁴

The wealthiest Westchester households did not list children as servants in the 1880 Census. If an older teenager worked in such a family, she or he did so supervised by more professional staff - trained butlers, housekeepers, coachmen, and gardeners. Finding and retaining domestic helpers presented such a pressing problem for nineteenth-century households of the middle classes, however, that many preferred to accept children in the hope of training and keeping them. In addition, children from institutions need not be paid even the small wages that domestics earned.²⁵

As late as 1900, the United States Census registered one child out of six between the ages of ten and fifteen working for wages in America. Despite the economic hardships endured by Westchester laborers who worked in seasonal and poorly-paid occupations, the percentages of working children of school age in Bedford, Cortlandt, and Eastchester were lower than the national average; none exceeded ten percent. The New York State Compulsory

²⁴Letter from Miss Sara H. Woodruff to Worthington, dated August 17, 1880, in Williams Papers. WTH Ledger 15:63 (July 15, 1890).

²⁵David Katzman observes that employing a maid provided not only a convenience, but a symbol of economic status for the swelling middle class of the late 1800s. Since fewer native-born girls entered domestic service, the pool of available servants did not keep pace with the demand. *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 225-226.

Education Law of 1874 required all children between the ages of eight and fourteen to attend school at least fourteen weeks a year or be instructed for an equivalent period at home.²⁶

In the town of Bedford, a total of thirty-six (or 8.8%) of the 407 children of school age worked. 1,470 children of school age lived in the town of Cortlandt, which included the villages of Peekskill, Verplanks, Crugers, Croton Point, and Croton Landing. Of this group, 102 (or 6.9%) worked outside their homes. Yet percentages varied dramatically depending on the specific area in which the youngsters lived. Of the 215 children between the ages of eight and fourteen in Verplanks, forty-three (or 20%) of them worked (mostly in the local brickworks), a much higher percentage than the 4.7% of children of those ages in the rest of Cortlandt. In the town of Eastchester, which encompassed the village of Mount Vernon, 1,299 children of school age resided. Of these only fifty-nine (or 4.5%) worked. Ironically, the Wartburg Orphans' Farm School in Eastchester, which did not release its inmates for work outside the institution until the age of fifteen, employed five fourteen-year-olds; one girl as a servant, two boys as farmers, one as a printer, and another as a coachman. The

²⁶This figure excludes working children under the age of ten and those who helped parents on farms, family owned businesses, and sweatshops without pay. Zeliser attributes the dramatic decline of children's employment by 1930 to the reassessment of a child's value that shifted from economically useful to emotionally precious, 57-58. That decline also corresponded with the Depression, which pushed youngsters out of the workforce.

Leslie Woodcock Tentler maintains that undereducation condemned working children to lives of near-poverty like those that their parents' generation faced. "The Working-Class Daughter 1900-1930," in *Family Life in America 1620-2000*, 185-188.

"Laws of New York, 1874," Chap. 421 in Bremner, vol.II, 1423.
1880 Census.

majority of youngsters employed in all three towns were at the upper range of the age group. Twenty-six of Bedford's working youngsters (76%), sixty-nine (or 67.6%) in Cortlandt, and forty-eight of Eastchester's fifty-nine working children (or 81%) were between the ages of thirteen and fourteen.²⁷

The villages within the three aforesaid towns offered greater opportunities for young workers than the rural countyside. Consequently a few urban families put their children to work in factories, brick works, foundries, and stores. In the outlying areas, children were listed as servants when they lived with families other than their own and did childcare, housework, or farm labor. With very few exceptions, school-age girls worked as servants. Only a handful of girls worked in nearby factories; a few worked at home alongside their mothers and older sisters sewing shirts. Although the 1880 census listed some unmarried young women in their twenties and older as teachers or women who sewed (dressmakers, "tailoresses," and seamstresses), the majority worked as servants like their younger sisters. The census data seem to justify the WTH decision to train its female inmates for lives of domestic service. This would probably have been how they would earn a living had they

²⁷1880 Census, Bedford, Districts 83-86. Of the 702 Bedford households in which children lived, 161 (or 22.9%) employed servants of all ages. Only twenty-six of these (or 16%) hired children between the ages of eight and fourteen. In addition to the farmers who required an extra pair of hands, no matter how young or inexperienced, others who took children as servants included couples in which the head of household was identified as a shoe merchant, a shoemaker, a miller, a lawyer who also employed a woman of twenty-one, and an editor's family with an infant. Eight of the farmers, a widow, and the aforementioned lawyer sent their young servants to school. Westchester farmers, who could spare their helpers during the winter months when school was in session, also sent their own children to classes in great numbers.

remained with their working-class families.²⁸

In contrast, young men had greater occupational possibilities as they matured. The unmarried older sons of Westchester laborers were employed in a wide variety of blue-collar jobs. They found work in foundries, coalyards, brickyards, quarries, machine shops, factories, and as boatmen, carpenters, cabinet makers, tailors, blacksmiths, ice-men, butchers, and saloon-keepers. Limited by their strength and lack of skill, younger boys had fewer options. The 1880 Census classified most of them as "servants." They probably worked in the capacity of farm hands or general helpers. An optical factory in Mount Kisco and a rubber factory in Eastchester employed a few youths, suggesting both that the work was less strenuous than other jobs available to men and that it paid lower wages. A few boys were identified as drivers of teams. No boys of school age worked in the quarries and very few started work in the local foundries, both of which required greater strength than most boys possessed. Men who had risen to the most skilled and experienced positions in the foundries as stove and plow molders, mounters, and patternmakers introduced their sons into the Peekskill iron industry. But these young men were older - in their late teens and early twenties. In the iron mills of Troy, New York during

²⁸women employed in making shirts found it the most tiresome of all sewing. Each shirt had nine buttonholes, and a seamstress could earn only fifty to sixty cents per dozen. Comstock, 24.

According to 1880 census data, many unmarried older daughters and sons in Westchester continued to live at home. In exchange for part or all of their wages, their families provided room, board, washing, and medical attention when needed.

The town of Eastchester presented the only two exceptions to the usual occupations for young women. The 1880 Census identified one fifteen-year-old girl as a nurse and another young woman as an artist.

this period, men, facing flaming open furnaces and molten metal, fainted from the heat during the summer. In Cortlandt, some boys followed their fathers and older brothers into the brickworks along the Hudson River that employed nearly 1,100 men and boys. The brickmaking season lasted for six months of the year. During the late nineteenth century, adult laborers at the brickworks worked from sunrise to sunset for a dollar or two a day, and boys earned 37 1/2 cents for the same workday. Thus, the WTH determination to raise male inmates as farm helpers might not have harmed their chances for a different future as manual laborers as their strength increased.²⁹

As noted previously, few of Westchester's working children also attended school. Youngsters of school-age who lived with their own families and held jobs had a better chance of getting some schooling than those who lived with their employers. Six of the ten working children in Mount Kisco went to school the previous year. A rare exception for children who lived with their employers existed in the town of Bedford. There, nine out of twenty-six children employed as live-in servants also attended classes.³⁰

²⁹One exception was the son of a blacksmith who had become a lawyer.

Older sons who resided with their more affluent Westchester families worked in white-collar positions as clerks, bookkeepers, merchants, surveyors, printers, telegraph operators, clergymen, and salesmen. Local foundries employed only three fourteen-year-old boys; the fathers of two of them were molders. 1880 Census. Daniel J. Walkowitz, 106-109.

Tamara K. Hareven finds that working with relatives in the textile mills of Manchester, New Hampshire provided youngsters with encouragement, assistance in learning skills, and support in the event of conflicts with fellow workers or foremen. "Dynamics of Kin in an Industrial Community," in *American Journal of Sociology* vol.84 Supplement "Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family," John Demos and Sarane Spence Boocock, eds., 1978, 151-177. Colin T. Naylor, 54-58.

³⁰1880 Census.

A bitter contrast existed between the children employed as servants in Cortlandt and the more privileged progeny of their employers. A typical example was the fourteen-year-old boy who worked for a farmer and received no education, while the farmer's fourteen-year-old daughter went to school. A thirteen-year-old girl worked for a minister's family in Montrose, but only his thirteen-year-old daughter attended school. Yet, Westchester families seemed unconcerned that their own youngsters would continue at school while even younger children labored for them. Just as domestic servants released affluent women from their most menial chores, child workers freed the youngsters in placement households to enjoy their childhood. The fact that most school-age servants in Westchester did not receive any education did not portend well for WTH inmates placed in families that expected them to earn their keep.³¹ In spite of this, the WTH continued to place even very young inmates in private homes.

PLACEMENT AND SUPERVISION

From its establishment in 1880, the WTH tried hard to find satisfactory places for its inmates. The first Placement Committee sent out a typewritten form letter to Westchester residents involved in local charitable and church work to ask for assistance in locating homes and providing oversight for inmates placed in their neighborhoods. The committee received many

³¹Stansell, 159-163. 1880 Census.

supportive replies.³² The WTH Annual Report for 1881 declared that the number of applications for children exceeded the number available, as Westchester families remained eager for youngsters who would assist them without payment.

Local officials who had the authority to discharge inmates refused to allow the use of apprenticeship indentures, which would transfer legal custody of the children to placement families. As a result, both the officials and the children's parents retained the right to remove children from placements when necessary or desirable. The WTH did not use indentures for ordinary placements, only as an alternative to adoption in order to bind children legally to families intent on keeping them. Although WTH children did not benefit from the protective covenants of apprenticeship indentures, the Home had greater flexibility in removing them from unsafe or uncongenial settings, and placement families appreciated their liberty to return those who didn't work out. Informal placement also enabled families to retrieve their children when their circumstances improved. Charles Woolsey of the WTH Placement Committee commented that the New York Childrens' Aid Society (hereafter "CAS") didn't indenture children either, a salient point for a group so impressed by Charles Loring Brace's influence and achievements.³³

³²Mrs. Alexander Hamilton suggested writing to the clergy of different churches to "ask assistance in finding good places and look in on" WTH inmates placed. Letter, dated October 26, 1880, in Williams papers.

³³Letter from Charles Woolsey to Grace Schuyler, dated August 22, 1880, in Williams papers.

Charles Loring Brace, the founder of the CAS greatly influenced the public's attitude in favor of placement. Brace wrote extensively of his experiences with poor children and reached a wide audience. In 1872, Brace asserted that asylums provided poor training for preparing dependent children for the practical aspects of life. He deplored the nation's large, crowded institutions where, he claimed, "the bad corrupt the good," and contended that an extended stay in an institution would negatively affect a child's character. Brace advocated "the plainest farmer's home" as preferable. His ideas accorded with prevailing attitudes of the upper- and middle-classes regarding the benefits of country life, the value of work as a means of building character, and the family setting as preferable to institutional life. Brace's opinions were not only well-known and well-respected, but gained him the support of wealthy and powerful New Yorkers and Westchester residents.³⁴

One of these was Angelica Hamilton (the wife of Alexander Hamilton's grandson), who joined the WTH Placement Committee and participated actively from 1880 to 1882. She forwarded a letter she received from Brace offering to accept WTH children in the CAS for transport to "good homes in the West . . . without any expense to the Home, provided that they are . . . of sound

³⁴Brace, 224-225, 236-237. Attitudes regarding the benefit of outdoor work remained so prevalent, that such labor was prescribed for the children of the wealthy as a health measure. During his late teens, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. took a year's absence from school because of ill health. He spent that year engaged in heavy outdoor work: chopping wood, breaking stone, sawing rails, and raking for up to seven hours daily. Raymond B. Fosdick, *John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a Portrait* (New York: Harpers, 1956), 30-31.

Boyer relates that Brace boasted of his social contacts with CAS supporters Mrs. William Astor and George Schuyler, at whose Westchester estate he met Washington Irving and Alexander Hamilton's son, 106.

mind and body." Brace had founded the CAS in 1853; a year later the first "orphan train" left for Michigan with thirty-seven youngsters. Over time, the CAS removed nearly 90,000 children from New York City. The WTH did not accept Brace's offer at once. The institution may have been constrained by the reluctance of local officials to send Westchester children out of the county. In 1873, Westchester Superintendents of the Poor had rejected Brace's offer to take children from the county Poorhouse. In addition, Westchester residents continued to seek young helpers from the WTH as they had done from the Poorhouse.³⁵

Yet, four years after Brace's initial offer, Westchester officials discharged eighteen WTH boys, ranging in age from four-and-a-half to sixteen, to the CAS to be transported to the West, without any explanation for their change of heart. The first eight, discharged in May 1885, ended up in Kansas; another group of eight left for Nebraska in January 1886; and one Irish boy, eleven-year-old Jeremiah O'Bryan, whom Pierce had sent to work on his family's farm between April 30 and July 1, 1884, was sent to Missouri in April 1886. Of the WTH boys sent West, most had parents who were unknown, dead, in jail or an insane asylum. In short, none had parents who would wonder what had

³⁵Letter from Brace to Mrs. Hamilton, dated October 25, 1880 in Williams Papers.

Stephen O'Connor, *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001), 106.

"The Children's Aid Society of New York, Its History, Plans and Results, Compiled from the Writings and Reports of the Late Charles Loring Brace, National Conference of Charities and Correction" (20th: Chicago: 1893) in *History of Child-Saving*, 30.

become of them. The WTH Ledgers contained no negative comments regarding these boys' behavior. None had been committed as truants or incorrigible; only one of them had run away. Eli Trott, an agent of the CAS who lived in Eastchester, returned the youngest, four-and-a-half-year-old Henry Banker, to the Home within five months "on account of disease of kidneys," even though he "gave satisfaction."³⁶

Trott's name appears on the "Terms on Which Boys Are Placed in Homes," which outlines the society's requirements for applicants. The CAS expected that boys of fifteen would work for board and clothes until they reached eighteen, after which they would be "at liberty to make their own arrangements." Applicants had to send boys between twelve and fifteen to school "for a part of each year," and treat those under the age of twelve "as one of their own children" with respect to their schooling, clothing, and training. In his own home, Trott and his wife raised six orphans along with their own two children. However, he employed two adult servants, rather than

³⁶WTH Annual Report for 1881, 6. Although there are no records of parents seeking boys sent West from the WTH, one sister tried to discover where her brother had been sent. Pierce refused to give Elizabeth Thomas, herself a WTH alumna, any information until James Thomas reached twenty-one. "Held Illegally." Several of the transported boys later tried to locate their siblings in New York through the WTH. The WTH Annual Report for 1901 related that two boys sent West eighteen years earlier wrote to ask about their sisters, who remained in New York. Both young men had married and were "doing well," 12.

WTH Ledgers 14:23 (May 26, 1885); 14:25 (May 26, 1885); 14:39 (January 19, 1886); 14:41 (April 13, 1886); and 14:45 (May 26, 1885). See Appendix B "WTH Inmates sent to the New York CAS for Transport to the West."

expecting the orphans to work for his family.³⁷

Despite elite New Yorkers' eager endorsement of Brace's solution for ridding the streets of New York of dependent children, sending New York youngsters to the West provoked stiff opposition from the city's Catholics. Their fears that Catholic children would become Protestant when placed in Protestant families proved valid; the CAS did place most Catholic children in Protestant homes.³⁸ Even after passage of the New York Children's Law of 1875 required that children be placed in families that practiced the same religion as the children's parents, the law only applied in New York State. Over time the orphan trains also troubled recipient states. A ripple effect generated by the influx of children from the East caused several western states to transport their own needy children further West. Michigan passed the first law that regulated the importation of children from other states. Then in 1902 Wisconsin announced the introduction of a bill to "prevent the shipping of dependent children in carload lots," noting that by then Michigan required a bond of \$1,000 from every person or institution bringing children into the

³⁷"Terms on Which Boys are Placed in Homes" form of the New York CAS, undated.

The 1880 census recorded that Trott, forty-eight, was born in England. Two mature servants attended him and his wife, a fifteen-year-old daughter, a son of twelve, and six orphan boys, most of whom were from England. All the children in the household attended school, except for one four-year-old. Mrs. Trott had served as the first matron of the CAS Girls' Lodging House, which opened in New York City in 1862. O'Connor, 217.

³⁸O'Connor, 168-172. Stansell, 211.

state.³⁹

The WTH enthusiastically embraced Brace's custom of placing even the youngest children, a practice that differed from the tendencies of the people of Westchester. The 1880 Census for Bedford, Cortlandt, and Eastchester confirms that only three children under the age of eleven were listed as servants. No matter how severe their economic hardships, local families did not send their littlest ones out to work. However, the WTH, activated by the desire to save the taxpayers' money and the sentimental hope that placement families would provide good homes for their inmates, emulated the CAS. Whether motivated by stinginess, self-delusion, or foolish hope, the WTH continued to discharge very young inmates to families who returned them repeatedly for their inability to perform the work expected.

Even under the best circumstances, the placement experience proved very stressful for the children involved, even for those who adjusted from the initial ordeal of parting from their parents when they entered the WTH. For many, discharge from the Home meant leaving a regimen to which they had become accustomed and another separation - this time from siblings, who provided links with their past, emotional grounding, and sympathetic support.

³⁹By 1935, thirty-four states had passed laws limiting interstate placement. Abbott, vol. II, 133-135.

Bernstein contends that states shipped children across state lines in order to minimize local problems. Ohio, for instance, accepted New York children, but sent hundreds of Ohio children to Indiana. In turn, Indiana shipped its indigent young to Nebraska, which had a thousand children living in its Home for the Friendless, 199.

"Carloads of Children: Wisconsin's Desire to Stop Importations from This City of Helpless Orphans Abused," in *Times*, December 13, 1902.

Children relocated by the CAS later described the emotional wrench of separation. Claretta Miller, who was sent West when she was nine, recalled, "I didn't have my sister any more. I didn't have my parents any more. I didn't have any friends. . . . They were strangers. . . . That's when I began to cry." Lee Nailling also remembered that he "felt terrible" when he realized that he was "losing a brother." Like Miller and Nailling, WTH inmates struggled to accommodate to new locations, new caretakers, and new demands, and the added strain of rejection when they were returned. In addition, placements and returns took place without explanations to the children. One alumna recalled that she entered the Home when she was six and did not remember how old she was when "first farmed out." The milkman who took her returned her to the WTH "for some reason unknown to me," after which the Home placed her with a farmer in Pound Ridge "with a good deal of mystery." That family returned her "when she was not wanted . . . any longer."⁴⁰

The WTH acknowledged that the system had flaws. A Placement Committee memo to the Executive Committee of the WTH reported that "children have been placed with tolerably good families, but it is feared that some have gone to places where . . . they are desired only for purposes of gain . . . (and) advantage to those who have taken them." Eager as always to

⁴⁰"The Orphan Trains" videotape.

Annette Atkins discusses the importance of sibling relationships during the nineteenth century. A sibling could help by being a confidant and someone with whom to commiserate or sympathize. *We Grew Up Together: Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 9.

"Held Illegally."

deliver the most flattering public portrayal of the Home's practices, Richard Hoe claimed in an Annual Report that the majority of placements fared as "well as those in average homes," while many enjoyed "full membership in the household." Hoe maintained that most placement families "seem to be activated by the . . . humane desire to promote the good of the child." Yet, even he had to admit that placement presented the most challenging aspect of the Home's work as "so many persons desiring to take children into their households are unfit for the task." Unfortunately, the institution's examination of applicants seems to have been rather cursory. In the Ledgers, Pierce occasionally registered recommendations from WTH Board members and volunteers, local clergy, and other respectable Westchester residents. Pierce took their word or relied on his personal impressions that applicants were good Christians, sober, and respectable people. Yet, he continued to place children in families that had mistreated previous placements. Even Richard Hoe had to concede that some children had to be removed from poor placements because of overwork and abuse.⁴¹

WTH Ledgers recount the removal of children from obviously dangerous settings, indicating less than scrupulous inspection before placement. George Fisher returned after two months with a family in New Castle "with such evident marks of severe punishment and utter want of cleanliness," that the

⁴¹"Memo from the Placement Committee to the Executive Committee," in Williams Papers. WTH Annual Report for 1889, 9; and for 1897, 15. By 1901 Hoe reported "many cases" where children had to be removed from unsuitable places. WTH Annual Report for 1901, 11.

WTH turned the case over to the Westchester County SPCC for prosecution. John Morgan came back to the Home because of "misuse when (the householder was) intoxicated." In addition to cases of blatant abuse, the WTH removed children from families whenever the "rumors of ill-treatment (that) circulated the neighborhood" reached the Home. The Home retrieved Susan Peachy, a young woman of fifteen, from the household of a doctor in Tarrytown upon hearing "unpleasant rumors about the treatment of the child." WTH Board of Managers also advised removing a boy placed with a man who "does not properly care for his family." In other instances the Ledgers only report that the "home was not satisfactory," as they did regarding twelve-year-old Theresa See and eleven-year-old Charles Disbrow.⁴²

The Westchester County SPCC also intervened when placement families failed to meet their obligations, neglected, or abused the WTH inmates they had taken. Their Reports list the recovery of youngsters taken from the WTH who were "kicked, beaten, overworked," "beaten with a whip and a club," "brutally treated," and "greatly abused" at their placements. The SPCC rescued WTH inmate William Kelley from the home of Charles Keeler, and the courts fined

⁴²WTH Ledgers 14:26 (July 16, 1884); and 14:51 (July 8, 1886). WTH Ledgers 15:22 (April 20, 1888) and 14:32 (September 3, 1885).

An Annual Report commented on the "marks of punishment" still visible on the body of a child returned from a placement. WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 13; and for 1884, 8. When the WTH took George Burgess from the home of a White Plains farmer, the WTH doctor found scars on his body. On the same day, the WTH removed Samuel Evans, another inmate it had placed with that farmer. WTH Ledger 15:98 (November 24, 1890).

WTH Ledgers 15:76 (December 3, 1889); and 15:86 (June 3, 1890).

Keeler \$25 for his mistreatment of the boy.⁴³ Reports from around the country indicate that these were common problems; many youngsters placed in private homes were mistreated, overworked, and poorly fed.

Like the WTH, other New York institutions noted difficulties with the placing and monitoring of inmates in private homes. The Albany Orphan Asylum, established in 1829, asserted that

no part of the work requires more care than placing the children in the right family. In hundreds of cases . . . the motive is purely mercenary, and where this is apparent . . . or made so by inquiry, the request is . . . refused. This involves no end of investigation, before the child leaves the institution and afterwards . . . through personal visitation, and . . . correspondence . . . till they are old enough to look out for themselves.⁴⁴

The WTH conceded that they had no organized system of visiting children who had been placed out, but indicated that they tried to visit each child once a year. Responses to the WTH circular letter sent to supporters around the county suggest that their rather haphazard method of visitation and oversight did not yield very efficient results. In many cases, the Placement Committee only knew the correspondents by reputation. Archibald M. Campbell's letter volunteering to assist the WTH impressed Woolsey greatly. Yet he confessed "I do not know him, but I have the impression that he is a Doctor, and that he is employed by the Commissioners of Charities and

⁴³WTH Ledger 15:48 (February 1, 1889).

Westchester County SPCC Report for September 1903, 4, 5, 7, 11, 12. The SPCC also recorded the removal of children taken from the WTH by families that did not send them to school. Reports for October 1904, 11; for November 1904, 2; and for June 1906, 3.

⁴⁴Phelps, 38.

Corrections at a salary." His assumption was correct.⁴⁵

However well-meaning the volunteers, they could not always find a placement family or a child. Rev. Edgar L. Heermance of White Plains reported that he had some difficulty locating a particular family that he was supposed to supervise. Ironically, although he maintained that they were "proper persons to trust with a child," he did not even find the child Lorrie Ackerman with them. She had been missing from her placement for four weeks since a man named Dan Holmes, who claimed that he married her mother, came and took her away.⁴⁶ To circumvent the random nature of volunteer visiting, in 1897 Anna Hoe, then chairman of the Placement Committee, hired and personally paid for Rev. Leander Hall to visit inmates placed in homes around the county and report to her in writing.

Many volunteers lacked understanding about the children's roles in placement households. Elite residents of Westchester, such as Helen Gould and Orlando Potter who ran private facilities for needy children, or individuals such as Ann Skeel, who took a little girl into her family before giving birth to her only

⁴⁵WTH Annual Report for 1889, 10.

Campbell claimed that the Commissioners of Charity and Corrections maintained about fifty children in Westchester under his care, whom he placed in homes to be "brought up by the bottle." Letter from Archibald M. Campbell to Woolsey, dated August 9, 1880, in Williams Papers.

The Annual Report of the Infants Hospital on Randall Island to the Commissioners of Public Charities and Corrections, dated January 1, 1879, reported that Dr. Campbell of Mount Vernon had charge of the "farmed out" children. Campbell selected families to board the 121 foundlings the Infants Hospital transferred to Westchester, at a monthly cost of \$12 per child, 82. This was only one of a number of sources that a generous colleague, Julie Miller, brought to my attention.

⁴⁶Letter from Rev. Heermance to Worthington, dated October 23, 1880, in Williams Papers.

son, may have been so isolated from average citizens that they assumed that others were equally motivated by altruism. Not grasping that less fortunate families traded room and board for a child's labor, Sarah Jay, the great-granddaughter of Supreme Court Justice John Jay, asked what the WTH paid for the support of a child placed with a family. (Although the county paid support for institutionalized children, it paid nothing to private families who took them.) Sarah Woodruff wrote from her home Fairmount in Tremont asking "if the children are to be taught for servants - or in what capacity they will be expected to bring them up."⁴⁷

Others had questionable notions of what constituted a good home for the children. Grace Schuyler noted that she had satisfactory accounts of a placement from the wife of Rev. Cornelius Bolton in Pelham. She reported that "Mrs. Buckhout is on a large farm and in summer takes boarders so I fancy there is always plenty to do and the boy will not have much chance of being idle." This assessment, whether Mrs. Bolton's or Miss Schuyler's, gave a fairly breezy account of what could be extreme exploitation of the youth unless Mrs. Buckhout had other servants. Another volunteer visited seven-year-old Ida Cooney at Mrs. Hyatt's. She insisted that Mrs. Hyatt was a "thoroughly good Christian woman," despite the fact that the child looked "delicate," which might

⁴⁷Letter from Sara H. Woodruff to Worthington, dated August 17, 1880, in Williams Papers.

have indicated that Ida was ill-fed and overworked.⁴⁸

Most of the work that Westchester placement families demanded of children fell within typically gendered categories. Girls were expected to do household chores. Agents of the Children's Bureau who visited youngsters placed in homes in Wisconsin described the following duties of an eleven-year-old girl: dressing the children, washing the breakfast dishes, doing the "upstairs work," and preparing vegetables for dinner before school. After school she helped prepare supper, washed the dishes, and helped with the ironing. An older teenager was expected to know how to "make and mend and wash and iron her own clothing, and get three regular meals and clear them away . . . besides keeping the house tidy." The workload increased during the summer months as farmers' wives had to cook and wash for hired hands, and many Westchester residents took in summer boarders. Placement families required even the youngest girls to sweep, make beds, wash dishes, carry wood, help with the laundry, and mind the baby. Most girls did not have to do outside work, except for milking. Yet, one WTH alumna testified that the general rule did not always apply. Sarah Reynolds complained that while placed at a

⁴⁸Letter from Miss Grace Schuyler of Pelham to Worthington, dated October 28, 1880, in Williams Papers.

The Rev. Bolton came from a wealthy and enterprising family of Episcopalian ministers. His father, Rev. Robert Bolton, ensured that the New York Central Railroad would stop near their home in Bronxville by having his thirteen children fill in a large area of swampy land to spur the growth of the community. Robert Bolton and his sons built a mansion in Pelham that they called the Priory. In 1838, his friend Washington Irving brought yellow bricks from his Irvington home, Sunnyside, and installed them over the door to mark the date. Bolton knew many men associated with the WTH through his membership in the WCHS. Comstock, 36-37.

Letter from Mrs. R. I. Murray to Worthington, dated October 21, 1880, in Williams papers.

farmer's in Pound Ridge, she "had to do a man's work." She was made to "harness horses, clean out the stable, and plow," and she resented it deeply.⁴⁹

Like housekeeping, agriculture always required a great deal of cheap labor, and farmers did not hesitate to overwork their own sons any more than they did their helpers. The nineteenth-century naturalist John Muir, a Scottish immigrant who worked his father's Wisconsin farm, recalled the harshness of farm work:

The summer work . . . was deadly heavy, especially harvesting and corn-hoeing. . . . We stayed in the field until dark, then supper, still more chores, family worship, and to bed; making altogether a hard, sweaty day of about sixteen or seventeen hours. . . . In winter father came to the foot of the stairs and called us at six o'clock to feed the horses and cattle, grind axes, bring in wood, and do any other chores required, then breakfast, and out to work . . . by daybreak. . . . Our winter work was about as . . . trying as that of the long-day summer.⁵⁰

Westchester dairymen also took boys from the WTH to help with the milking and early-morning deliveries. Cows were milked twice a day, a

⁴⁹Abbott, vol. II, 227. "Lucy Larcom's Factory Experience," in *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women*, ed. Nancy F. Cott, (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1972), 129.

David E. Schob describes the endless drudgery of the farm wife, equalled only by the arduousness of the farmer's work from sunup to sundown, 94, 228.

"The Pierce Investigation," in *Eastern State*, February 8, 1896, 3.

⁵⁰Muir's sense of being exploited derived less from the labor demanded of him and more from the fact that his father spared him no time for formal education. John Muir, *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), 161-162.

Hamlin Garland also resented the "fearless use our father made of us" when he was only eight. At the age of ten, he overheard (and agreed with) a neighbor's comment, "that chap's too young to run a plow," ten hours a day. 34, 86-88.

Nate Shaw, the son of an African-American sharecropper and former slave, did not protest working hard for his family, but fumed that his father intended "to draw my last dollar" until the age of twenty-one." Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975), 72-73, 81-82.

laborious chore. An experienced milker could handle eight to ten cows an hour before milking machines came into widespread use between 1910 and 1920. Dairymen had to complete their cleaning of the cows and the barn between milkings. Chores included brushing the cows, washing their udders, removing manure, and pitching hay.⁵¹

THE CHILDREN'S RESPONSES

Hamlin Garland remembered having a "bitter and rebellious" heart because of the harshness of his father's work requirements and punishments. He finally demanded "don't you strike me. You can't do that any more." Many youngsters in this study likewise had their own ideas about what constituted "a good home," reasonable work, and fair treatment. They resented when circumstances did not match those standards and challenged both their caretakers and their conditions. WTH inmate John Morgan, who had suffered abuse at the hands of the drunken householder with whom he had been placed, became "very disobedient and uncontrollable" at his next placement.⁵²

Inmates attempted to negotiate shifting standards of appropriate behavior and elicit acceptable treatment as they moved from place to place. Those who could not manage to do either openly resisted what they perceived as mistreatment. When the children in this study doubted the good will and good sense of those with authority over them, they, like other subordinate groups

⁵¹Sheila Buff, ed., *Traditional Country Skills: A Practical Compendium of American Wisdom and Know-How* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2001), 145-147.

⁵²Garland, 88, 177. WTH Ledger 15:94 (August 25, 1890).

acted out their dissatisfaction and frustration. Sometimes they retaliated by stealing, setting fires, and being "cruel to the cattle." Placement families registered additional complaints regarding their less overt protests. WTH Ledgers record charges against returned youngsters who had acted impudent, dishonest, lazy, careless, sullen, sloppy, unruly, stubborn, disobedient, destructive, and/or uncontrollable. These descriptions cover a wide range of self-protective and subversive behaviors that their adult caretakers would interpret as deviant.⁵³

WTH youngsters adopted various strategies in an attempt to influence where and with whom they would live; 92 (44%) of the 207 children placed in homes adjusted and remained at their first placements. Several arranged to be transferred to more agreeable surroundings by ingratiating themselves with the neighbors, acquaintances, or relatives of their placement families.

⁵³The Armonk farmer who returned Thomas Head to the WTH accused the twelve-year-old of being "very cruel to the cattle." Head's father was in the Albany Penitentiary; his mother retrieved his little sister from the Home, but left her son to fare as well as he could. WTH Ledger 15:110 (July 3, 1891).

The family with whom Joseph Evans had been placed had a constable return the boy to the Home after he stoned a horse. WTH Ledger 14:48 (March 17, 1886).

San Gupta's work suggests that children's most drastic rebellions had cultural foundations. In 1865, two African-American youngsters attempted to poison the families to whom they were indentured by the New York House of Refuge. To former slaves, indenture seemed too much like bondage; they responded with a pattern of resistance learned in slavery. 111-112.

Elizabeth Janeway maintains that the powerful need the consent of those they rule. *Powers of the Weak* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980), 121. Scott explains that slaves and serfs ordinarily did not dare to contest their subordination openly, but coped by doing so covertly, 110.

Pierce recognized that placement families sometimes used these charges when reluctant to admit their true reasons for returning a child. In the case of six-year-old Agnes Leggett, he considered that the accusation that she was "untruthful" was merely "an excuse for being too small" to do the work they hoped to extract from her. WTH Ledger 14:50 (May 26, 1886).

A few older boys ran away repeatedly or caused trouble until they were placed with families that they preferred, especially those that paid wages. The family that returned fifteen-year-old George Banker claimed that he had become "troublesome and would not mind well." Within weeks the WTH found him a place in a "good home" that paid wages. The history of young servants and apprentices running away from miserable situations is at least as old as European settlement of America. Youngsters from the WTH continued the tradition. Edgar Halstead had a history of running away from placements he considered unsatisfactory or misbehaving so that he would be returned to the Home. Finally, the WTH placed the fourteen-year-old with a family that agreed to pay wages; there he remained.⁵⁴

Others chose their own employers and did everything they could to gain formal placement with those whom they preferred. Abraham Robbins ran away from several placements until he found himself a congenial position with Miss Rundle in North Castle. Pierce refused to accept Robbins's self-determination and returned the fifteen-year-old to the WTH. After Robbins ran away from

⁵⁴WTH Ledgers 14:76 (June 29, 1887), 14:73 (August 17, 1887), and 15:83 (June 19, 1891).

At the age of three, the orphaned Edgar Halstead was adopted by Charles Halsted (*sic*) of Ossining and apparently even took his name. By the time the boy turned ten, he determined that even legal adoption could not prevent him from leaving and began running away. Local authorities committed Edgar to the WTH. WTH Ledger 14:58 (October 12, 1886).

Ken Liberto asserts that not only were runaway children among the earliest immigrants to America, but that they contributed greatly to the growth of the country. He cites Benjamin Franklin and Davy Crockett as the most well-known early examples. "The Runaway Child in America," in *Family Life in America 1620-2000*, eds., Mel Albin and Dominick Cavallo (St. James, New York: Revisionary Press, 1981), 268-278.

another placement, he prevailed and was formally discharged to Miss Rundle.

His resolution to make his own way resembled that of the intrepid hero of Horatio Alger's *Jed, The Poorhouse Boy*. After fourteen years in the poorhouse, Jed declared, "I think I can earn my own living, and a better living than I have here. I am young and strong, and I am not afraid to try." Robbins did not share his fictional counterpart's luck in discovering that he inherited an English title and estate, but persevered enough to succeed in getting a decent home and a fair employer. Not all runaways improved their lot. Pierce found George Edwards, a fourteen-year-old orphan who had run from a placement, with a "den of thieves," in Kensico. Within a month, the Superintendent sent the youth to the Albany Orphan Asylum "to remove him entirely from his former associates."⁵⁵

Servants generally had to accept whatever they were given to eat and wear and the conditions under which they worked. But, as they grew older and accepted greater responsibilities, some youngsters in this study sought a measure of control over their work. One girl objected to the pace of the work required of her. The WTH placed Irene Green in "a very good home" when she was seven. At thirteen, when "reproved for not washing her dishes as quickly as she usually did," she ran away. Fourteen-year-old George Fisher ran away

⁵⁵In the 1880 census, District 113, Rundle lived with her brother, a farmer, and a staff that included a housekeeper, a female servant, and a young male laborer. WTH Ledgers 14:65 (August 16, 1889), 15:115 (September 21, 1891), and 15:87 (September 21, 1891).

Alger, *Jed*, 423.

WTH Ledgers 14:22 (May 13, 1885); and 14:25 (June 15, 1885).

from a placement because he "did not like to work outside," but worked inside willingly. Paid servants dissatisfied with their jobs could leave and find other employment; children could only run away.⁵⁶

If younger children were ever grateful for a roof over their heads in exchange for their labor, older ones began to develop a different sense of their contribution to their placements, a desire for greater autonomy over their work, and payment. Adolescents typically begin to chafe against adult demands and discipline as they acquire a clearer sense of their subordination, which often accompanies an awareness of developing strength and competence. The case of Edward Greenwood provides an illustration of the transformation of a formerly "good boy" into an adolescent who began to sense his own power and challenge that of his elders. The WTH placed Greenwood with the Fearing family. When they returned him to the Home four years later at the age of twelve and a half, they attested that he had been "a good boy until . . . a year or two ago . . . [then turned] disobedient and destructive and uncontrollable." Subsequent placements returned him with complaints that as the boy aged he grew increasingly disobedient.⁵⁷

At placement homes disobedient acts could provoke severe punishment. But children also knew that they could serve to return them to the WTH and the

⁵⁶WTH Ledgers 15:62 (June 17, 1889); and 14:12 (October 15, 1884).

Katzman makes this point regarding live-in servants during this period; the same applied to children taken from the Home, 173.

⁵⁷WTH Ledgers 15: 56 (May 4, 1889); 15:70 (October 15, 1889); and 15:78 (January 28, 1890).

possibility of reuniting with siblings or obtaining a more congenial situation. When they fled from unsatisfactory placements, local officials returned children to the WTH, which provided shelter until their next placement. The WTH Ledger protested that Chauncey Greenwood "had a good home, but . . . did not like the confinement." To demonstrate his discontent, Greenwood set fire to the house. Despite the wish "of all in the house" that the boy be arrested, he was returned to the WTH. Joseph Evans displayed his dissatisfaction with a placement by threatening to use his knife on some members of the family. He, too, returned to the WTH.⁵⁸

Although the Home provided a haven for some, others chose to escape from there as well. Most youngsters who were miserable at the institution considered running away their best option. Inmates understood that there was no chance of negotiation with Pierce, who regarded his decisions as final. Appeal to any of the managers, who supported Pierce wholeheartedly, promised little hope. Minor children had no standing in court and needed adult champions. Most WTH youngsters grasped that their parents had little ability

⁵⁸WTH Ledgers 15:52 (April 3, 1889); 14:32 (August 28, 1885); 14:37 (January 8, 1886); and 14:48 (March 17, 1886).

Evans was one of four orphaned siblings who came to the Home in April 1880 at the age of nine. He was discharged to the WTH in 1887 and remained two more years until he turned eighteen. At that time, Pierce obtained a position for him in New York City at R. Hoe and Company, owned by the WTH secretary. Somehow Evans not only escaped the reformatory for pulling a knife, but managed to avoid the treatment that his two brothers, John and Samuel, endured at the Home. They both testified at the Weeks Hearing that Pierce beat and chained them, but Joseph seems to have gained the Superintendent's favor. He reported that Pierce entrusted him to wield the clipping machine with which he shaved the heads of girls the Superintendent wished to punish. Official Transcript 17, 18, 45, 67-68. See Chapter 5 "The Scandals" for further discussion of the Weeks Hearing.

to remove or protect them from mistreatment at the Home.

In the two existing WTH ledgers, older boys constituted the majority who attempted to escape from the Home or from their placements. Between April 1884 and February 1892, nineteen boys ran away from their placements and another eleven ran away from the Home. Only three girls had the courage or opportunity to leave unsatisfactory situations and only two fled from the WTH. The runaways ranged in age from nine to sixteen. Few managed to escape successfully. The coarse, shapeless uniforms that WTH children wore marked a runaway who appeared on the street, especially during school hours or in the middle of the night. Local constables nearly always captured and returned the fugitives, and Pierce diligently pursued youngsters who fled from placements.⁵⁹

Although many parents preferred to have their children remain in the Home in order to avoid the uncertainties of being shuttled about and to obtain a better or at least a more consistent level of care, some accepted that their

⁵⁹See Appendix D "WTH Inmates Who Ran Away from the Home and WTH Inmates Who Ran Away from Placements." There may have been more runaways than the Ledgers record. In his report to the Board of Managers in 1882, Williams noted that of the thirty-nine children placed that year, twenty-three remained in families, twenty-four returned to their own families, and "nine have gone on their own account we know not whither." Report of the Placement Committee, 1882, in Williams Papers.

During the scandals described in Chapter 5, which occurred after the last Ledger entries, newspapers reported additional runaways in approving tones. Six inmates took advantage of public sympathy generated by the publicized scandals to risk flight. The *Eastern State* ran a story about four boys who fled the Home and walked twenty miles to Yorktown, in "Runaways Arrested," February 22, 1896. Fifteen-year-old Millicent Coffee claimed that Pierce threatened to send her to a reformatory because she witnessed some of the cruelties charged against him and was prepared to testify. She ran away and "sought shelter with friends." "Ran Away from Pierce . . .", *Mount Kisco Recorder*, April 17, 1896. During this time, Elizabeth Thomas also ran from the Home. "Held Illegally."

children would be sent to work in private homes. These parents hoped that the youngsters would find good situations and kind employers. The WTH, like the community, acted on the belief that private homes would offer superior settings for dependent youngsters and would give them the opportunity to earn their own way. Children acted out their critiques of the institution and of placement homes by running away from both.

Some youngsters who attempted to chart their own courses succeeded in finding tolerable if not satisfactory places for themselves. The actions of others brought down Pierce's wrath. He seemed to have taken the act of running away as a personal challenge. When John Brazel fled from a placement that the enterprising twelve-year-old considered unsatisfactory, he made his way to Pleasantville and found work with Mr. O'Dell, a saloon keeper. According to the WTH Ledger, Pierce not only recaptured the boy, he brought him to the House of Refuge. Again, *Jed the Poorhouse Boy* sheds some light on his attitude. In that story, the Overseer of the Poor denounced Jed as "a hardened young villain," explaining that "his running away from those who are lawfully set over him . . . is a most audacious and highhanded outrage."⁶⁰ Pierce and the Board of Managers considered that daring to question their authority and casting aspersions on their management by running away deserved the most severe restraints. Running away incurred Pierce's most brutal punishments. These ultimately transgressed commonly-accepted

⁶⁰Alger, *Jed*, 453.

disciplinary practices and outraged not only the Westchester community, but the state. The flight of one young inmate whom Pierce had shackled for six months precipitated a public outcry that effected a change in New York State law prohibiting the physical punishment of children in state institutions.

CHAPTER 5 - THE SCANDALS

On Christmas morning in 1895, fourteen-year-old Harry Weeks ran away from the Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children. Instead of waiting for the rare and long-anticipated holiday treats - the turkey dinner, the oranges and cakes, the candies and toys all donated by well-wishers - the boy escaped from the playground of the Home on North Street in White Plains, New York. Taking advantage of diminished surveillance for the holiday and a warm spell following many weeks of frigid cold, Weeks traveled ten miles on foot to reach Glenville, Connecticut, (near Greenwich). Here a local constable apprehended him at midnight.¹

This was not the first time Weeks had run away. The previous August he and George Patterson, a fellow inmate, fled as far as Greenwich, where they were found and returned to the Home. Upon their return, Superintendent Pierce whipped them both and fitted them with twelve inch chains secured at the ankles with heavy padlocks "to curb their spirit and prevent future attempts at flight." The boys wore the chains day and night for five months.²

¹"Boy In Irons Caught," in *Eastern State*, December 28, 1895 (hereafter "Boy in Irons Caught"), 3. In addition to monetary donations, Westchester supporters contributed clothing, toys, and foodstuffs to the Home. In 1895 Mrs. David Dows donated 80 lbs. of candy and 300 oranges for Christmas. Others gave 25 quarts of ice cream, 300 cakes, 50 pies, and 84 lbs. of figs for the holidays. The WTH Annual Report for 1895, 16-24.

At Christmas, even the prisoners at Sing Sing received a chicken breakfast, lemon crackers, apples, two cigars, and Christmas boxes from relatives. "Christmas at State Prison," *Times*, December 26, 1885, 12.

²Weeks may have been trying to reach his widowed father who worked in South Norwalk, CT. at the Pennsylvania Iron Co. "No More Whips and Chains."

The WTH Annual Report for 1888 disclosed that the Managers "regret to record the fact of boys absconding, but with our spacious and open grounds, and the desire to make the

By Christmas, Weeks was desperate enough to make another bid for freedom, despite the encumbrance of the leg chain. According to newspaper reports, he slipped into the woods surrounding the white gabled building and broke one of the padlocks with a stone. He then trudged ten miles dragging the chain behind him or carrying the cold iron in his bare hands. When found, he was cold and hungry and begged to be taken anywhere rather than back to the WTH. Possibly softened by the holiday spirit or Harry's pitiable condition, Constable Philip Finnegan delayed returning the boy to the institution until morning and allowed him to share a bed with his own son for the remainder of that Christmas night.³

Harry Weeks's attempted escape was one in a series of events that erupted into scandals at the WTH at the end of the nineteenth century and spilled into the newspapers and the courtrooms. The WTH scandals resembled others in New York State during this period that exposed cases of dangerous neglect or brutal punishment of children. The scandals that tarnished other New York State institutions generally involved the misuse of funds, insufficient food or poor physical conditions. But Pierce and the WTH managers retained standards of punishment from an earlier era, and the Home was most unusual in its use of chains and handcuffs on children. The Westchester County SPCC

institution a Home and not a House of Detention, almost any boy so disposed could attempt to run away. Every effort is made by the Superintendent to trace and recover these boys, and he has been successful" in a number of cases. 6.

³"Boy In Irons Caught."

attempted to resolve most local cases of institutional abuse before they reached the level of public scandal.⁴ Revelations of children abused and children forced to take matters into their own hands stirred public outrage. In the case of the WTH, exposure galvanized community and state reaction.

The scandals also direct attention to class tensions in the late nineteenth-century Westchester suburbs of New York City. The severe depression that began in 1893 and lasted for five years produced unprecedented suffering and class anxiety. The panic had a devastating effect on poor and working-class Westchester county families. Like others throughout the country, many local workers believed that the press, the clergy, and politicians sided with the wealthy against them. In turn, more than three million unemployed and striking workers frightened Americans of the middle and upper-classes, who witnessed

⁴In early 1880, the *Times* uncovered the Dickensian conditions at the Shepherds Fold in New York City after a five year old inmate was taken to the hospital on the verge of starvation. Rev. Cowley, who ran the institution, was sent to the Tombs. He justified his treatment of the inmates, claiming that he treated the children like a father and never used undue harshness, refrains that Pierce would later invoke. Unlike the supportive WTH officers and managers, the President of the Shepherd's Fold, identified as a Brooklyn gentleman, disclaimed all knowledge of the institution. Most of the other officers of the Shepherd's Fold were relatives of its superintendent. "Starvation Of Children; How It Was Practiced In The Shepherd's Fold," in *Times* January 18, 1880, 2. The *Times* ran additional articles on this affair on January 19, 1880, 5; January 25, 1880, 12; February 1, 1880, 1-2; and February 2, 1880, 8.

One of the founders of the Albany Orphan Asylum wrote, "Reports are still in circulation that we have whipt and starved children to death, but we are in hopes to live [them] down." Phelps, 17.

Report of the Westchester County SPCC, September 1902, Case 1,623 involved a complaint that the Good Counsel Farm in White Plains kept two boys in the barn with the cows. They were removed, 3. Case 1,655 revealed that an employee of the Leake and Watts Orphan Home in Yonkers beat inmates with a stick. The employee confessed, pleading ignorance of the law against the use of corporal punishment in institutions, and received a warning, 9.

Westchester County SPCC vigilance did not always succeed. In October 1903, Case 1,827 registered a complaint lodged against the Martha Fautoute School in Bronxville for terrible cruelty against its fourteen female residents. In this instance, the Westchester County SPCC could not obtain sufficient evidence to prosecute, but revealed that an earlier investigation by the New York SPCC forced the school to leave New York City, 3.

their businesses, banks, and railroads failing.⁵ Some of this mutual mistrust and fear surfaced during public examinations of the conditions and practices at the WTH that led to the scandals.

Yet, the scandals raised issues far more intricate than flagrant social control or overt class antagonism. Inmates, their families, and the institution's staff, most of whom came from or ended up among the working classes, grappled with contradictory ideologies and goals regarding children's care, work, and education. When the scandals erupted, many of those who supported the WTH and community leaders who often came from the same privileged background discovered that they differed on some of the basic tenets of philanthropy. Members of the same class disagreed on who deserved to be helped and how that aid should be administered. Even within their own social and economic groups all participants faced further conflict on the subject of the appropriate care and discipline of children.

DISCIPLINE

No one questioned the need to control children, but in the judgment of the State Board and much of the public, Superintendent Pierce had exceeded the bounds of acceptable treatment on too many occasions. The question of

⁵Freeman, vol. 2, 137-8, 144.

In March 1897, the *Mount Kisco Recorder* published a letter registering indignation at farm laborers carting manure into the fields on a Sunday. "Perhaps labor is so plentiful these hard times that employers are able to exact . . . seven days work at the wages for six. . . . Such things ought not to be . . . When men get power they . . . oppress the poor and helpless." Renoda Hoffman Scrapbook, Box 2, vol.1, 106 and 134, at the WCHS.

appropriate discipline for children at the WTH fell within a larger debate about childrearing that persisted throughout nineteenth-century America. Even during the earliest colonial period, Americans discussed the question of what constituted appropriate or excessive chastisement of children. For centuries European-Americans considered extreme punishments inflicted on servants and children acceptable if they did not cause permanent injury. A Puritan mistress testified in court in her husband's defense, claiming that his severe beating of a female servant "broke no bones and brought no blood, there were no permanent bruises or contusions."⁶

This tolerance of violent punishment continued throughout the nineteenth century. At the end of the 1800s, eighteen states granted parents the right to use physical discipline on their children, and nine excused them from murder if death occurred during the lawful correction of the child. Only five states considered abusive punishment as grounds for removing children from their homes. South Carolina accepted the use of knives in disciplining children and South Dakota ruled homicide excusable when committed by accident in the course of punishment. This standard prevailed even into the twentieth century.⁷

⁶Quoted in Elizabeth Pleck, 28.

⁷Mary Ann Mason, *From Father's Property to Children's Rights: The History of Child Custody in the United States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 103-4.

Laura Oren points out that in the 1989 case of *Deshaney v. Winnebago County Department of Social Services*, the United States Supreme Court not only confirmed the parental right to chastise children but also decreed that the state did not violate the Constitution even if it "wholly and arbitrarily denied helpless children protection from the violence of their parents." (The father of four-year-old Joshua Deshaney chastised him into paralysis and brain

An 1888 Manual of the New York SPCC set forth the legal limits of acceptable punishments in New York State. The manual included extracts from the "Provisions of the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and other Statutes relating to Children" as follows:

Any punishment which leaves marks or welts on the person of the pupil for two months afterward, or much less time, is immoderate and excessive. . . . Any punishment, therefore, which may seriously endanger life, limbs or health, or shall disfigure the child, or cause any other permanent injury, may be pronounced . . . immoderate.⁸

According to these criteria, Pierce's beatings of inmates at the WTH fell within acceptable limits, for none of the children who later testified against him had suffered any serious permanent injury.⁹

The use of whipping to control or correct children declined among the educated middle classes during the early nineteenth century as maternal authority increased in the home. Yet, most nineteenth-century parents, even those of the middle-classes and even mothers, struck their children with a weapon of some sort at some time. Of the forty-seven sources born between 1850 and 1899 in Elizabeth Pleck's study, only two claimed that their parents never used physical punishment. The majority of the remainder recalled being

damage.) Laura Oren, "The State's Failure to Protect Children and Substantive Due Process: *Deshaney* in Context," *North Carolina Law Review* vol. 68 1990, 659-731. I am grateful to Connie Lobur for directing me to this case.

⁸1888 New York SPCC Manual, "Comprising the provisions of the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal Procedure, and other Statutes relating to Children," at the New York Historical Society.

⁹Referee's Decision, 12.

hit with various implements including a slipper, a hairbrush, a belt, a razor strop, a buggy whip, plough or harness lines, a switch, a rod, a horsewhip, or a cat-o-nine-tails.¹⁰ Viewed from this perspective, Pierce may have believed sincerely that he only employed the amount of correction used in any well-run family, as he alleged. It would not be unreasonable to assume that a generation earlier, Pierce and his siblings received or witnessed even more severe or frequent whippings than that which he inflicted on the children in his care.

Many historians acknowledge that not only did most Americans continue to use corporal punishment on their offspring, but that even the so-called gentler measures advocated by antebellum childrearing literature might be considered cruel by today's standards. The newer methods of correction, which included withdrawal of approval and affection, depriving of food, or locking a child in a dark closet in addition to spanking (as opposed to whipping with an instrument) often served as the opening stages to more severe punishment depending on the age of the child and the gravity of the misdeed. During the late nineteenth century, the definition of domestic violence changed from that of a century earlier when Americans condoned ordinary punishment that was a good deal more violent than later standards.¹¹

This new sensibility did reach a wide audience. As early as 1830, the Managers of the Society for the Reformation of Juvenile Delinquents (hereafter

¹⁰Bernard Wishy, Chap.5 "Spare the Rod and Save the Child," 42-49. Mary Ryan, 158-161. Pleck, Appendix A: "Patterns of Childhood Punishment," 205-216.

¹¹Pleck, 46-8; Linda Gordon, 5, 180.

the "Society") designed an indenture form for the apprenticeship of inmates from the New York House of Refuge that stated:

It has not been concealed from you, and ought not to be forgotten, that this child has been a delinquent. We beg, therefore, to remind you that his conduct may require more attention than might be necessary to one who had never been led from the paths of virtue.

The form encouraged the master's "kindness and care [to] redeem this child, and make him religious, moral, and industrious." Beyond this general plea for benevolence, the Society expressly charged:

We have found from experience . . . [and] are persuaded that most children may be more easily, and more effectually governed, by proper appeals to their mental feelings, than by corporal punishments, and that where these are inflicted frequently and with severity, it oftener marks a want of sense or humanity, on the one part, than demerit on the other.

The explicit reminders suggest not only more modern and compassionate theories of childrearing, but the reality that these were not yet widely practiced, especially with regard to children deemed socially inferior or more difficult to control. In an Annual Report, the WTH also affirmed its belief that the "best discipline is that in which obedience and order are maintained with the least reproof and punishment, self-control and Christian love are the foundations." Yet, within the privacy of its walls, the Home's practices did not follow the philosophy it espoused publicly.¹²

¹²New York House of Refuge Indenture Form, WCHS ms. #32. The WTH Annual Report for 1887, 15.

THE FIRST SCANDAL

During its early existence, the WTH suffered common childhood epidemics and accidents. In 1885, a two-year-old boy fell to his death from a second story window at the Home. Eugene Gray fell on September 15, was unconscious for fifteen minutes, then "took his medicine regularly," indicating that he received medical attention until he died three days later on September 18, 1885. The WTH Annual Report for that year made no special mention of the unfortunate event. This incident never blossomed into a scandal; it was accepted as the sort of tragic accident that might occur anywhere. However, Elijah Purdy, the coroner at the time, later observed a pattern of behavior that Pierce and the Board of Managers would follow in every subsequent investigation of his questionable actions as superintendent of the Home. At first Pierce denied that there had been a death; under arrest, he admitted that the child's coffin was in the stable.¹³

Nine years later, a true scandal developed at the WTH chiefly because the young victim chose to publicize her abuse. Scandal by definition involves public disclosure of behavior or practices that offend society's moral sensibilities. In this case, the press followed the investigation eagerly, reporting all the salacious details. In 1894 Pierce had ordered Theresa See, a sixteen-

¹³Two-year-old Eugene Gray was admitted to the Home with an older sister, three-and-a-half-year-old Grace on August 27, 1885. Their mother was in the Poorhouse with two younger siblings; their father had just been sent to the Albany Penitentiary. WTH Ledger 14:33 (September 18, 1885).

"No More Whips."

year-old inmate, to undress and get into bed. He then entered the room and, with no adult female present, whipped the girl while she was nude and covered only by a sheet. After the beating, See defied Pierce's rules against showing the marks of punishment to anyone and displayed them to her sister Emily, another inmate. She then escaped from the WTH and ran to the home of the widowed Mrs. Lewis Platt, a White Plains neighbor. There See exposed her bruises again to Mrs. Platt's forty-year-old daughter, Mary Platt. Mrs. Platt's son, William Popham Platt, the Westchester county District Attorney, reported the case and launched an investigation. Mary Platt, characterized as an impeccable witness at that investigation, explained that she had never before seen Theresa See, who appeared at her door in the rain seeking protection. She described See as a pale, nervous girl bearing a black and blue mark that extended the width of two hands. What happened to Theresa See was not an aberration, but a general practice at the WTH. Other girls had suffered the same humiliation and abuse at Pierce's hand, with the knowledge and approval of the Board of Managers. However, See not only challenged Pierce by flouting his rules, she publicly charged him with egregious behavior.¹⁴

¹⁴The WTH managers approved of this procedure for punishing female inmates. See pages 245-246.

An article, "Superintendent Pierce's Investigation," in the *Yonkers Statesman* noted that Pierce's rule which forbade inmates to exhibit their injuries after punishment "showed that he *did inflict injuries*" (*sic*), July, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol. 10, 99. "Theresa See and Others Testify In The Westchester Temporary Home Investigation," in *Times*, January 28, 1896, 10. "The WTH," in *Eastern State*, February 1, 1896, 2.

Official Transcript, 10-11.

No surviving evidence indicates that See knew the Platt family. A roadway through the Bloomingdale Asylum grounds just down the road from the WTH would have led See almost directly to Mrs. Platt's home located between Mamaroneck Avenue and Mamaroneck Road.

As he had done in the case of the accidental death of Eugene Gray, Pierce first denied every imputation, then admitted that contrary to his previous statement, the girl was nude and only covered by a sheet. Obviously, Pierce's first impulse was to lie in order to protect himself from the charges of excessive brutality or extreme insensitivity to female modesty. Following what would become a familiar device, he turned attention away from his own misdeeds and concentrated on the girl's character. Pierce defended his behavior with the excuse that he whipped the young woman, "but no more severely than . . . a parent would have been justified in punishing her under the same conditions. She is . . . incorrigible and what I did was for her own good." He went on to insist that with 150 inmates under his care,

the effect of having one of the oldest . . . disobedient and badly behaved is very bad. When we get such a child we do not like, for the child's sake . . . to transfer her to some other institution. . . . We have tried kindness and offered her rewards to no effect.¹⁵

Pierce's supporters remained loyal and corroborated his story. The Board of Managers appreciated the difficulty of controlling 150 children at a time and condoned his disciplinary measures. Anna Hoe, Treasurer of the WTH since its founding in 1880, later affirmed that Pierce was "fully authorized to administer

Map of White Plains, New York 1901. William Platt served as Westchester county D.A. from 1890 to 1896, County Judge from 1901 to 1915, and New York State Supreme Court Justice from 1915 to 1926. Charles Platt, Jr., *Platt Genealogy in America from the Arrival of Richard Platt in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1638* (New Hope, 1963), 107, 129.

The public would not learn that See's treatment was part of a pattern at the Home for another two years, when WTH children and alumni testified against Pierce at the Weeks Hearing.

¹⁵"Pierce's Side of It," in *New York World* February 5, 1894, 8, French Scrapbook vol.10, 87.

punishments . . . The board [of managers] sanctioned the whipping of girls under sheets . . . [when] all lighter punishments had failed." WTH managers may have considered this method of punishment more suitable for girls than the manner of whipping boys, who were made to lower their trousers and bend over. Dr. A.M. Haight, an attending physician at the Home, contradicted Mary Platt's testimony. He denied seeing any such bruising on Theresa See when he examined her several days after the incident and attested that such a bruise, if it had existed, could not have disappeared in forty-eight hours.¹⁶

Nineteenth-century observers did not miss the sexual implications of the incident. A newspaper editorial addressed the impropriety of the situation, declaring that a person with the most blunted sense of decency would recognize that such punishment should have been administered by a matron.¹⁷

Attorney Stephen Marshall, who had been engaged by some of the managers to investigate the charges against Pierce, observed that the Superintendent previously had been indicted on similar charges of cruelty, but was never convicted. Marshall feared that the See investigation would turn out to be a whitewashing of Pierce, noting that "the committee [of investigation appointed by the WTH Board of Managers] appeared to be desirous of shielding him in every way possible." Marshall guessed correctly. The committee

¹⁶"Supt. J. W. Pierce's Trial," in *Times* June 19, 1897, 2. "Many Charges Refuted; Defense Of Superintendent Pierce Of The Children's Home," in *Times* March 19, 1896, 9.

¹⁷"Superintendent Pierce's Investigation," in the *Yonkers Statesman* gave an account "clipped (in part) from the *New York World*," July, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol. 10, 99.

refused to allow Marshall to present any of a dozen other contemporaneous cases of alleged cruelty at the WTH, but insisted on limiting the investigation to the See case. He later recounted that he retired from the See case in disgust. The WTH Annual report for that year exonerated Pierce as the investigation by the hand-picked committee had done. It interpreted the investigating committee findings as evidence that the charges of cruelty were wholly untrue. The WTH account praised Pierce as "uniformly humane and judicious and no stricter in his discipline than was necessary."¹⁸ This scandal offered Pierce and the WTH managers the opportunity to reevaluate their disciplinary procedures. Instead, they remained unyielding in their moral certitude, and continued to deny wrongdoing rather than reconsider their policies. Neither the investigation nor the negative public reaction resulted in significant changes in disciplinary practice at the Home at that time.

THE WEEKS HEARING

In early January, 1896, less than three weeks after Harry Weeks's Christmas breakout, newspaper headlines cheered, "No More Whips and Chains for Children." The New York State Board of Charities prohibited any further use

¹⁸"Supt. Pierce Under Fire; Investigation Begun Of Charges Of Cruelty To Poor Children Under His Care; Admits That He Whipped Girls," in *New York World* February 24, 1894, 6, in French Scrapbook vol.10, 98. "Pierce's Side Of It," in *New York World* February 5, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol. 10, 87.

Although no documentation survives that confirms Marshall's allegation that Pierce had been indicted on similar charges before, the prominent Westchester attorney knew the history of the WTH well. He sold his White Plains home to the institution. "Pearce (*sic*) Under Fire . . . Said To Have Been Indicted Before On Like Charges," in *New York World* February 6, 1894 in French Scrapbook vol. 10, 87-88. "No More Whips."

The WTH Annual Report, 1894, 11.

of the whip or the cat-o-nine-tails on children in institutions or chains on those who attempted to escape. Roused by newspaper accounts of the Weeks boy's flight in chains, State Board Commissioner Edward Litchfield and Inspector of Charities James C. Fanning conducted a brief, unannounced investigation of the WTH premises. Two weeks before a formal hearing even began, the State Board officially rebuked Pierce by banning the types of restraint and punishment that he employed at the Home, calling them "abhorrent to the enlightened sentiment of this age." The report reaffirmed the opinion expressed in the State Board Annual Report for 1890 that

the whipping of children . . . cannot be tolerated in . . . institutions. . . . (O)nce admitted as an exceptional . . . remedy, . . . it becomes the chief (punishment. It) . . . is pernicious in its influence on both officers and inmates, and . . . detrimental to discipline."¹⁹

The State Board prohibition against the use of whips and chains did not gain universal acclaim among the affected institutions. Within months of the ruling, several New York facilities that dealt with children, all of them subject to the ruling, mounted resistance. Those that considered corporal punishment necessary in order to maintain proper order, complied with the order under protest. The WTH appealed to the State Supreme Court for relief without

¹⁹"No More Chains For Boys; Their Use Ordered Stopped in the Westchester Home; . . . The State Board of Charities Acts Promptly on the Report Made By Commissioner Litchfield," in *Times* January 10, 1896, 10. "No More Whips and Chains."

Litchfield did note in his report that "The general health of the children appears to be good, and they look well fed, although not as well cared for in the matter of clothing or shoes." He also conceded that the WTH management appeared "anxious and desirous to do their best." "Board Of Supervisors," in the *Westchester News* of White Plains, New York, January 25, 1896, 1.

success, despite its wealthy and influential Board of Managers.²⁰

Newspapers solicited the opinion of Elbridge T. Gerry, who established the New York SPCC in 1874. As founder of the first society organized to protect children from abusive treatment, Gerry welcomed the opportunity to publicly endorse the State Board view, asserting:

whenever you place a man in absolute control of children . . . abuse will follow as a matter of course. . . . punishment is inflicted, more with the purpose of instituting fear and preventing recurrence of the infraction than any . . . corrective motive.

By the 1890s, the New York SPCC handled up to 15,000 cases a year in New York City. Its work and its founder were so well known that many called it the Gerry Society. Gerry's professional experience qualified him to speak on the detrimental effects of physical punishment:

The first effect . . . on a child is fear and terror. Then . . . vindictiveness; the pain . . . arouses the worst feelings in his nature . . . either to resist or escape or retaliate.²¹

Since whipping and chaining children were increasingly censured but not actually illegal, no trial followed publication of the Weeks case. However, exposure did precipitate a New York State Supreme Court Hearing of complaints against the WTH and its Superintendent that began on January 27, 1896 and lasted for nineteen months. New York State Supreme Court Justice Jackson O. Dykman appointed Daniel W. Guernsey, an ex-judge from

²⁰"Courts Are To Decide; Contest Over The Corporal Punishment Question," in *Times*, November 29, 1896, 2.

²¹"No More Whips."
O'Connor, 245-6.

Poughkeepsie, as Referee. In a contemporary newspaper sketch, Guernsey's narrow face was framed by short dark hair and adorned with thin wire glasses, a small mustache, and a goatee. He appeared soberly dressed, as befit his calling.²²

The Hearing included the testimony of 115 witnesses, including inmates and alumni of the Home, people who worked or volunteered at the WTH in various capacities, and community leaders. Its ostensible goal was to establish the degree to which Pierce exceeded the limits of his authority. The people of Westchester wanted to learn whether Pierce was a brutal autocrat, as the prosecuting attorneys and several newspapers alleged, or an able administrator dealing with adolescents who defied his authority and failed to respond to less severe disciplinary measures, as he and his supporters maintained.²³

During a period of shifting standards regarding corporal punishment, the Hearing and newspaper coverage helped to clarify community values by providing the forum for a public discussion of the proper limits to the correction of children. Since both the prosecution and the defense referred to the disciplinary rights of parents, the Hearing broadened the debate to include the appropriate use of force not only in institutions, but also in private families.

²² "To Investigate the Temporary Home; A Commissioner To Report On The Charges Against The Institution," in *Times*, January 14, 1896, 9.

Justice Dykman studied law in the office of a Peekskill attorney, served as District Attorney for Westchester County in 1868 and was elected a justice of the New York Supreme Court Second Judicial District "by a union of both parties." Scharf, vol. I, 533-4.

²³Official Transcript, *passim*.

Pierce and his supporters reached back to the latitude of an earlier period to define his standards of discipline; they characterized misbehaving inmates as deviants deserving severe punishment. The prosecutors outlined changes in the use of corporal punishment, insisting on new delineations of acceptable behavior and casting Pierce as the deviant from society's norms. Observers at the Hearing and newspapers declaring themselves to be the voice of the public not only felt competent to pass judgment on the subject, but were eager to do so.²⁴

During the Weeks Hearing, Westchester residents flocked to the courthouse for months to hear evidence against Pierce. A large audience appeared daily, crowding the space predominantly "with women and schoolgirls with their books under their arms . . . [but] everyone who can get away from business" to attend, did. The public unquestionably sided with the children and judged Pierce far more harshly than did the court-appointed referee. The *New York Journal* portrayed him in Mephistophelian terms, with unwavering and hypnotic grey eyes behind his glasses, "pent-house brows," the lines in his face "etched in firm and hard," and "slightly pointed ears." Early in the Hearing the *Journal* also explained for its readers the evolving theory that mischievous youngsters were not necessarily criminals. The paper reported that a prominent Brooklyn woman offered to contribute \$250 toward the legal expenses of the

²⁴Kai T. Erikson observes that the change from the practice of public trial and punishment of society's offenders coincided with the rise of newspapers as vehicles for restating the boundaries of appropriate behavior. *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: John Wiley, 1966), 4, 12-13, 26.

prosecution. Merchants in White Plains and throughout Westchester county also tendered financial assistance. Observers in the courtroom actually hissed and applauded loudly when the prosecutor scored points against Pierce, "something unheard of even in a court of criminal jurisdiction." Newspapers related that Sheriff Johnson of White Plains confiscated an effigy of Pierce, which some men intended to hang from a tree, and that other observers suggested that Pierce should be lynched. From the initial turnout in court, one can only imagine how those unable to hear the testimony in person devoured reports in both the local and the New York newspapers.²⁵

The WTH scandals offered sensational stories which the press covered in depth for many months. Newspapers not only exposed the shocking revelations to public inquiry, they also reflected, shaped, and possibly distorted their meaning. Reporters took an active role in the Hearing, seeking out witnesses and paying some of them for their travel expenses or exclusive stories. Newspapers presented the story to reflect their views or those of their readers. The *New York Journal* referred to fourteen-year-old Harry Weeks as

²⁵After more than a year of testimony, fewer people attended the end of the Hearing. The initial shock and excitement may have worn off, the prurient disclosures fizzled, or possibly the public did not want to hear testimony that would mitigate their outrage at Pierce's actions.

"No More Whips." "He Scourged Naked Children," in *New York Journal*, February 4, 1896; "Tell Of Inhuman Acts; More Accusations Made Against James W. Pierce; Witnesses Testify To Tortures," in *Times*, February 11, 1896, 10. "The Pierce Prosecution Rests," in *Times*, February 28, 1896, 9. "Accused of Cruelties," in *Times*, February 25, 1896, 16. "Pierce Victims Are Missing; Some of the Children Who Were to Testify Taken to Unknown Places," (hereafter "Pierce Victims Missing") *New York Journal*, February 3, 1896, in unnumbered French Scrapbook with no pagination. "The Managers Defending Pierce," *Eastern State*, February 8, 1896, 2-3.

a "poor little fellow," and described the beating of "tots", an inflammatory choice of terms. The *White Plains News* chided the New York dailies for alleged exaggeration. The *Ardsey Sun* was the only local paper to castigate the children who testified against Pierce as incorrigible little liars and accuse the State Board of Charities of showing "a capacity for blundering gullibility and soft heartedness" as a result of listening to "whining tales of boy criminals." A more moderate editorial in the local *Eastern State* offered a critique of the disciplinary practices at the WTH in the context of then current sensitivity:

While it may be better to have incorrigible children tied by the feet so that they may walk about instead of severer punishment, we shudder to think that in this enlightened age instruments of criminality should be used [on children]. Can the presence of shackles and handcuffs have a good moral effect on children's minds. Can modesty in a young female be developed by being stripped of her clothing in the presence of a man.

Then, in case anyone failed to comprehend, the editorial added: "We believe the methods of discipline at the Home are not of the right sort."²⁶

Newspaper artists sketched likenesses of court officials, attorneys and witnesses as well as what they labeled instruments of torture displayed in court. Charles Loring Brace had used before and after photographs to reveal the miserable condition of street children and to generate support for the New York Children's Aid Society with pictures of the children's improved state once rescued. Other child saving organizations used the same technique. The *New York Journal*, familiar with that ploy, used similar before and after drawings of

²⁶"No More Whips." "The Vindication Of The Westchester Home," in *Ardsey Sun*, October 11, 1897, in French Scrapbook vol. 16, 18. "Editorial," *Eastern State*, February 8, 1896, 2.

Harry Weeks, but reversed the images. An earlier sketch depicted a boy with a sad expression and a shaggy haircut, dressed in a coarse uniform and shackled with the iron chain and padlocks, presenting a pathetic view of childhood within the social welfare system. His later picture showed a well-groomed smiling youngster dressed in a neat suit with a white collar and a floppy bow tie ready to perform his duties for the newspaper that rescued him. In all cases the contrasting portraits reinforced the goodness and power of the rescuers. Media treatment of the Weeks case dramatically reversed the image that children were safer and better cared for within the institutional system.²⁷

The press congratulated itself repeatedly during the Weeks case. The *New York Journal's* headline "No More Whips and Chains for Children" bore a subtitle that crowed "The *Journal* Rescues the Inmates of the Westchester Home from the Harsh Treatment of Superintendent Pierce." State Board Commissioner Litchfield announced that the Board commissioners were "very thankful to the *Journal* for bringing the matter of abuse to their attention. It was publication of the facts that led to the investigation" and subsequent prohibition against the use of weapons on children in institutions. Papers continued to gather flattering statements by prominent Westchester citizens. Henry

²⁷The nineteenth-century Massachusetts State Board of Lunacy and Charity, the Children's Industrial School and Home of Cleveland, Ohio, and the Minnesota State Public School also published pitiful looking before and handsome after photographs of children they accepted. *History of Child Saving*, 54-55, 58-59, 64-65, 110, 112, 220.

"No More Whips." Harry Weeks left the WTH permanently and found employment as a "hall boy" with the *New York Journal*, one of the papers that pursued the case against Pierce most zealously. The *New York Journal* warranted that he displayed "none of the evil tendencies" of which Pierce had complained. "Courts Are To Decide," in *Times*, November, 29, 1896, 2.

Henderson, one of the attorneys for the prosecution, lauded the public press for its disclosures that caused abuses to be forbidden in the Home.²⁸

All parties understood the power of the media and attempted to try the Weeks case in the press. Friends of the Home and opponents of its disciplinary measures offered opinions, condemnations, arguments, and excuses. Newspapers printed them all, sometimes in agreement and at other times in sarcastic, contemptuous tones.

Different newspapers carried different versions of the story. Some reported that Weeks ran away in the evening, some in the morning; he was an orphan or his father was alive but unable to care for him; he had been committed to the home six months or six years ago. (In each case, the latter option was true.) Accuracy of the details seemed less important than the larger story. It was the brutal treatment of children in the guise of discipline that energized the press and aroused public ire.

The testimony of current and former inmates of the WTH revealed that many of the young people had their own standards about acceptable limits of chastisement. Several of them had been subjected to punishments in their own homes or placements excessive enough to warrant their removal and commitment to the WTH at the recommendation of the Westchester County SPCC or the courts. Most children accepted some form of corporal punishment as part of growing up. At times they risked behavior that might provoke

²⁸"No More Whips."

beatings, and employed various tactics to escape them. Many attempted to satisfy the demands of their adult caretakers, some calculated the advantages of keeping quiet to avoid worse treatment, others ran away from intolerable situations. Although a few admitted that they deserved the punishment they received at the Home, many took the stand to denounce what they considered Pierce's brutality.

At the Hearing, the court and the public heard the testimony of Harry Weeks and at least eighty-five other inmates and alumni of the institution alleging that Pierce had compelled children to sleep, eat, and work in handcuffs and chains, sometimes for months at a time. His most extreme punishments included both physical brutality and humiliation. He not only flogged some inmates with a cat-o-nine tails or a horsewhip, but whipping boys' bare bottoms and nude girls covered only by a sheet inflicted shame as well as pain. Among his most cruel punishments, Pierce cut off the hair of some girls as a mark of disgrace meant to endure for a very long time. At least nine girls had their hair cut, sometimes on only one side. Once, whoever wielded the clippers went through the "top of the head clean to the back," before shaving the girl bald. Testimony by WTH managers and staff confirmed these punishments.²⁹

²⁹Referee Guernsey noted that on one occasion a girl had her hair clipped on a portion of her head and the remainder was left uncut for two days. Referee's Decision, 18.

Official Transcript 30, 39, 65, 66-68. Testimony at the Weeks Hearing and evidence in the Principal's Black Book, which recorded punishments inflicted on New Rochelle schoolboys, confirm the data in Pleck's work that indicate that boys received more frequent beatings than girls. Principal's Black Book, *passim*, WCHS. Pleck, 205-216.

Today, few boys are beaten in school. Instead children, especially boys, are routinely medicated to control their behavior. According to the *Times*, during the year 2000 doctors wrote almost two million prescriptions for drugs for children at the request or requirement of

The testimony of inmates and alumni of the Home connected directly to the opening remarks offered by the prosecuting attorneys concerning changing standards of physical punishment in nineteenth-century institutional life. The prosecutors pursued a line of argument that asserted not only the unsuitability of using violence and humiliation as punishment in institutions, but also their general decline. Henry T. Dykman, counsel for the Board of Supervisors of Westchester county, pointed out that by the end of the nineteenth century flogging had been abolished in the U.S. Navy and penal institutions. Henry C. Henderson, another prosecuting attorney, noted that other New York State institutions that cared for children, such as the Catholic Protectory in the town of Westchester and the Rochester Orphan Asylum, had been operating successfully without resorting to corporal punishment. Corporal punishment was still permitted in public schools, but Westchester parents disturbed by overzealous application challenged its use. In January 1895, the principal of the Dobbs Ferry School was arrested and found guilty of whipping a twelve year old boy. In 1903, a father complained in court that a Harrison teacher beat his ten year old son with a green butternut stick and a rope until the boy was "greatly bruised" on the back of both hips.³⁰

their schools or social workers. State legislatures have begun to pass new laws to prevent schools from recommending or requiring that parents put their children on medication to control their behavior. Kate Zernike and Melody Petersen, "Schools' Backing of Behavior Drugs Comes Under Fire; Legislature Sets Limits . . .", *Times*, August 19, 2001, 1 and 30.

³⁰ "Pierce Investigation Ends," in *Eastern State*, July 17, 1897, 3. County Supervisor Shirmer of White Plains maintained that even though many children were committed to the Catholic Protectory for incorrigibility, they were "well-treated and under perfect control. If chains and whips were used on them . . . no doubt they would develop into runaways." "No More

The Prosecution called Commissioner Litchfield of the State Board of Charities to confirm their arguments. Pierce's attorney, ex-judge Isaac Mills, objected to Litchfield testifying as an expert. Despite the commissioner's credentials, Referee Guernsey upheld the objection. In what appears as partiality, Guernsey sustained objections to all questions that Henderson posed to Litchfield regarding other New York State institutions and "limited the matter" upon which State Board of Charities reports could bear testimony.³¹

Prosecutors claimed that "even if the right to use corporal punishment belonged to the Superintendent, he exceeded his authority . . . the force and violence used being . . . unnatural, excessive, cruel, and inhuman." They further maintained that chains on children were "degrading and took all the spirit of manliness out of them, even though they may not physically injure them."³²

Prominent supporters of the Home and its practices lined up to undermine these arguments without actually denying them. They claimed that Pierce and

Whips." Attorney Henry Dykman was the son of Justice Dykman, who appointed Referee Guernsey. Scharf, vol.1, 534.

Even George Matsell, Chief of Police for New York City, and John Russ, the superintendent of the New York Juvenile Asylum, opposed physical punishment on the grounds that it was not rehabilitative. Brenzel, 46.

Dobbs Ferry Register, January 25, 1895. Westchester County SPCC Report for the period ending October 1903, 8.

³¹"Pierce Testimony Ended: Mrs. R.M. Hoe Gave Evidence For the Superintendent," in *New York Tribune*, no date, in unnumbered French Scrapbook with no pagination.

³²Official Transcript, (b).

"Pierce Investigation Ends," in *New York Tribune*, July 16, 1897, in French Scrapbook vol. 17, 107.

the Board of Managers had the authority and even the obligation to chastise children, allegedly for their own good and to maintain the discipline of the Home. Richard S. Emmett, attorney for the WTH, told a *Times* reporter that

there are certainly many good people among the contributors to philanthropy in the state who believe that better men and women can be made out of the unfortunates . . . in these children's homes by corporal punishment of the proper kind, mild punishment, applied for corrective purposes . . . where other means fail.

When Dr. Orrin Kingsley, an attending physician at the WTH for eleven years, testified that he did not consider the cat-o-nine-tails a cruel instrument, the courtroom erupted in a "small sensation" of protest.³³

Abusers often rationalize their aggression by emphasizing the negative characteristics of the victim, by minimizing the severity of their aggression, or by absolving it as socially acceptable.³⁴ Pierce went beyond employing these tactics and claimed that he saw it as his duty. With the support of his

³³"Courts Are To Decide; Contest Over The Corporal Punishment Question," in *Times*, November 29, 1896, 2. "Supt. J. W. Pierce's Trial," in *Times*, June 19, 1897, 2. "The White Plains Inquiry: Further Testimony in Favor of the Children's Home," (hereafter "The White Plains Inquiry") in *New York Tribune*, April 4, 1896, in unnumbered French Scrapbook with no pagination.

Mr. Emmett's mother served on the Board of Managers and the House Committee of the WTH for eight years from 1887 through 1894, the year of her death.

Dr. Kingsley took a nine-year-old boy from the WTH in 1886 and returned him within three months with the comment "not obedient;" three months later he took a girl of twelve, whom he kept. Although the White Plains School Census of 1884 listed Kingsley's six-year-old son Charles as a student, there is no evidence that he sent the WTH children to school. Scharf, vol.1, 16-17. WTH Ledger 14:43, 50, 53. Census of Union Free Village School White Plains, Westchester County, 1884, 15.

³⁴Sharon D. Herzberger, "Social Cognition and the Transmission of Abuse," in *The Dark Side of Families: Current Family Violence Research*, eds. David Finkelhor, Richard J. Gelles, Gerald T. Hotaling, and Murray A. Straus (Newbury Park: Sage, 1983) (hereafter "The Dark Side of Families"), 319, 325.

employers, Pierce alleged that he acted as the children's legal guardian once they were committed to the WTH and so had both the authority and the responsibility to administer corrective discipline. He variously denied and admitted many of the charges against him. During the See investigation, he had falsely denied using chains on children. Two years later when Harry Weeks was found in chains, Pierce defended his practice of sixteen years declaring, "We can't use a rope; they would bite it in two and be off." He also admitted that he had chained at least twenty boys and girls. The iron chains caused irritation and most boys wore buckskin protection. Witnesses testified (and Pierce admitted) that one youngster, William Yerkes, had rings of callosoes around his ankles because he was not given buckskin protectors for weeks. Robert Wetz's mother testified that her son had running sores around his ankles that stuck to his socks as a result of wearing chains. In an attempt to convince the Referee and the public that he was primarily concerned for the children's well-being, Pierce justified the practice as healthier and more humane than locking children up indoors and restricting them to bread and water.³⁵

The very fact that Pierce did lie suggests that he knew that his actions would be condemned. But did he think that he was wrong? Pierce's religious

³⁵"Pierce's Side Of It," in *New York World*, February 5, 1894, 2. "No More Whips." "No More Chains For Boys," in *Times*, January 10, 1896, 10.

At the time Pierce lied about chaining inmates, he admitted tying a boy's ankles with rope long enough for him to walk around the yard, adding "but it was criticized and I thought it better never to do that again." "Superintendent Pierce Under Fire," in *New York World*, February 24, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol. 11, 94-95. "Board of Supervisors," in *Westchester News*, January 25, 1896, 1. "The Home Investigation," in *Eastern State*, February 29, 1896, 3. "Accused of Cruelties," in *Times*, February 25, 1896, 16.

principles may have motivated his disciplinary practices. Evangelicals ensured their absolute authority over their children by insisting on complete obedience. For centuries, many of these extremists advocated using physical punishment to achieve the desired submission. Neighbors "spoke well of him [Pierce] but some knew him to be a stern disciplinarian and were not surprised that he had gone too far in the matter of corporal punishment."³⁶

Yet, year after year, the WTH Annual Reports extolled him as an "energetic and capable officer . . . (with) the interest of the children at heart." His supporters noted his friendly relations with the inmates, who "always seemed to welcome him" rather than "shrink in fear of him." A teacher at the Home affirmed that Pierce never whipped children at the first offense and always listened to a child's excuse before passing judgment. In the estimation of the WTH managers, learning work, prayer, and obedience were appropriate values to shape the character of the Home's inmates. Establishing order and maintaining discipline demanded a very firm hand, which corresponded with Pierce's own attitude.³⁷

Pierce's most steadfast supporters, the managers of the WTH, backed

³⁶Greven, *Protestant Temperament*, 33, 49. Greven elaborates further on this theme in *Spare the Child*, *passim*.

"Pierce's Side Of It," in *New York World*, February 5, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol. 10, 87. "Westchester County Temporary Home," in *Eastern State*, February 4, 1888, in French Scrapbook vol. 38, 28.

³⁷WTH Annual Report for 1880, 8; for 1883, 10; and for 1887, 16. "Say Mr. Pierce Was Humane," *Times*, March 20, 1896. "Letter Upholding Mr. Pierce," *Westchester News*, February 27, 1896. "Probing the Charges," *Westchester News*, March 26, 1896. "Pierce's Side Of It," *New York World*, February 5, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol.10, 87. "Westchester County Temporary Home," *Eastern State*, February 4, 1888, in French Scrapbook vol.38, 28.

him literally as well as figuratively. They seated themselves behind him in the courtroom every day and remained faithful for the duration of the Hearing. Friends and patrons supported Pierce and gave testimony in his favor. Ninety-two-year-old Charles Butler, president of the WTH, defended Pierce as an earnest Christian. At the Hearing Butler maintained that the Superintendent demonstrated "sympathy with children and . . . executive ability," as he had done during the earlier See investigation. His daughter Emily Butler, who was also deeply involved in the administration of the Home, likewise testified in favor of Pierce, insisting that he was a good man. She excused his propensity for excessive discipline on the grounds that he had to deal with some of the "most intractable children."³⁸

Anna Hoe, the well-born treasurer of the WTH since its establishment, was among Pierce's most faithful allies. But the image of her tenderheartedness and kindness of demeanor applauded in an *Eastern State* article did not conform with the behavior of Pierce's female supporters during the Hearing. According to the *Mount Kisco Recorder*, the good, pious ladies of the WTH Board of Managers laughed aloud in court when one of the young witnesses was forced to admit that her mother was in jail as a drunk. The girl

³⁸The WTH Annual Report for 1897 confirmed that at least eight members of the Board of Managers sat at every session of the Hearing. Support for Pierce was not absolute. Some board members had "desired his removal for some time, but they have been in the minority." "No More Whips."

"In defense of Mr. Pierce; A Talk With the President of the Trustees of the WTH; Charles Butler Declares His Faith in the Superintendent," in *New York Tribune*, February 19, 1896, French Scrapbook, vol.21, unpaginated. "Pierce's Side of It," in *New York World*, February 6, 1894, French Scrapbook vol. 10, 87.

wept.³⁹

Unlike the WTH Board, which presented a united front in support of Pierce at the Hearing, WTH staff members differed openly in their opinions about the discipline of inmates. Those of higher status, such as the matron and a few teachers, aligned themselves with Pierce and the managers. Attendants with the authority to use corporal punishment seemed disposed to sanction the liberal use of it by others. Working class employees such as carpenters, housemaids, and the cook, who may have empathized with youngsters who came from similar backgrounds, seemed less sanguine about the prospect of children being horsewhipped. Mrs. Young, a cook at the Home, testified at the Hearing that she discussed the children's conduct with Pierce. He remarked, "Yes, they have to be [well-behaved, or] . . . if they want me to be a meat axe, I can be a meat axe." When she questioned his use of the cat-o-nine-tails on the youngest children, he replied that he only punished them "as he would punish his own children."⁴⁰

In the midst of the depression of the 1890s, the desire to retain their employment may have affected the outlook of staff members. Adrienna Springmeyer, a teacher at the WTH, conceded that she used corporal

³⁹"They Made The Tyrant Cringe; Ladies Of The Board Of Managers Laugh . . . and Cross-Examination Failed To Shake The Girl's Testimony - Others Tell Of Brutality At The Home," in *Mount Kisco Recorder*, January 5, 1896, in unnumbered French Scrapbook with no pagination.

⁴⁰Official Transcript, 70. "The Pierce Investigation," in *Eastern State*, February 8, 1896, 3. "Used The 'Cat-'O-Nine Tails" . . . Ex-Employees (*sic*) And Inmates Say The Superintendent Of The Westchester Institution Was Cruel," in *Times*, February 4, 1896, 16.

punishment on her kindergarten charges to enforce obedience. Yet she also admitted that her two previous posts, the Seamen's Home for Children on Staten Island and a private school in New York City, did not employ such discipline. She refused to admit that these institutions had different administrative approaches, but insisted that the character and behavior of the children differed.⁴¹

Two staff members who took opposing positions found themselves embroiled in a family conflict. Mrs. Jennie Montell, who assumed responsibility for the WTH nursery in 1892 at the age of sixteen, resented Pierce for disciplining her as though she were an inmate. Her fury had not abated during the years since Pierce had urged her mother, the head laundress of the WTH, to commit her to the Home so that he would have legal control over her. Her mother did not comply. At the time of the Hearing however, her mother implored Montell to write a letter in favor of Pierce. The daughter refused, vowing that she would not tell a lie. In response, the laundress, Mrs. Jessie Alexander, testified that her daughter was an epileptic and unfit to testify in any court. On cross-examination Alexander denied her daughter's accusations that she had threatened to disown Montell or take her child away if she testified against Pierce. Whether Montell told the truth or sought revenge, she could only criticize the Superintendent publicly because she no longer worked for him. The laundress, in turn, chose to jeopardize her relationship with her daughter

⁴¹"The White Plains Inquiry: Further Testimony in Favor of the Children's Home," in *New York Tribune*, April 4, 1896, in unnumbered French Scrapbook with no pagination.

rather than risk losing steady employment.⁴²

Faced with aggressive prosecution and hostile news coverage, Pierce and the WTH managers actively attempted to minimize the damage of the public hearing to the point of manipulating, hiding, or bribing witnesses. At the Hearing, lawyers protested that the managers had removed several children, whom the prosecution had intended to subpoena to testify, "to unknown places." The *Journal* informed its readers that the WTH was

more closely guarded than any state prison. No one is permitted to enter it, or to speak to an inmate or employee. . . . Parents who have called at the Home to see their children have been refused permission. . . . Pierce and members of his family aided by several matrons and husky male employees patrol the grounds and . . . the institution constantly.⁴³

The managers pressured several employees at the home to sign a letter praising Pierce and feted the staff to encourage them to testify favorably. Harry Hunter, a Justice-of-the-Peace from Armonk formerly employed at the WTH, testified against Pierce at a morning session of the Hearing. Later he reported that Anna Hoe accosted him during the recess and asked why he gave testimony that did not "redound to the credit of the institution." He responded that he had been sworn to tell the truth.⁴⁴ Hunter, like Montell, was free to speak out against

⁴²"The Pierce Investigation," in *Eastern State*, February 8, 1896, 3. "Used The 'Cat-'O-Nine Tails'," in *Times*, February 4, 1896, 16. "Pierce's Scourging Of Girls," in *Times*, September 3, 1896, 16.

⁴³"Pierce Victims Missing: Some of the Children Who Were to Testify Taken to Unknown Places; Lady Managers Have Been Doing All they Could to Help and Save Him," in *New York Journal*, February 3, 1896, in unnumbered French Scrapbook with no pagination.

⁴⁴"Used 'Cat-'O-Nine Tails'," in *Times*, February 4, 1896, 16.

the Home because he no longer worked there. Like Montell, he also challenged the position of Pierce's supporters by emphasizing the honesty of his testimony in contrast to their self-protective deceptions.

The WTH administration continued to excuse or deny any wrongdoing. In his Annual Reports, Richard Hoe used every verbal weapon at his disposal including aligning God on the side of the WTH Board of Managers. "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to naught," he wrote, then warned, "but, if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found to fight against God." His argument that criticism of the WTH Board was akin to an attack against God may be seen as either supreme arrogance or utter desperation. During the course of the Hearing, the majority of managers perceived the Home as under siege and behaved accordingly. They ignored the courtroom table full of physical evidence - the whips, chains, handcuffs, and cat-o-nine-tails that so inflamed the public, and protested the "voices of popular malice and slander" raised against the Home. The WTH Annual Report for 1897 even dismissed any negative remarks in the Referee's decision.⁴⁵

DECISION OF THE REFEREE

After nineteen months of testimony, the Referee Daniel W. Guernsey divided his Decision into three sections: a description of the general conditions at the WTH, a definition of the limits of the institution to punish inmates, and a condemnation of its excesses of those limits. He commenced with a

⁴⁵The WTH Annual Reports for 1897, 9-11; and for 1898, 15.

satisfactory evaluation of conditions at the Home. He found that children who arrived "badly nourished, weak and ill . . . were restored to strength and apparent perfect health." Sick children received medical care and nursing; each child had a separate bed or cot, and clean clothing and bedding. He noted that children were schooled and taught to work in a "useful way consistent with their age, condition, and the necessary limitations of the home." Guernsey also observed that the WTH used its best efforts in placing children in homes.⁴⁶

The Decision affirmed the right of a parent to inflict physical punishment under Section 223 of the Penal Code and granted to the Home the right and power over a child committed to its care, subject to the same limitations that would apply to a parent. Guernsey accepted statements that teachers reported all misconduct of inmates to Pierce, that children were permitted to tell their own stories, and that Pierce did not employ corporal punishment for the first offense.

Guernsey then clarified those areas that he considered unacceptable. He denounced Pierce's whipping unclothed girls over the age of fourteen, protesting, "I cannot regard (it) as a method of punishment that would be allowed to a parent," and added that such behavior would be "justly condemned by the judgment of reasonable men." He censured cutting off girls' hair as punishment, explaining that it could "be seen and noticed by everyone," that it lasted a long time, and that "the best of conduct could not remove it."

⁴⁶Referee's Decision, 7-9.

He judged that "such punishment . . . diminishes self respect . . . [and] cannot have a reformatory influence." He also denounced the use of chains, which "exceeded the limit allowed to a parent in the correction of a child." With these exceptions, Guernsey found the supervision and management of the Home "honest, intelligent, and conscientious, the prevailing motive always being the best welfare of the inmates with the available means." The Board interpreted Guernsey's Decision to confirm their own opinion that Pierce should be retained as superintendent.⁴⁷

Yet Guernsey acknowledged that

reasonable and thoughtful persons, the best members of society, parents and educators honestly differ as to the circumstances that will in the case of a minor justify corporal punishment, and they differ as to whether it should be used at all . . .⁴⁸

Whereas spanking children might be supported by socially-accepted cultural norms, the court, like many Westchester residents, ultimately condemned Pierce for the irregularity of his punishments, namely the use of handcuffs and chains, cutting off the hair of young women and whipping them unclothed in bed. Although most parents used some form of physical punishment despite their professed ideals, ordinary well-run families did not use these particular methods.

⁴⁷Referee's Decision, 12, 18-19, 23-25.

During the scandals, the community that supported the institution would not abandon it. Even those who withheld their money temporarily continued to donate supplies, time, and sewing skills for the benefit of the children.

⁴⁸Referee's Decision, 22.

Referee Guernsey incorporated into his Decision some phrasing and arguments that sounded highly prejudicial against the children of the WTH. He echoed the invidious depictions of the three classes of children at the WTH - the destitute, the truant, and those committed for criminal offenses - used in the summation of Pierce's attorney, ex-county judge Isaac Mills. The WTH managers' class bias projected negative characteristics on a larger proportion of the homeless, troubled, and poor young inmates. They regarded them as socially threatening, and Guernsey either shared their views or allowed himself to be persuaded. Guernsey accepted the WTH position that the so-called "criminal element" made up about thirty percent of the inmates and that Pierce inflicted punishments largely on those children.⁴⁹

However, the inmates most severely disciplined had not been committed as young malefactors or even truants, but as children whose families were in crisis. Of the 559 inmates listed in the two surviving WTH Ledgers, only eighteen (about three percent) were committed for any alleged criminal offense, and only fifteen (close to three percent) as truants. Only three of the thirty-three children listed in the surviving WTH ledgers as committed for *petit larceny* or vagrancy or as truants, disorderly, or a nuisance (like vagrancy, another term

⁴⁹Referee's Decision, 18. "Pierce Investigation Ends, Counsel For Both Sides Sum Up . . . Ex-Judge Mills Criticizes the State Board of Charities and Calls Their Interference "Impertinence", " in *New York Tribune*, July 16, 1897, French Scrapbook vol.17, 107. "Pierce Investigation Ends," in *Eastern State*, July 17, 1897, 3.

Judge Mills, who came from a family of farmers of moderate means, graduated as valedictorian of his class at Amherst College and from Columbia Law School. He practiced law in Westchester County and in New York City. Scharf vol. I, 532.

for homeless) testified as having been beaten by Pierce. Youngsters who ran away or otherwise contested the severity of Pierce's administration endured the most abusive discipline. Apparently Pierce assumed that demonstrations of independent behavior posed such a serious threat to his authority that he could not disregard the challenge. In order to reassert absolute control, he resorted to chains, handcuffs, humiliation, and whippings.⁵⁰

At the Hearing, Isaac Mills, Pierce's attorney, argued that the disputed punishments and restraints used on runaways were preferable to sending the most difficult boys to a reformatory such as the House of Refuge, where they might associate with young criminals. The WTH record substantiates this allegation. During the eight years covered by the WTH Ledgers, only four of the 367 boys registered were sent to the House of Refuge.⁵¹ At least three of them would be considered very bad boys in any era.

Charles Shenheit, a twelve-year-old runaway from the WTH, was arrested after breaking and entering a home in Yonkers. The court sentenced him to the House of Refuge in 1887. At the age of thirteen, Chauncey Greenwood had set fires several times at the homes in which he was placed. Returned to the WTH, Greenwood had been "doing well in his work and deportment" for a year.

⁵⁰WTH Ledgers, *passim*. See Appendix C "WTH Inmates Committed for Alleged Criminal Activity."

⁵¹"Victims of Pierce's Lash: Theresa See and Nora Adams Tell Their Stories in Court," in *Mount Kisco Recorder*, January 28, 1896, in unnumbered French Scrapbook with no pagination.

Then he lit a fire in a barrel in the cellar of the Home and was committed to the House of Refuge in 1891. Shortly thereafter, thirteen-year-old John O'Donnell followed Greenwood to the reformatory. He had set fire to haystacks at his placement, was arrested, sent to White Plains jail and then the House of Refuge.⁵² Pierce had given both fire setters several chances to reform their behavior before having them committed to a reformatory. Considering the gravity and danger of their offenses, it is remarkable that after their first incidents, Pierce sent them out to other placements. One can only wonder whether he thought it important to warn subsequent placement families.

Fire posed a serious threat to the entire community before the use of modern equipment. On the evening of February 15, 1895, fires destroyed the main building of the WTH. After firefighters controlled a blaze in the cellar, flames broke out in the attic. No one was injured, but children had to be relocated to various outbuildings. For months the barn served as a dining room. The hospital, laundry, and two small cottages housed the inmates. Despite the suspicious nature of conflagrations erupting in such distant parts of the Home and the predilections of some of the inmates, no reports mention the possibility

⁵²Shenheit had run away from a placement and his parents, whom the WTH Ledger characterized as intemperate and depraved, concealed him for nearly a year before his arrest. His record included the notation that he was responsible for the theft of more than \$400 worth of goods. WTH Ledger 15:2 (September 7, 1887); and 15:3 (November 23, 1887).

WTH Ledgers 15:52 (April 3, 1889); 15:56 (May 4, 1899) and 15:55 (May 5, 1889). The Ledger identified Greenwood as "colored." The ninety-one African-American inmates of the WTH represented only 16% of the 559 youngsters listed in the two surviving Ledgers; none of them had been committed for alleged criminal activity or truancy. Yet of the seven youngsters sent to reformatories, two of them (or nearly 29%) were African-American.

WTH Ledgers 15:64 (July 26, 1889); 15:106 (May 12, 1891); and 15:83 (June 18, 1891).

of arson.⁵³

In an offense far less serious by modern standards, John Brazel ran away from a placement and found work in a saloon. Yet, Pierce tracked him down, returned him to the Home, and personally took him to the House of Refuge in May 1890. Brazel's record insisted that he "had several good places, but would not work." Since he was working when Pierce found him, the notation suggests that judges and justices of the peace who committed and discharged inmates accepted Pierce's assessment of the children's behavior and endorsed his decisions.⁵⁴ Brazel harmed no one, destroyed nothing, and arranged gainful employment for himself, but Pierce would not or could not tolerate the youngster undermining his authority and had him incarcerated. Brazel's imprisonment seems uniquely puzzling. Aside from the fact that he worked in a saloon, which may have troubled the religious Pierce, the available evidence reveals no further clues for Pierce's harsh response toward the boy's behavior.

A modern reader searching for reasons for the boys' destructive behavior would have no difficulty finding them. Except for Shenheit, the boys were

⁵³In "Westchester's Bravest: The History of the Fire Departments in Westchester County", Christopher Marinaro describes the inadequacy of early fire-fighting techniques. Bucket brigades or smothering a fire with wet sand proved equally ineffective. Alarms such as bells and clanging on locomotive tire irons eventually replaced running through the streets shouting "fire," but firefighters still expected to do little more than save the surrounding property near a blaze. *The Westchester Historian* vol.76, no.3, 74-79 and vol.76, no.4, 108.

On October 9, 1872, an uncontrollable fire in Ossining caused destruction in the amount of \$125,000, leaving twenty families homeless and twenty-seven businesses destroyed. *Half Moon Press*, vol. 8, Issue 10, October 2004, 4.

⁵⁴WTH Ledgers 15:86 (May 21, 1890); and 15:55 (May 27, 1890).

orphans, half-orphans abandoned by their surviving parents, or escaped from terrible placements. A Sarles family in Pound Ridge had taken O'Donnell from an institution in New York when he was seven. Two years later in 1887, he "was either turned out or ran away" and was committed to the WTH when he was found "with feet frozen in pitiable condition." Some WTH placements turned out even worse. The WTH had placed Brazel and Greenwood with William H. Carpenter, a farmer in White Plains, who proved to be more than usually abusive. Brazel lasted there only three days. A week later, Greenwood tried to set fire to the place three times. Carpenter had taken and returned six boys from the WTH in the course of a year. The fact that Pierce continued to send inmates to this placement suggests that the Superintendent did not question the boys themselves about conditions there. Pierce removed the last of them from the premises because "rumors of ill-treatment" reached the WTH at last. This must have referred to more than ordinary corporal punishment, which Pierce and the Board of Managers expected and tolerated.⁵⁵

The WTH transferred only three girls to reformatories. When Pierce and the managers discovered that Dolly Douglas was pregnant at the time of her admission, they sent her to the reformatory at Bedford. Pierce sent two other fifteen-year-old girls to the House of Mercy in New York. The lack of comment in the Ledgers raises the presumption of sexual activity, since the Ledgers always reported the behavior that triggered such commitments for boys. Etta

⁵⁵WTH Ledgers 14:32 (August 28, 1885); 14:37 (January 8, 1886); 14:48 (March 17, 1886); 14:66 (February 1, 1887); and 15:98 (November 24, 1890).

Coombs was sent on December 31, 1888, after three and a half months at the Home, with no explanatory note. Mary E. Lockwood was discharged on November 11, 1889, but was returned to the Home nearly nine months later on August 1, 1890. The time frame strongly suggests that she had been sent away to have a baby.⁵⁶

These were not the only girls sexually at risk at the WTH. Several years after the Weeks Hearing, a State Board of Charities report in March 1905 revealed shameful evidence of sexual activity at the Home. The State Board discovered that male guards had impregnated several girls at the WTH. The report cited "three separate cases, and in one of them twice, during the past five years . . . (which shows) a lack of care that is most reprehensible." Once again, Pierce took a defensive stance declaring, "We don't think we have been lax; such things sometimes occur in private families." Despite the fact that contemporary Westchester County SPCC records confirmed increasing awareness that girls were vulnerable to sexual assault even in their own homes, once again Pierce failed to accept culpability for his deficient guardianship of

⁵⁶Westchester County SPCC Case No. 1,595.

WTH Ledger 15:47 (November 16, 1888), and 15:92 (August 1, 1890).

Mary E. Odem, 13-14. In her study of antebellum New York, Stansell discloses the prevalence of "sex with girl children," 182. During this same period in England, concern for the sexual protection of girls led to efforts to raise the age of consent to thirteen in 1871 and sixteen in 1885. Pamela Horn, *Children's Work and Welfare, 1780 - 1890* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 67.

The *Times* exposed the gender bias of the courts at the turn of the century. The paper reported that justices often paroled boys but sent girls to reformatories, with the excuse that "girls are less likely than the boys to reform." "Paroled Boys Examined; Observations of the Results of the Work of the Children's Court; Forty-one Lads, Attended by Proud Parents, Congratulated by Justice Mayer for Their Good Behavior," *Times*, December 28, 1902, 1.

inmates.⁵⁷

According to contemporary Westchester County SPCC reports, men accused of sexual assaults on underage children were arrested and indicted, although occasionally discharged for lack of evidence. Apparently the Home did not press charges against the suspected men, even though the girls' pregnancies should have provided sufficient evidence for prosecution. WTH managers did not have any guards arrested or even removed from their positions and no mention of this sordid situation appeared in the WTH Annual Reports. The Ledgers, which might have offered greater detail, ended in 1901, well before the State Board expose. After twenty-five years of negligence, the WTH managers finally acted to protect female inmates. In response to the State Board denunciation, they employed a woman to have closer supervision over the older girls. The State Board report confirms that the WTH had not transferred girls to reformatories to protect them from sexual assault, but to hide their pregnancies and maintain the reputation of the institution. The most egregious improprieties at the Home never prompted indictments or court proceedings or stirred public furor because WTH managers carefully concealed

⁵⁷The Westchester County SPCC sought evidence on which to prosecute the man involved with Dolly Douglas. Case No. 1,595, 5. The twenty-nine cases of sexual assault on children registered in the Westchester County SPCC reports from the period ending June 1902 to December 1906 involved twenty girls, eight boys, and one "child." In New York State, the legal definition of rape only included the sexual abuse of females, despite obvious assaults on young males.

"State of New York State Board Report of Investigation into the Affairs and Management of "The Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children" at White Plains; made by a Special Committee of the State Board of Charities, March 2d, 1905," (Albany: Brandow Printing, 1905), (hereafter "State Board Report of 1905"), 10-12.

them.

Neither public airing of the scandals nor Referee Guernsey's Decision resolved the differences in attitude regarding appropriate punishment for children. As a later Annual Report explained,

It has been difficult . . . to completely eradicate every form of corporal punishment because . . . the average attendant, like the average person in the community, believes that a resort to brute force is . . . a necessity when gentler means of moral suasion have failed.⁵⁸

Even though Westchester residents from different economic and social backgrounds harbored mistrust and suspicion about each other, support and condemnation of the Home's disciplinary procedures did not divide neatly along class lines. Some Westchester elites, including WTH board members who did not approve of Pierce's methods, apparently did not carry enough political or social weight to effect his removal. On the other hand, not all inmates of the Home disapproved of Pierce's methods. Although the majority of those who defended Pierce at the Hearing were Board members, teachers, attendants, and friends, the WTH located some alumni, who (with their parents) agreed to attest to Pierce's kindness to them and the good care they received at the institution.⁵⁹ Many of Pierce's supporters clung to their belief that dependent

⁵⁸The WTH Annual Report, 1907, 7.

⁵⁹Several inmates or former inmates testified in favor of Pierce at the Hearing. George Meekel explained that Pierce had whipped him, but only after he excused him several times for the same offense. He also recalled that Pierce had treated him kindly when he suffered from pneumonia for two months. Others noted that children received privileges and outings as rewards for good conduct, and that five or six former inmates returned every Sunday to visit. "Say Mr. Pierce Was Humane; Testimony in Favor of the Superintendent . . .," in *Times*, March 20, 1896; "Held Illegally;" "Probing the Charges: Mr. Pierce's Side of the Case Brought Out

children were a threat to public order and needed to be disciplined firmly to prevent more serious problems with them in the future. His critics viewed the Home's excesses as the threat to public order and a reversal of their preferred self-image as members of a society that cared for its children humanely.

The investigations allowed various social and economic groups to denounce each other and justify their own actions. Children, their parents, and some of the staff could question the WTH administration openly and challenge its hubristic attitude. Many inmates appreciated a public audience before which they could condemn the injustices they felt they had suffered. Many parents openly conveyed their devotion to their children and defended leaving them in an institution. Several employees took the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to the Home; others acclaimed their honesty in contrast to the deceptions and/or coverups of their employers.

The Referee's decision at the Weeks Hearing supported the position of the management of the WTH, applauded their commendable charity and their genuine concern for the less fortunate, and made them even more complacent and self-satisfied. Pierce, hampered by the State Board of Charities prohibition against whipping and chaining inmates, found other ways to punish and restrain WTH inmates. The State Board investigation of 1905 discovered boys incarcerated in small cages on the top floor of the institution. The report deplored the impossibility of rescue in the event of fire, *inter alia*. Pierce no

at the Hearing," in *New York Tribune*, March 26, 1896.

longer used the horsewhip and cat-o-nine-tails as instruments of discipline; he replaced them with rubber hose.⁶⁰

THE FINAL SCANDAL

In June 1905 a final scandal removed Pierce. Two Yonkers boys charged that attendants at the WTH beat them, long after corporal punishment was supposed to have been abolished at the Home. A male attendant admitted before a Grand Jury that he and others beat children with rubber hoses on Pierce's orders. The Grand Jury failed to indict any of the attendants, but placed the blame squarely on Pierce, whom it charged was responsible for conditions in the Home.⁶¹

Pierce and the Board of Managers did not offer evidence of a transformation in the population of the Home as an excuse for continuing to use corporal punishment and physical restraints on inmates. However, the demographic makeup of the institution had been changing significantly. A number of these changes added to the difficulty in maintaining order. The inmate population increased tremendously since its inception in 1880, when the WTH accepted seventy-five boys and girls, all of whom came from Westchester

⁶⁰State Board Report of 1905, 10-12.

The U.S. Census for 1900 placed the widowed fifty-year-old Pierce at the WTH. His son Charlton, age twelve, his married daughter, called Sarah M. instead of the diminutive Sadie, twenty-seven, and her husband William J. Onderdonk, a twenty-eight-year-old bookkeeper lived with him there.

⁶¹"No Indictment in Temporary Home Investigation: Grand Jury in Presentment to Justice Maddox Advises That Superintendent Pierce's Resignation Be Accepted At Once; Nothing Said of Charges Against the Keepers of the Home," (no indication of newspaper) June, 1905, in French Scrapbook, vol. 18, 54 (hereafter "No Indictment").

County. Twenty five years later, the New York State Census of 1905 disclosed that nearly half of the 255 inmates came from outside the county. That year, 122 inmates came from New York City, Brooklyn, Long Island, upstate counties and even towns in Connecticut.⁶²

This non-native group was older, had a larger percentage of boys, and included children of much greater ethnic diversity. In 1880 and for most of its existence the inmate population at the WTH consisted predominantly of American-born children. The early Ledgers note the admission of some children of English, Irish, Scottish, and German backgrounds, with a handful from Italy and one or two from the Scandinavian countries. By 1905, the WTH roster had a much more diversified population, including several Native-American youngsters, some designated as Hebrew (and many others with very obviously Jewish names), and even a few from Syria.⁶³ Despite an enlarged staff of nineteen attendants (up from seven in 1880), controlling larger numbers of older boys must have presented a great challenge, which may explain the use of rubber hose and cages. Since rubber hose left fewer physical marks and cages technically complied with the prohibition against using chains to restrain

⁶²1880 Census. New York State Census 1905.

⁶³In 1880 24% of the inmates were female, and the average age of inmates was just slightly over nine. In 1905 the average age of the non-native inmates was over eleven, compared to the Westchester residents whose average age remained less than nine, resembling that of the Home's earlier population. In 1905 the outsider group had a much smaller percentage of girls (14%) compared to 20% of the Westchester residents.

The 1880 census designated 11% of WTH inmates as "colored"; in 1905, African-American children represented 15% of the total WTH population, but only 8% of the imported group. The WTH Annual Report for 1880, 9. New York State Census 1905.

inmates, Pierce apparently adjusted his disciplinary practices to minimize the possibility of discovery or censure, not to treat his charges more humanely.

Throughout his career, Pierce felt safe behind the redoubt of WTH Board approval of him personally and the manner in which he carried out their directions. He assumed that he could escape lasting condemnation if he continued to please them. The WTH Annual Report for 1901 observed the twenty-first anniversary of the employment of its valued Superintendent. On that occasion, although the Board acknowledged Pierce's term as a "period of service checkered by light and shade," it praised his sense of "duty and fidelity to his high ideals." His previous acquittals not only enabled Pierce to retain the power he held at the WTH but also fortified his sense of personal exoneration. The prior acquittals also indemnified the WTH managers, who placed their administration of the Home on trial with Pierce. By joining him in court every day during the Weeks Hearing and fully supporting his behavior, they also reaped both the public censure and the reprieve. This time, however, Pierce submitted his resignation. The Grand Jury recommended that the WTH managers accept it immediately, and they did. The Board next chose a woman to fill the superintendent's position.⁶⁴

⁶⁴WTH Annual Report for 1901, 10. "No Indictment."

Pierce retired to his family farm in June 1905 after his resignation from the WTH. As his father had done, he executed a deed conveying his property to his children in anticipation of his death in 1911. Deed, dated June 24, 1911, made by Pierce to Charlton Vincent Pierce and Sarah Pierce Onderdonk conveying the Pierce farm, recorded on December 2, 1911 in Liber 1970, page 252 in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk.

After he died from a "malignant tumor of the stomach," Charlton and Sarah and their families occupied and ran the farm. "Obituary of James W. Pierce," *Times*, November 17, 1911, 13.

The WTH Annual Report of 1907 praised Pierce's replacement, Mrs. Mary R. Jordan, who "made important improvements in nearly every department . . . [especially in] discipline." The report went on to commend the "improved atmosphere among the inmates, the more manly bearing of the boys and a respect for rules that . . . gives promise of lawabiding citizenship in future years." The debate regarding the appropriate discipline of children had not ended. The desire to control the inmates' current condition and shape their future persisted as well.⁶⁵

THE END OF THE WTH

The struggle to keep afloat financially also continued. The New York State Children's Law of 1875 that removed children from poorhouses funneled public money to private institutions. Yet, public funding was seldom adequate to maintain these institutions. As WTH auditor David Cromwell remarked during the Weeks Hearing, "Every year there is a deficit, and the managers

According to the New York State Census of 1915, Charlton V. Pierce identified himself as a twenty-seven-year-old farmer who lived with his wife Ethel, twenty-six, his mother-in-law Ann Sliver, forty-seven, and a young farm laborer, David McClelland, seventeen. By 1915, Sarah's husband William Onderdonk also listed his occupation as farmer. He and Sarah lived on the premises with their son Harold, fourteen, and a farm laborer, John Reynolds, fifty-three.

Reynolds had been an inmate of the WTH since 1880, when he was committed as "idiotic." In 1890, Reynolds was officially discharged to the WTH at the age of twenty-four. When the WTH ceased to exist in 1908, Pierce's family supplied a home and work for Reynolds. WTH Ledger 15:57 (May 31, 1890).

Sarah Pierce Onderdonk died at the Pierce farm on July 6, 1916. "Mrs. William L. Onderdonk Dies at Pleasantville," in *New York Journal*, June 14, 1916. WCHS Vertical File - Biography.

⁶⁵The WTH Annual Report, 1907, 7.

have to put their hands in their pockets."⁶⁶

The scandals sharpened the financial distress caused by the prolonged depression of the 1890s. Not only did donations decline, but the Home's finances came under increased scrutiny. Based on evidence given during the Weeks Hearing, the Westchester Board of Supervisors questioned whether the WTH was charging the county for inmates placed in homes or those past the age of sixteen, "thus inflicting an unnecessary and illegal burden upon the taxpayers." The *New York Journal* even charged that the "revelations in regard to Pierce's cruelty have wrecked the financial prospects of the institution and they cannot be improved" until the Board of Managers removed Pierce. Yet, even after Pierce resigned in 1905, raising sufficient funds proved difficult.⁶⁷

The twenty-eighth and final WTH Annual Report disclosed that the financial needs of the institution were pressing. In April 1908 James Wood, the second President of the WTH, warned the Westchester County Superintendent of the Poor that unless the Home received additional financial assistance, responsibility for the 150-200 WTH inmates would fall on the county. Superintendent Hopkins retorted that he was prepared to send the children to

⁶⁶"Pierce Under Fire," in *New York World*, February 6, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol. 10, 87.

⁶⁷"WTH; Supervisor Henry A. Percival of Yonkers Wants the Accounts of the Institution Investigated," in *Times*, February 23, 1896, 2. "Pearce (*sic*) Under Fire," in *New York World*, February 6, 1894, in French Scrapbook vol. 10, 87-88. "No More Whips."

various institutions throughout the state.⁶⁸

When the county failed to increase its contributions to the WTH, its president James Wood and secretary Richard M. Hoe clarified the financial dilemma that confronted the WTH. The cost of maintaining a child had more than doubled from the \$1.50 per child per week that the county had provided in 1880. By 1908, Wood and Hoe estimated the cost per week for each child at \$4.13. They reported that the Home received \$4 per week from the various Boards of Education for each truant, but only \$2.11 per child from the Westchester Superintendent of the Poor. The WTH sought \$3.50 from the county, which responded by offering \$2.35 to all Westchester institutions that cared for children. In dismay, Wood and Hoe revealed that "in nearly every year of its existence the receipts have fallen below the expenses. The deficiency has been met by contributions from the managers or by funds advanced by them." The Home's indebtedness for 1907-1908 reached \$12,700 or nearly one-third of the WTH annual budget.⁶⁹

⁶⁸The WTH Annual Report for 1908, 9. Sending WTH inmates throughout the state would have sad implications for children and their working parents, who might not be able to visit their children. *Times*, April 19, 1908.

Inflation followed the depression of 1895, and prices rose to new heights between 1897 and 1916. While the "rich man's panic" of 1907 did not lead to business failures and unemployment as severe as the previous depression, the Home's financial problems did accelerate. Paul Finkelman, ed. *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001), vol.2, 472.

⁶⁹Letter to the People of Westchester. Some parents gave small amounts toward their children's board. Family contributions for the year 1907 totalled \$507, compared to \$12,225 received for truants and \$9,379 from the Superintendent of the Poor. "Westchester County Temporary Home," *Eastern State*, February 4, 1888, French Scrapbook vol. 38, 28. "Temporary Home May Not Close," *Eastern State*, June 20, 1908, no page number.

The WTH cast no blame on the Superintendent of the Poor for failing to meet its needs. The Home acknowledged the competition for public funding posed by thirty-two other Westchester institutions that cared for children at that time. They submitted that other institutions could operate on a smaller budget because of the "gratuitous service of the Brothers and Sisters of the Church orders, by the lessened per capita cost of maintaining their large numbers and by the income from industries they carry on."⁷⁰

The managers voted unanimously and with deep regret to close the institution. The WTH recognized that they had no prospect of financial relief regarding their budgetary shortfall. Over the years, their solicitude for needy children, tainted by class bias from the start, diminished further by practicalities. In addition to coping with a chronic shortage of funds and a larger and more troublesome corps of inmates, the Home now had a Board of Managers fatigued from more than twenty years of dedicated service and repeated public censure.

In preparation for the dissolution of the WTH, the Board prepared to apply to the State Supreme Court to dissolve the corporation and dispose of its property, which provided some interesting details of the Home's assets. The WTH declared that after paying the costs of dissolving the corporation, it would return to the heirs of Ann Skeel the \$10,000 mortgage on property in the Bronx, which she had bequeathed to the WTH. It also proposed to divide the remainder, including the \$13,343 it had in the bank, *pro rata* among those who

⁷⁰"Letter to the People of Westchester."

had donated funds for erecting the buildings on the property. However, the Board made no mention of what would happen to the proceeds from the contemplated sale of the Home to the Sisters of St. Francis of the Mission of the Immaculate Virgin for \$125,000. That sum far exceeded the total amounts donated by Anna Hoe (\$41,955), Mrs. Charles F. MacLean (\$3,000), and Alexander Taylor, Jr. (\$841). The Sisters converted the property into St. Agnes's Home for Crippled Children. On August 1, 1908 the WTH closed its doors.⁷¹

⁷¹"Letter to the People of Westchester."

Obituary of James W. Pierce in *Times*, November 17, 1911, 13. "The Westchester Temporary Home To Be Dissolved," in *Eastern State*, 1908, undated, no page number. "Temporary Home Sold," *Eastern State*, July 25, 1908, no page number.

In December 2004, the St. Agnes property sold at auction for \$21,400,000 for development into housing for the elderly. Elsa Brenner, "New Life for Former Hospital Site: Sold at Auction, 23 Acre Property to be Developed into Housing for the Elderly," *Times*, December 19, 2004, WE 3.

CONCLUSION

During a time of social transformation and increasing rights for children, the WTH emerges as an institution attempting to retain very tight control over its inmates, its staff, and its public image. Viviana Zeliser's contention that children had become priceless during this period refers predominantly to the offspring of the middle-and upper-classes. But the cultural effect of that change was to increase the perceived value of dependent children as well. The press whipped the Weeks affair into a scandal. The public reacted with shock and indignation that even the children of the poor should be handled in that way, reflecting a changing sensibility about the treatment of all children.

The contention surrounding the various investigations of the WTH obscured the fact that all participants and witnesses to the scandals originally shared the same hopes and expectations for the inmates of the WTH. The children and their families, the officials who committed them, the organizations that recommended them, the managers and staff of the Home, and the general public all presumed that the children would receive the care, training, and discipline that would enable them to grow into productive adults and good citizens. Everyone trusted that children committed to the Home would be more secure and receive better care than that which they experienced in homes riven by poverty, illness, loss, and abandonment. To a large extent, this came to pass.

Yet, the scandals temporarily fractured that trust and revealed the social

and economic tensions that lurked behind the facade of consensus. For a while, the scandals served to divert the general public from the deep anxieties created by the social and economic upheavals of that time. When comparing their situations or their behavior with those under scrutiny, Westchester citizens of all social classes could express relief that they were not involved. Exposure further produced the satisfying catharsis of public outrage at the attitudes and actions of the rich and more powerful.

It also raised the question of how these well-intentioned volunteers, who gave so generously of their time and energy as well as their money, had approved of such harrowing physical punishment and humiliation of the children in their care. Conservative at heart, the officers and managers clung to an older vision of how an institution for children should fulfill its mission. Two men helped to sustain this point of view. Charles Butler was president of the organization for seventeen years; during most of that time he was in his eighties and nineties. Butler's ideas about the proper care of dependent children had solidified more than half a century earlier when he helped to establish the Society for the Relief of Half-Orphans and Destitute Children in 1835. The Home's Superintendent, a man of fervent religious principles and no formal schooling or prior experience except in farming, also upheld the Home's vision. With the help of his supporters on the Board, James Pierce had risen to a position of considerable authority as Superintendent of the WTH. Pierce acted as the Home's front man. He maintained contact with local

officials and various organizations, such as the Westchester County SPCC and the Dorcas Society, and influenced decisions about whether children should be returned to their families, placed in private homes, or retained in the institution. He served as the Home's agent in court during custody contests with children's parents and other proceedings; and he represented the WTH at statewide conferences. He also acted as the linchpin of the organization, interacting with everyone involved with the Home. Pierce had daily contact with the children and the staff and frequent association with the children's families, the Home's volunteers, and the officers and members of the Board. As the Home's Superintendent for twenty-five years, Pierce not only reflected the Board's perspective, he endorsed it. Because of his religious principles, Pierce was as traditional in outlook as his employers, and, like them, believed in the efficacy of physical punishments and restraints.

The Home's managers thought that their good intentions and class superiority could prevail over the growing challenges of more modern ideas. WTH managers and committee members had devoted a great deal of consideration and effort to the inmates' health and education, including moral and vocational training. Many of them had sewed their clothing themselves. These volunteers still thought of themselves as kindly as well as charitable, providing holiday celebrations and outings and donating sweets and toys for the children. However, their testimony at the Weeks Hearing revealed that they thought of most WTH inmates as "intractable," as Emily Butler designated

them. The WTH administration incorrectly estimated that a third of the inmates were of the "criminal element." The Ledgers actually only recorded eighteen (or 3%) of the 559 registered inmates as committed for alleged criminal activity. Their class bias enabled the managers to continue to sanction harsh and occasionally bizarre punishments for inmates at a time when other institutions for children had discarded the whip.

With respect to the physical layout of the Home, WTH officers and managers considered themselves quite modern. Over the course of twenty-five years, the Home went from melting ice from the brook for washing to a well-equipped laundry with steam-driven pumps, a washing machine, mangle, and wringer. They even installed telephone connections between the brick buildings they erected. Ironically, during a time when other institutions for children began to adopt the cottage system of small residences under the guidance of surrogate parents, the Home's appearance and management grew more and more institutional. Despite the claim of the New York State Deputy Inspector of Schools Danforth Ainsworth in 1898 that the WTH "was the most home-like institution he had ever visited," it had grown into an imposing brick and concrete complex, less home-like than ever.⁷²

Some other contemporary institutions for children had begun to train their residents for more modern employment. Anna Hoe and Ann Skeel had introduced kindergarten classes and installed a playground supervisor, both

⁷²WTH Annual Reports for 1887, 11; and for 1898, 12.

modern innovations. But the WTH Board refused to finance these new ideas, and the two women had to continue to pay for them. With respect to teaching more current vocational skills, WTH Board members remained committed to training inmates for domestic and farm work on the assumption that the only alternative for these children would be prostitution and crime, not stenography and telegraphy.

The Hearings disclosed that Pierce and the WTH managers resented the children who resisted their authority and felt indignant that the public and authorities questioned their good intentions.⁷³ Defending the institution took precedence over protecting the children. Once the aim of the organization was to support, maintain, and perpetuate the Home and their own reputations, they turned their collective back on the misdeeds and failures at the institution. On occasion during his administration, Pierce overlooked staff members' abuse of their power, just as the managers excused his excesses. In order to justify WTH policies and safeguard the Home's good name, Secretary Hoe both understated and exaggerated events in his Annual Reports, reflecting the managers' inclination to avoid self-examination or self-criticism. The Board kept to their older traditions. They saw no need to consult experts or professionals, as the advocates of progressive methods of social work did.

In the long run, neither the exposures of the scandals nor public outrage

⁷³Former-Judge Mills, the Home's defense counsel at the Weeks Hearing, even criticized the State Board of Charities, calling their involvement "impertinence." "Pierce Investigation Ends," in *New York Tribune*, July 16, 1897.

at the practices at the WTH changed the social and political power structure or the economic imbalances in the county. In the short run, the torn integument of social agreement mended itself rapidly. Public ire waned with time or redirected itself to other more pressing or more lurid subjects. Almost immediately, need surmounted any lingering indignation or fears for the children at the Home and overcame any rift left by the scandals. Local officials required an institution in which to place Protestant children. Parents and guardians had to renew their trust in the WTH to provide a shelter for the children they could not raise. Despite a proliferation of facilities for the care of children in Westchester County, for a time after the scandals, the WTH continued to fill a need in the community even after disclosure of its worst weaknesses.

Only four years after the Home closed, V. Everit Macy, Westchester's new Superintendent of the Poor, brought a fresh approach to the question of dependent children in Westchester County. In contrast to the managers of the WTH who endeavored to reform dependent children in the belief that that would save them from lives of crime and depravity, Macy chose to reform the system.

AFTERWORD

In 1912, Westchester County elected V. Everit Macy, a wealthy reformer, as Superintendent of the Poor. Macy, a graduate of the Columbia School of Mines, came from an old Nantucket family of general commission merchants. He was as rich, well-born, and influential as the founders of the WTH, but had a completely different vision about how the community should care for its dependent children. He ran as the candidate for both the Democratic and Progressive parties against local Republican power. Macy won the position despite the fact that seventy-five percent of the county's newspapers were Republican and wouldn't allow him to purchase space for political advertisements.⁷⁴ (The Democrats also took the White House that year with Woodrow Wilson's victory.)

In keeping with the Progressive spirit of the age, Macy hired and collaborated with Ruth Taylor, a professional social worker. Together they planned the overhaul of the county's fragmented and chaotic system of caring for dependent children. Taylor later characterized it as "decentralized, indefinite, and confused," and condemned the fact that local officials with the power to commit children to institutions had all been elected or appointed for political reasons, not because of any "special fitness or training." Macy and

⁷⁴Winthrop D. Lane, "A Rich Man in the Poorhouse: Behind That Another and Bigger Story - What Any American County Can Do," in *The Survey* vol. XXXVII no.5 (November 14, 1916), 101-104.

Mrs. Macy contributed \$100 to the WTH in 1908, the year the institution closed. WTH Annual Report for 1908, 14.

Taylor reorganized that system, so vulnerable to abuse by minor local officials, to consolidate authority and expenditures. Under the old system, officials neither investigated the children's cases nor their family situations, but accepted the word of whomever brought the child into court. The Macy-Taylor team established the beginnings of a case-work system. To that end they instituted more efficient record keeping and engaged a professional staff "on the basis of merit alone."⁷⁵ Macy first ordered a census of all children considered public charges, hired additional trained social workers, and convinced private benefactors to pay the salaries of half of them.

Macy not only resigned from thirty corporate boards and directorates to accept the position, he donated his own salary in order to compensate additional staff. An astute politician, Macy even secured the support of the Republican political boss, Mr. Ward, who shared his Quaker affiliation.⁷⁶ Ward agreed to support Macy's proposed Westchester Public Welfare Law if Macy would change his political affiliation to Republican. A pragmatist, Macy agreed, and the Macy chain of daily newspapers run by his son, J. Noel Macy, thereafter supported the Republican party. With Ward's political backing, Macy

⁷⁵Ruth Taylor, Director, Westchester County Department of Child Welfare, "The Development of the Department of Child Welfare of Westchester County, New York," in U. S. Department of Labor Children's Bureau "County Organization and Child Care and Protection," Bureau Publication No. 107. Washington Government Printing Office, 1922, 109-126.

⁷⁶Mildred G. Black, "The History of the Development of a Foster Care Program in Westchester County," (Master's Thesis New York University, 1942), 19-22.

"Mr. Macy Gave His Salary for Clerk Hire," Editorial in the *Tarrytown Daily News*, September 16, 1916. Almshouse (Eastview) County Home A-0249 (22) F Series 177, WC Archives.

and Taylor created a new welfare department. They also established a children's court and the county's first penitentiary. They influenced the county to purchase Grasslands Farm to construct a hospital for paupers. Grasslands Hospital, separated from the Poorhouse, opened in 1920.⁷⁷

Under Macy's direction, Westchester County led New York State in establishing paid foster care two years before state legislation. He and Taylor operated on the theory that it would be "not only more humane but more economical" to preserve families rather than separate them. In 1914 Macy convinced the Budget Committee of the Westchester Board of Supervisors to board children with their own widowed mothers, again anticipating the New York State Law for Mothers' Allowance by a year. Although trailblazing, Macy's policies fell within a general trend away from institutionalization. By 1922, Ruth Taylor had risen to the position of Director of Westchester County's Department of Child Welfare. Today, many nineteenth-century institutions for children continue to flourish in Westchester county in revised form.⁷⁸

⁷⁷Neil S. Martin, "Westchester as an Evolving Suburb," in *Westchester County*, 106-107.

⁷⁸Black, 23.

See Appendix A, "Westchester County Institutions for the Care of Children".

APPENDIX A
WESTCHESTER COUNTY INSTITUTIONS FOR THE CARE OF CHILDREN
DURING THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURIES

1866	Wartburg Orphan's Farm School, Mount Vernon
1868	St. Vincent de Paul, Tarrytown
1868	St. Michael's Home for Wayward Girls, Mamaroneck
1874	Boland Farm, Peekskill
1878	New York Infant Asylum, Mount Vernon (only in summer)
1879	St. Joseph's Home, Peekskill
1880	Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children, White Plains (opened in Pleasantville, moved in 1885)
1889	Noyes Memorial Home, Peekskill
1890	*St. Christopher's School, Dobbs Ferry (founded in 1881 in New York City)
1891	*Leake & Watts Orphanage, Yonkers (founded in 1831 in New York City)
1891	Robins' Nest, Tarrytown
1891	St. Benedict's Home for Colored Children, Rye (founded in 1886 in New York City)
1893	Institute of Mercy, Tarrytown
1893	Mount Minturn, Elmsford
1894	Brace Memorial Farm School, Valhalla
1894	Homeopathic Hospital and Maternity, Yonkers
1894	*Jennie Clarkson School, Valhalla (opened in Katonah in 1896, moved in 1906, merged with St. Christopher's in 1975)
1894	Lyndhurst Sewing and Cooking School, Tarrytown
1894	Martha Milbank Home, Valhalla
1895	*Christ Child Day Nursery, Ossining (now Ossining Children's Center)
1895	*New Rochelle Day Nursery, New Rochelle
1895	Pelham Hall Shelter, New Rochelle
1896	St. John's Day Nursery, Yonkers
1898	Good Counsel Farm, White Plains
1898	Pelham Home for Children, Pelham
1901	St. Faith's Home, Tarrytown
1902	*Graham-Windham, Hastings (founded in 1806 in New York City as the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children and later merged with the Society for the Relief of Half-Orphan and Destitute Children, later known as Windham Child Care)
1904	Loeb Memorial Convalescent Home, Greenburgh
1905	*Children's Village, Dobbs Ferry (founded in 1851 in New York City as the New York Juvenile Asylum)

APPENDIX A, cont.
 WESTCHESTER COUNTY INSTITUTIONS FOR THE CARE OF CHILDREN
 DURING THE NINETEENTH AND EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY⁷⁹

1906	New York Training School for Boys, Yorktown
1906	*Hawthorne Cedar Knolls School, Hawthorne (founded in 1893 in New York City; one of the first correctional schools for delinquent boys built on the cottage plan)
1907	*Lincoln Hall, Inc., Somers (founded in 1863 as the New York Catholic Protectory in New York City, moved to the town of Westchester in 1867)
1907	Campbell Convalescent Cottages, New York Hospital, White Plains
1908	Elizabeth Milbank Anderson (Convalescent) Home, Chappaqua
1908	*St. Agnes Hospital Rehabilitation for Children, White Plains
1908	Tuckahoe Day Nursery, Bronxville
1909	Caroline Rest, Hartsdale
1912	*Pleasantville Cottage School, Pleasantville (founded in 1879 in New York City by the Hebrew Sheltering Guardian Society)
1906	*Blythedale Children's Hospital, Valhalla (founded in 1893 in New York City, moved to Hawthorne in 1906, to Valhalla in 1922)
1923	Hebrew National Orphan Home, Yonkers
1924	St. Mary's-in-the-Field, Valhalla
1925	St. Germaine's Home, Peekskill
1927	Little Missionary's Day Nursery, Rye (summer)
1928	*Julia Dyckman Andrus Memorial, Yonkers
1928	Villa Loretto, Peekskill
1930	Baptist Fresh Air Home, Somers
1931	Salvation Army Day Camp, Ardsley
1931	Sunshine Cottage, Grasslands Hospital, Valhalla
1938	*New York School for the Deaf, Greenburgh (founded in 1817 in New York City)

⁷⁹This chronology came from "Mindful of Children: A Photographic Exhibition of Westchester Institutions Serving Children, 1828-1940, presented by the Westchester County Historical Society, 26 September 1993 to 2 January 1994."

Institutions marked with an asterisk continue to operate and care for dependent children today.

APPENDIX B
 WTH INMATES SENT TO THE NEW YORK CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY
 FOR TRANSPORT TO THE WEST⁸⁰

NAME [AGE]	STATE	DATE	LEDGER:PAGE
1. Banker, Henry [4.5]	Nebraska	10/3/85	14:45, 70
2. Banker, Richard [8.5]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:23
3. Caven, Thomas [9]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:23
4. Christfield, Henry [11]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:23
5. Daniels, Theodore [9]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:23
6. Donohue, Thomas [6.5]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
7. Fisher, Arthur [6.5]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
8. Hoerning, John [8]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
9. Hoerning, George [5]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
10. Hunkle, George [9]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:25
11. Ketch, Frank [13.5]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
12. O'Bryan, Jeremiah [11]	Missouri	4/13/86	14:41
13. Peachy, Charles [10]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:25
14. Sweeney, Patrick [16.5]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
15. Taxter, Augustus [11]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
16. Taxter, Fred [8]	Kansas	1/19/86	14:39
17. Thomas, James [7]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:23
18. Turner, James [12]	Nebraska	5/26/85	14:23
19. Valentine, Howard [13]	[unspecified]	9/13/87	

⁸⁰John and George Hoerning were brothers; their father was dead and the WTH labeled their mother "intemperate." John's twin Hannah and an older sister Minnie remained at the WTH. The Taxter boys were brothers also. Their mother was dead and their father listed as "very intemperate." Although both Banker boys had mothers who were characterized as "depraved" and "very intemperate" fathers, the evidence is not conclusive that they were related because they did not enter the WTH at the same time.

Valentine ran away from Westchester placements six times. He personally made application to Dr. Balch, President of the Westchester County SPCC in Yonkers to be sent to New York CAS "to go west."

APPENDIX C
WITH INMATES COMMITTED FOR ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

NAME	REASON	LEDGER:PAGE
1.Anderson, George [13]	Truant	15:86
2.Berwick, William [12]	Truant, Petit Larceny	15:14
3.Bogart, William [12]	Truant	15:42
4.Bracey, Edward [9]	Truant	15:44
5.Brower, Irving [12]	Truant	15:88
6.Conkling, James [6]	Disorderly, Runaway	14:24
7.DeGolyer, Theodore [10]	Runaway, Disobedient	14:32,37
8.DeMuth, John [11]	Truant	15:50,73
9.Fuller, Arthur [15]	Vagrancy	15:18
10.Fuller, Carrie [14]	Vagrancy	15:18
11.Fuller, Lizzie [12]	Vagrancy	15:18
12.Fuller, Maggie [11]	Vagrancy	15:18
13.Goodhart, Frank [13]	Truant	15:53,78
14.Inman, Simon [15]	Uncontrollable	15:21,38
15.Lannon, Hugh [14]	Petit Larceny	15:28
16.Lockwood, Eugene [13.5]	Runaway	15:25,26
17.Mabie, Winfield [11]	Truant	15:23,40
18.Mackey, William [13]	Disorderly	14:40,15:5
19.Mallison, William[10]	Truant	15:124
20.Manning, William [11]	Truant, Disorderly	14:38,49
21.Marjory, Walter [13]	Truant	14:10
22.McFall, Arthur [12]	Truant	14:35,38
23.Meyers, Robert [13]	Truant	15:71,96
24.Parker, John [12]	Truant	14:35,38
25.Pierpoint, Alice [14]	Begging	15:10,43
26.Rose, Albert [11]	Truant	15:87,96
27.Rose, Frederick [13]	Truant	15:33,40
28.Schultz, William [16]	Disobedient at home	15:22
29.Spearing, Katie [11]	Nuisance	15:110
30.Thompson, Andrew [13]	Truant	15:78
31.Van Buskirk, Edward [14]	Petit Larceny	15:42
32.VanWyck, George [11]	Uncontrollable	15:91,106
33.Wettzien, Sophia [12]	Disorderly	14:4

APPENDIX C, cont.
WTH INMATES COMMITTED FOR ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITY⁸¹

⁸¹Only three of the youngsters committed for alleged misbehavior testified at the Weeks Hearing that Pierce whipped or chained them. Testimony by and about Berwick and Bogart appear in the Official Transcript; a doctor testified that he observed scars on Marjory's head, back, and chest. Official Transcript, 15, 43, 65, 71.

The City Judges of Yonkers, George Pentz and S. H. Thayer, Jr. committed the majority of inmates for alleged criminal activity. Justice-of-the-Peace James H. Shepard of Scarsdale committed Manning; and John H. Baxter, Justice of the Peace for Cortlandt committed Conkling and the Fuller children.

Twenty-five of the thirty-three children returned to a parent or sibling. Only four of those remained in the Home for as long as two years.

Of the six girls listed, Spearing and Pierpoint were homeless; and the mother of the three Fuller girls could not care for them or their brother. Wettzien, one of eight motherless children, was committed as "disorderly." During her stay at the WTH, she must have made a good impression, as a volunteer gave Wettzien a "dressed doll and wools" for Christmas, 1884. (Donations of a gift for a specific child only appeared four times in all the WTH Annual Reports.) The girl was discharged to her father in February, 1885. In 1893, Pierpoint married a young carpenter in a June wedding at the Home. She "left her adopted family well furnished with substantial tokens of their good will." The WTH Annual Report for 1893, 9.

The WTH Ledgers did not identify any of the inmates committed for alleged criminal activity as "colored."

APPENDIX D
 WTH INMATES WHO RAN AWAY FROM THE WTH⁸²

NAME	SOURCE(LEDGER:PAGE)
1. Coffee, Millicent [15]	
2. Finch, Henry [12]	14:24,27
3. Groves, Edward [12]	(Official Transcript, 66)
4. Hall, Lewis and Floyd	
5. Logle Charles	
6. Patterson, George	
7. Schultz, William R. [16]	15:11,30
8. Shenheit, Charles [11]	15:2
9. Stark, Charles	
10. Thomas, Elizabeth [20]	
11. Watson, George [14]	15:15
12. Weeks, Harry [14]	

⁸²Finch fled six days after being committed, while Pierce was away from the WTH. Superintendant of the Poor Read of North Castle permitted the boy to remain with his father instead of being returned to the Home.

Eight of the runaways fled after the conclusion of the surviving Ledgers. For details of Harry Weeks's escape with George Patterson, see "No More Whips."

Newspapers reported the six who ran away during the Weeks Hearing. "Runaways Arrested," in *Eastern State*, February 22, 1896. "Held Illegally." "Ran Away From Pierce: Millie Coffee, Who Claims to Have Seen Cruelties, Missing From the Westchester Home," in *Mount Kisco Recorder*, April 17, 1896, in Renoda Hoffman Scrapbook, vol. 1, 50.

APPENDIX D cont.
 WTH INMATES WHO RAN AWAY FROM PLACEMENTS⁸³

NAME	LEDGER:PAGE
1. Adams, Nora [11]*	14:6
2. Bailey, Charles [13]*	15:100
3. Behrends, Frederick [13.5]	14:12
4. Brazel, John F. [12]	15:86
5. Edwards, George [14]	14:22, 25
6. Fisher, George [15.5]	14:26
7. Green, Irene [13]	15:62
8. Halstead, Edgar [10]	14:58
9. Harmon, George L. [14]	15:41
10. Heady, Benjamin [12]*	14:60
11. Long, George [15]	14:10
12. Marjory, Walter [14]*	14:30
13. Moore, Ervin [14]	15:18
14. O'Donnell, John [9]	14:66
15. Robbins, Frederick [14]	15:72
16. Robbins, Abraham [14]*	15:66, 114
17. Schultz, William [16]	15:11, 30
18. Schwarze, Hermann [12]	14:2
19. Taxter, Warren [11]*	14:4, 28
20. Turner, James [12]*	14:14
21. Valentine, Howard [12]*	14:51, 56 & 15:4
22. Wood, Jane [14]	15:14

⁸³Asterisks indicate inmates who ran away several times. Moore did not actually escape; but he "had his clothes packed and expected to take money from milk rout (*sic*) & leave but was detected." WTH Ledger 15:18 (February, 18, 1888).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

UNPUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES

MANUSCRIPTS

Christ Episcopal Church, Tarrytown, New York
Parish Registers, 1864-1895.

New York Historical Society
New York Children's Aid Society, Annual Reports, 1854-1939.

New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Manual,
"Comprising the provisions of the Penal Code, the Code of Criminal
Procedure, and other (New York) Statutes relating to Children." 1888.

Society for the Relief of Half Orphan and Destitute Children, Annual
Reports, 1856-1937.

New York Public Library
Isaiah Thornton Williams Papers, 1833-1918.

New York State Library
Floyd, Augustus. Report of Investigation into the affairs and management
of "The WTH" at White Plains, made by a special committee of the State
Board of Charities, March 2, 1905.

Hebberd, Robert W. "Dangers Attendant Upon the Careless Methods of
Placing Out Children," read by the secretary of the Board at the Twenty-
sixth National Conference of Charities and Corrections, 1900.

Letchworth, William P. Extract from the Ninth Annual Report of the State
Board of Charities of the State of New York, Relating to Pauper Children,
1876.

New York Catholic Protectory, Annual Report to the Legislature of the
State, and to the Common Council of the City, 1863.

New York Juvenile Asylum (later known as Children's Village), Annual
Report to the Legislature of the State, and to the Common Council of the
City of New York, 1854.

New York State Board of Charities, Annual Reports of Orphan Asylums
and Homes for the Friendless, 1873-1896.

Roosevelt, Theodore. A communication to the Mayor of New York in regard to the Official Charities of the City by . . . Commissioners of the State Board of Charities, 1877.

Stoddard, Enoch V. Report of an Investigation into the Management of the House of Mercy, New York City by a Special Committee of the Board [State Board of Charities], 1899.

State of New York, State Board of Charities, "Dangers Attendant upon Careless Methods of Placing Out Children," read by the Secretary of the Board at the Twenty-sixth National Conference of Charities and Corrections, 1900.

Scarsdale Public Library

Scarsdale Historical Album of Fox Meadow, including the Butler correspondence.

Westchester County Archives.

Estate Inventories.

Reports of the Department of Social Services, Series 172-179.

Requa, William. "Westchester Alms-House Report to the Board of Supervisors (of Westchester County)," November 8, 1830.

Westchester County Clerk's Office.

Deeds.

Supreme Court of the State of New York, Westchester County.

"In the Matter of the Petition of James W. Pierce; Petition for *Habeas Corpus*," filed May 26, 1883; and "Order Dismissing" the writ, filed June 23, 1883. No.875 SP.

"In the Matter of the Visitation and Inspection of the Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children. Order Authorizing and Directing Visitation and Inspection," dated January 4, 1896 and filed January 13, 1896, appointing Daniel W. Guernsey as referee.

"In the Matter of the Investigation etc Westchester Temporary Home etc." (seventy-three pages of excerpts of the Hearing), filed October 6, 1897.

Decision of Daniel W. Guernsey, dated October 2, 1897.

Westchester County Historical Society

"An Address delivered by Mrs. Joseph Hobson, at the Rooms of the State Charities Aid Association, No. 6 East Fourteenth Street, New York, February 12, 1880, Prior to the Incorporation of the 'Home'."

Children's Village records, 93 boxes, 1855-1905.

Christ Child Day Nursery and Bethany Home, Annual Reports (Ossining, New York), 1895-1945.

Family Services of Westchester papers, including "Minute Book, Bureau of Charities, 1896-1899."

French, Alvah P., Westchester County Historian. Forty-two scrapbooks, 1880-1924.

Graham-Windham Papers, 1841-1905.

Hoffman, Renoda, City Historian of White Plains. Fifty-five scrapbooks.

New York Catholic Protectory and Lincoln Hall Papers, 1863 -1914.

New York Historical Society collection, Indentures of Apprentices, October 12, 1718 to August 7, 1727.

New York House of Refuge, Indenture Form.

New York State Census, 1905, 1915 (microfilm).

Principal's Black Book (of Punishments), New Rochelle, New York, 1871-1887.

Wartburg Orphans' Farm School Papers, including Annual Reports, 1876 - 1959, inmate records, 1866 - 1914, and school records, 1880 - 1884.

Westchester County Almshouse Records

Children's Records of Admission, 1887-1901.

Transfers from the New York Catholic Protectory, Missionary Sisters of the Third Order, St. Francis, and Westchester Temporary Home.

Westchester County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Annual Reports, 1902-1906.

Westchester Temporary Home, Ledgers of Admissions and Discharges, vol.14 (1884-1887), and vol.15 (1887-1892).

White Plains Public Library

Census of Union Free Village School, White Plains, Westchester County, August 1, 1884.

Sweet, Mrs. A. M. Scrapbook: "Westchester Temporary Home for Children, Westchester Avenue, White Plains, New York: Pictures Taken in 1907-1908."

United States Census for Westchester County, New York. 1870, 1880, and 1900 (microfilm).

PUBLISHED PRIMARY SOURCES

Abbott, Grace. *The Child and the State: Legal Status in the Family, Apprenticeship, and Child Labor, Select Documents*. vol.1. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938.

Berkemeier, Gottlieb Conrad Cleophas. *The Wartburg Orphans' Farm School of the Evangelical Lutheran Church at Mt. Vernon, Westchester Co., New York: a Brief Historical Sketch on the Occasion of its Golden Jubilee*. Mt. Vernon, NY: The School, 1920.

Black, Jennie Prince. *I Remember: A Short and Intimate Sketch of the Dignified Seventies, the Elegant Eighties, and the Gay Nineties in . . . the Hudson Valley in the Vicinity of Sunnyside, the Home of Washington Irving . . .* New York: Claydon Print, 1938.

Brace, Charles Loring. *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years Work Among Them*. Reprint from the 3rd ed, 1880; Montclair, NJ: Patterson, Smith, 1967.

Bremner, Robert H., ed. *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History*. vols. 1 and 2. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970.

Bressler, Leo and Marion, eds. *Youth in American Life: Selected Readings*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972.

Comstock, Anthony. *Traps for the Young*. 1833; reprinted, ed., Robert Bremner. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967.

- Gorn, Elliott J., ed. *The McGuffey Readers: Selections from the 1879 Edition*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1998.
- Hart, Hastings H. *Preventive Treatment of Neglected Children: Correction and Prevention*, vol.4 (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1971).
- History of Child Saving in the United States: National Conference of Charities and Correction Report of the Committee on the History of Child-Saving Work to the Twentieth Conference, Chicago, June 1893. Reprint with an introduction by Anthony Platt. Montclair, New Jersey: Patterson Smith, 1971.
- Lee, Francis Cook. *New Castle Historical Records, Minutes of Town Meetings 1791-1850, Maps, Census, and Cemetary Lists with a Pictorial History of the Town*. Town of New Castle, Chappaqua, New York, 1997.
- Letchworth, William P. *Homes of Homeless Children: A Report on Orphan Asylums and Other Institutions for the Care of Children*, 1876.
- Local Visiting Committee for the Westchester County Poorhouse First Annual Report to the Secretary of the State Charities Aid Association. New York: Cushing, Bardua & Co., 1873.
- Phelps, Henry P. *The Albany Orphan Asylum, Established 1829: What it is doing for God and Little Children*. Albany: Albany Engraving Co, 1893.
- Rothman, David J. & Sheila M. Rothman. *Sources of the American Social Tradition: Volume II, 1865 to Present*. New York: Basic Books, 1975.
- Spencer, Anna Garlin and Charles Wesley Birtwell, eds. *The Care of Dependent, Neglected, and Wayward Children: Being a Report of the Second Section of the International Congress of Charities, Correction and Philanthropy, Chicago, June, 1893*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1894; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1974.
- State of New York State Board of Charities Report of Investigation into the Affairs and Management of "The Westchester Temporary Home for Destitute Children" at White Plains; made by a Special Committee of the State Board of Charities, March 2d, 1905." Albany: Brandow Printing, 1905.
- Taylor, Ruth. 1922. "The Development of the Department of Child Welfare of Westchester County, New York" in U.S. Department of Labor Children's

Bureau *County Organization and Child Care and Protection*. Bureau Publication no. 107. Washington Government Printing Office, 1922.

United States Department of Commerce. *Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970*. Part 1. Bicentennial Edition.

Westchester Temporary Home Annual Reports. New York: Printing House of C. A. Coffin & Rogers. Westchester County Historical Society, 1880-1908.

PUBLISHED SECONDARY SOURCES

Addams, Jane. *Twenty Years at Hull House*. New York: Macmillan, 1910; reprint, Signet Classics, 1961.

Albin, Mel and Dominick Cavallo, eds. *Family Life in America, 1620-2000*. St. James, NY: Revisionary Press, 1981 (hereafter, "*Family Life in America*").

Alexander, Ruth M. "'The Only Thing I Wanted Was Freedom': Wayward Girls in New York, 1900-1930," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America, 1850-1950*, eds. Elliott West and Paula Petrik. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1992 (hereafter, "*Small Worlds*"), 275-295.
----- . *The "Girl Problem": Female Sexual Delinquency in New York, 1900-1930*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.

Alger, Horatio, Jr. *Ragged Dick or Street Life in New York*. Boston: A.K. Loring, 1868; Reprint with an Introduction by Carl Bode, Penguin, 1985.
----- . *Mark, the Match Boy*. Boston: A.K. Loring, 1869; reprint with an introduction by Richard Fink, New York: Collier, 1962.
----- . "Jed, the Poorhouse Boy" in *Struggling Upward and Other Works*. Introduction by Russel Crouse. New York: Crown, 1945.

Alston, Lester. "Children as Chattel," in *Small Worlds*, 208-231.

Aries, Philippe. *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*. Robert Baldick, tr. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962.

Ashby, LeRoy. *Saving the Waifs: Reformers and Dependent Children, 1890-1917*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.
----- . *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History*. New York: Twayne, 1997.

Atkins, Annette. *We Grew Up Together: Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth-Century America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001.

- Babener, Liahna. "Bitter Nostalgia: Recollections of Childhood on the Midwestern Frontier," in *Small Worlds*, 301-320.
- Beatty, Barbara. *Preschool Education in America: The Culture of Young Children from the Colonial Era to the Present*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Beecher, Catherine E. and Harriet Beecher Stowe. *The American Woman's Home: or, Principles of Domestic Science; Being a Guide to the Formation and Maintenance of Economical Healthful, Beautiful, and Christian Homes*. New York: J. B. Ford, 1869.
- Bernstein, Nina. *The Lost Children of Wilder: The Epic Struggle to Change Foster Care*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2001.
- Berrol, Selma. "Immigrant Children at School, 1880-1940," in *Small Worlds*, 42-60.
- Billingsley, Andrew. *Climbing Jacob's Ladder: The Enduring Legacy of African-American Families*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992.
- Biographical History of Westchester County, New York, vols. 1 and 2. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1899.
- Blackstone, William. *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. Vol.1. San Francisco: Bankroft-Whitney, 1916.
- Blumin, Stuart M. *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Bogen, Hyman. *The Luckiest Orphans: A History of the Hebrew Orphan Asylum of New York*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992.
- Boyer, Paul. *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Bradbury, Bettina. *Working Families: Age, Gender, and Daily Survival in Industrializing Montreal*. Toronto, Ontario: McClelland & Stewart, 1993.
- Brennan, John J. "Father Christopher Drumgoole, Founder of Mt. Loretto: Understanding the Man," in *Community, Continuity, and Change: New Perspectives on Staten Island History*, eds. Michael Rosenfeld and Charles La Cerra. New York: Pace University Press, 1999.

- Brenzel, Barbara M. *Daughters of the State: A Social Portrait of the First Reform School for Girls in North America, 1856-1905*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1983.
- Bridenbaugh, Carl. *Cities in the Wilderness: The First Century of Urban Life in America 1625-1742*. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1964.
- Buchwald, Art. *Leaving Home: A Memoir*. New York: G.P. Putnam's, 1993.
- Buff, Sheila, ed. *Traditional Country Skills: A Practical Compendium of American Wisdom and Know-How*. Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2001.
- Burgess, Robert L. and James Garbarino. "Doing What Comes Naturally? An Evolutionary Perspective on Child Abuse," in *The Dark Side of Families: Current Family Violence Research*, eds. David Finkelhor, et al. Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1983 (hereafter, "*The Dark Side of Families*"), 88-101.
- Bynum, Victoria E. *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social and Sexual Control in the Old South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.
- Calhoun, Arthur Wallace. *A Social History of the American Family from Colonial Times to the Present*. Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark, 1919.
- Calhoun, Daniel. *The Intelligence of a People*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.
- Calvert, Karin. *Children in the House: The Material Culture of Early Childhood 1600-1900*. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992.
- Canning, Jeff and Wally Buxton. *History of the Tarrytowns Westchester County, New York from Ancient Times to the Present*. Harrison, New York: Harbor Hill Books, 1975.
- Cawelti, John G. *Apostles of the Self-Made Man*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- Clement, Priscilla. "Families and Foster Care: Philadelphia in the Late Nineteenth Century" in *Growing Up in America: Children in Historical Perspective*, eds. Joseph M. Hawes and Ray N. Hiner. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985 (hereafter, "*Growing Up in America*").
- Cmiel, Kenneth. *A Home of Another Kind: One Chicago Orphanage and the Tangle of Child Welfare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

- Comstock, Anita Inman. "Rural Westchester to the Turn of the Century: Farmers, Squires and Just Plain Folk," in *Westchester County: The Past Hundred Years 1883-1983*, ed. Marilyn E. Weigold. The Westchester County Historical Society, 1984 (hereafter "*Westchester County*").
- Contosta, David R. *Philadelphia's Progressive Orphanage: The Carson Valley School*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997.
- Coontz, Stephanie. *The Social Origins of Private Life: A History of American Families 1600-1900*. London: Verso, 1988.
- Cott, Nancy F., ed. *Root of Bitterness: Documents of the Social History of American Women*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1972.
- Cremin, Lawrence A. *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*. New York: Knopf, 1961.
- Degler, Carl N. *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.
- DeMause, Lloyd. "The Evolution of Childhood," in *The History of Childhood*, ed. Lloyd DeMause. New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974.
- Demos, John. *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Derks, Scot, ed. *The Value of a Dollar: Prices and Incomes in the US 1860-1999*. Lakeville, CT: Grey House, 1999.
- Dudden, Faye E. *Serving Women: Household Service in Nineteenth-Century America*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1983.
- Duffy, John. *Epidemics in Colonial America*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971.
- Dulberger, Judith A. *"Mother Donit Fore the Best": Correspondence of a Nineteenth-Century Orphan Asylum*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996.
- Duncombe, Frances R. *Katonah: The History of a New York Village and Its People*. Katonah, NY: The Society, 1961.
- Dunlop, M. H. *Gilded City: Scandal and Sensation in Turn-of-the-Century New York*. New York: William Morrow, 2000.

- Du Puis, Melanie. *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink*. New York: New York University Press, 2002.
- Erikson, Erik H. *Childhood and Society*. New York: W.W.Norton, 1950.
-----, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1968.
- Erikson, Kai T. *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance*. New York: John Wiley, 1966.
- Fass, Paula S. and Mary Ann Mason, eds. *Childhood in America*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Felt, Jeremy P. *Hostages of Fortune: Child Labor Reform in New York State*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965.
- Field, G.W. *The Legal Relations of Infants, Parent and Child, and Guardian and Ward, and a Particular Consideration of Guardianship in the State of New York*. Littleton, Colorado: Rothman, 1981.
- Finkelhor, David. "Common Features of Family Abuse," in *The Dark Side of Families*.
- Finkelman, Paul. *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Nineteenth Century*, vol. 2. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2001.
- Folks, Homer. *The Care of Destitute, Neglected, and Delinquent Children*. New York: Macmillan, 1902.
- Fosdick, Raymond B. *John D. Rockefeller, Jr., a Portrait*. New York: Harpers, 1956.
- Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography and Other Writings*. Reprint with an Introduction by L. Jesse Lemisch, New York: Signet, 1961.
- Freeman, Joshua, et al, eds. *Who Built America: Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society*, vol. Two From the Gilded Age to the Present. New York: Pantheon, 1992.
- French, Alvah P., ed. *History of Westchester County, New York*. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1925.
- Friedman, Reena Sigman. *These are Our Children: Jewish Orphanages in the United States, 1880-1925*. Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England for Brandeis University Press, 1994.

- Friedman, Stephan J. "Industrialization, Immigration, and Transportation to 1900" in *Westchester County*.
- Gardner, Ralph D. *Horatio Alger, or the American Hero Era*. Mendota, IL: Wayside Press, 1964.
- Garland, Hamlin. *A Son of the Middle Border*. P. F. Collier, 1917; reprint New York: Macmillan, 1959.
- Gelles, Richard J. "An Exchange/Social Control Theory," in *The Dark Side of Families*.
- Gennep, Arnold van. *The Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present*. University of Chicago Press, 1960.
- Genovese, Eugene. *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. New York: Vintage, 1972.
- Ginsberg, Lori D. *Women and the Work of Benevolence: Morality, Politics, and Class in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.
- Gordon, Linda. "The Politics and History of Family Violence," in *Family in Transition: Rethinking Marriage, Sexuality, Child Rearing, and Family Organization*, 6th ed., eds. Arlene S. Skolnick and Jerome H. Skolnick. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman, 1989 (hereafter, "*Family in Transition*").
- *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence: Boston 1880-1960*. New York: Viking, 1988.
- *Pitied but Not Entitled: Single Mothers and the History of Welfare, 1890-1935*. New York: Free Press, 1994.
- Graff, Harvey J. *Conflicting Paths: Growing Up in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Greven, Philip J., Jr. *Spare the Child: The Religious Roots of Punishment and the Psychological Impact of Physical Abuse*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.
- Griffen, Ernest, ed. *Westchester County and Its People, A Record*. New York: Lewis Historical, 1948.
- Grossberg, Michael. *Governing the Hearth: Law and the Family in Nineteenth Century America*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.

- Gutman, Herbert G. *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*. New York: Vintage, 1976.
- Hacsi, Timothy A. *Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.
- Hammonds, Evelyn Maxine. *Childhood's Deadly Scourge: The Campaign to Control Diphtheria in New York City, 1880-1930*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999.
- Handlin, Oscar and Mary F. Handlin. *Facing Life: Youth and the Family in American History*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971.
- Hareven, Tamara. "American Families in Transition: Historical Perspectives on Change," in *Family in Transition*.
- Hawes, Joseph M. *Children in Urban Society: Juvenile Delinquency in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1971.
- and Ray N. Hiner, eds. *Growing Up in America*.
- Herzberger, Sharon D. "Social Cognition and the Transmission of Abuse," in *The Dark Side of Families*.
- Holloran, Peter C. *Boston's Wayward Children: Social Services for Homeless Children 1830-1930*. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1989.
- Holt, Marilyn Irvin. *The Orphan Trains: Placing Out in America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992.
- Homberger, Eric. *Mrs. Astor's New York: Money and Social Power in a Gilded Age*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Horn, Pamela. *Children's Work and Welfare, 1780-1890*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.
- Jacoby, George Paul. *Catholic Childcare in Nineteenth-Century New York*. New York: Arno Press, reprint 1974.
- Janeway, Elizabeth. *Powers of the Weak*. New York: Alfred A. Knop, 1980.
- Jones, Jacqueline. *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, From Slavery to the Present*. New York: Vintage Books, 1985.

- Kaestle, Carl and Maris Vinovskis. *Education and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
- Katz, Michael. *The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1968.
- Katzman, David M. *Seven Days a Week: Women and Domestic Service in Industrializing America*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981.
- Kett, Joseph F. *Rites of Passage: Adolescence in America 1790 to the Present*. New York: Basic Books, 1977.
- . *The Pursuit of Knowledge Under Difficulties: From Self-Improvement to Adult Education in America, 1750-1900*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994.
- Kutler, Stanley I., ed. *Dictionary of American History*, 3rd ed. New York: Scribner, 2003.
- Lasch, Christopher. *Haven in a Heartless World: The Family Beseiged*. New York: Basic Books, 1977.
- Libertoff, Ken. "The Runaway child in America," in *Family Life in America, 1620-2000*.
- Martin, Neil S. "Westchester as an Evolving Suburb," in *Westchester County*.
- Mason, Mary Ann. *From Father's Property to Children's Rights: The History of Child Custody in the United States*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- McCarthy, Kathleen. "Women, Politics, Philanthropy: Some Historical Origins of the Welfare State," in *The Liberal Persuasion: Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. and the Challenge of the American Past*, ed. John Patrick Diggins. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Mennel, Robert M. *Thorns and Thistles: Juvenile Delinquents in the United States 1825-1940*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1973.
- Mintz, Steven. *A Prison of Expectations: The Family in Victorian Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 1985.
- and Susan Kellogg. *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life*. New York: The Free Press, 1988.
- Morgan, Edmund S. *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in*

- Seventeenth Century New England*. New York: Harper and Row, 1944.
- Muir, John. *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*. 1914; reprint University of Wisconsin Press, 1965.
- Oppel, Frank, ed. "The Little Laborers of New York City." In "Harper's New Monthly Magazine." no.CCLXXIX, August 1873, Vol. XLVII in *Gaslight New York Revisited*. Secaucus: Castle, 1989.
- Nasaw, David. *Schooled to Order: A Social History of Public Schooling in the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979.
- . *Children of the City: At Work and at Play*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.
- . "Children and Commercial Culture: Moving Pictures in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Small Worlds*, 14-25.
- Nash, Gary. *The Urban Crucible: Social Change, Political Consciousness, and the Origins of the American Revolution*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Norton, Mary Beth *et al*, eds. *A People and a Nation: A History of the United States*, third ed. vols. I and II. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.
- O'Connor, Stephen. *Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2001.
- Odem, Mary E. *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995.
- Osofsky, Gilbert. *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto: Negro New York, 1890-1930*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Pilat, Oliver and Jo Ransom. *Sodom by the Sea*. New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1941.
- Platt, Anthony M. *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.
- Platt, Charles, Jr. *Platt Genealogy in America from the Arrival of Richard Platt in New Haven, Connecticut, in 1638*. New Hope, 1963.
- Pleck, Elizabeth. *Domestic Tyranny: The Making of Social Policy Against Family Violence from Colonial Times to the Present*. New York: Oxford

University Press, 1987.

Pollock, Linda A. *Forgotten Children: Parent-child Relations from 1500 to 1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Porter, Susan L. "A Good Home: Indenture and Adoption in Nineteenth-Century Orphanages," in *Adoption in America: Historical Perspectives*, ed. E. Wayne Carp. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002.

Preston, Samuel H. and Michael R. Haines. *Fatal Years: Child Mortality in Late Nineteenth-Century America*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.

Rodgers, Daniel T. "Socializing Middle-Class Children: Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Growing Up in America*.

Rosen, Ruth. *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982.

Rosengarten, Theodore. *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975.

Rothman, David J. *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1971.

Rotundo, E. Anthony. *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era*. New York: Basic Books, 1993.

Ryan, Mary. *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865*. Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Scharf, J. Thomas. *History of Westchester County, New York Including Morrisania, Kings Bridge, and West Farms Which Have Been Annexed to New York City*. Philadelphia: L.E. Preston, 1886; reprint in two volumes Camden: ME: Picton Press, 1992.

Schob, David E. *Hired Hands and Plowboys: Farm Labor in the Midwest, 1815-1860*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975.

Scott, James S. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990.

Seely, Mrs. L. *Mrs. Seely's Cook Book: A Manual of French and American Cookery with Chapters on Domestic Servants Their Rights and Duties and Many Other Details of Household Management*. New York: MacMillan,

1902.

- Shoumatoff, Alexander. *Westchester: Portrait of a County*. New York: Coward, McCann, and Geoghegan, 1979.
- Simpson, Eileen B. *Orphans: Real and Imaginary*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1987.
- Sklar, Kathryn Kish. *Florence Kelley and the Nation's Work: The Rise of Women's Political Culture, 1830-1900*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Skocpol, Theda. *Protecting Soldiers and Mothers: the Political Origins of Social Policy in the United States*. Cambridge: Belknap, 1992.
- Smith, Chester A. *Peekskill, A Friendly Town: Its Historic Sites and Shrines; A Pictorial History of the City from 1654 to 1952*. Peekskill: The Friendly Town Association, 1952.
- Spann, Edward K. *The New York Metropolis: New York City, 1840-1857*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1981.
- Stack, Carol B. *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.
- Stanley, Amy Dru. *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Stansell, Christine. *City of Women: Sex and Class in New York, 1789-1860*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Swanson, Susan Cochran and Elizabeth Green Fuller. *Westchester County, a Pictorial History*. Virginia Beach: Donning, 1982.
- Torres, Louis. *Tuckahoe Marble: The Rise and Fall of an Industry, 1822-1930*. Fleishmans, New York: Harbor Hill, 1976.
- Trattner, Walter I. *Crusade for the Children: A History of the National Child Labor Committee and Child Labor Reform in America*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1970.
- , *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*. 4th ed. New York: Free Press, 1974.

- Walkowitz, Daniel J. *Worker City, Company Town: Iron and Cotton-Worker Protest in Troy and Cohoes, New York, 1855-84*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981.
- Wall, Helena M. *Fierce Communion: Family and Community in Early America*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990.
- Wallace, Anthony F.C. "Childhood, Work, and Family Life in a 19th-Century Cotton Mill Town," in *Family Life*.
- Ward, Geoffrey C. *Before the Trumpet: Young Franklin Roosevelt*. New York: Harper & Row, 1985.
- Washburne, Carolyn Kott. "A Feminist Analysis of Child Abuse and Neglect," in *The Dark Side of Families*.
- West, Elliott. "Children on the Plains Frontier," in *Small Worlds*.
 ----- and Paula Petrik, eds. *Small Worlds*.
 -----, *Growing Up with the Country: Childhood on the Far Western Frontier*.
 Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989.
- Wiebe, Robert H. *The Search for Order 1877-1920*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1967.
- Wishy, Bernard. *The Child and the Republic: The Dawn of Modern American Child Nurture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968.
- Woolfert's Roost Irvington-on-Hudson: Portrait of a Village. Irvington-on-Hudson: The Washington Irving Press, 1971.
- Yellowitz, Irwin. *The Position of the Worker in American Society, 1865-1896*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969.
- Zelizer, Viviana A. "Pricing the Priceless Child: From Baby Farms to Black-Market Babies," in *Family in Transition*.
 -----, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children*.
 New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Zmora, Nurith. *Orphanages Reconsidered: Child Care Institutions in Progressive Era Baltimore*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1994.

ARTICLES

Abrams, Jeanne. "'For a Child's Sake': The Denver Sheltering Home for Jewish Children in the Progressive Era." *American Jewish History* vol. 79, Winter 1989-90, 181-202.

Atkeson, Mary Meek. "Women in Farm Life and Rural Economy." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (hereafter, "*The Annals*"), vol. CXLIII no. 232 May 1929, 188-194.

Boylan, Anne. "Timid Girls, Venerable Widows, and Dignified Matrons: Life Cycle Patterns Among Organized Women in New York and Boston, 1797-1840." *American Quarterly* 38 Winter 1986, 779-797.

Cunningham, Hugh. "Histories of Childhood." *American Historical Review* vol.103 no.4, 1195-1208.

Hager, Alice Rogers. "Occupations and Earnings of Women in Industry." *The Annals* Vol. CXLIII, no. 232 May 1929, 65-73.

Hareven, Tamara K. "Dynamics of Kin in an Industrial Community." *American Journal of Sociology* vol. 84 Supplement "Turning Points: Historical and Sociological Essays on the Family." John Demos and Sarane Spence Boocock, eds. 1978, 151-177.

Hiner, N. Ray. "The Child in American Historiography: Accomplishments and Prospect," *The Psychohistory Review* vol. VII, no. 1, Summer 1978, 13-23.

Kelley, Florence and Marguerite Marsh. "Labor Legislation for Women and its Effects on Earnings and Conditions of Labor." *The Annals*, May 1929, 286-300.

Maynard, Steven. "'Horrible Temptations': Sex, Men, and Working-Class Male Youth in Urban Ontario, 1890-1935." *The Canadian Historical Review* 78 (2) June 1997, 191-235.

Marinero, Christopher. "Westchester's Bravest: The History of the Fire Departments in Westchester County." *The Westchester Historian*, vol.76, no. 3., 73-83 and vol. 76, no. 4, 106-115.

McConnell, Beatrice. "Child Labor in Agriculture." *The Annals*, vol. 236 November, 1944, 92-100.

- Naylor, Colin T. "Millions of Bricks." *The Westchester Historian*, vol.43, no. 3, 54-58.
- Oren, Laura. "The State's Failure to Protect Children and Substantive Due Process: *Deshaney* in Context." *North Carolina Law Review* vol.68 1990, 659-731.
- Pauly, Thomas H. "Ragged Dick and Little Women: Idealized Homes and Unwanted Marriages." *Journal of Popular Culture*, 13 (Winter 1975).
- Peterson, Agnes L. "What the Wage-Earning Woman Contributes to Family Support." *The Annals* vol.CXLIII, no. 232 May, 1929, 74-93.
- San Gupta, Gunja. "Black and "Dangerous?": African-American Working Poor Perspectives on Juvenile Reform and Welfare in Victorian New York, 1840-1890." *Journal of Negro History*, vol. 86, no.2, 99-131.
- Schreiber, Mike. "Streetcars North of the Harlem River." *Branford Electric Railroad Journal* vol.36, 1992. WCHS Verical File.
- Stanley, Amy Dru. "Beggars Can't be Choosers: Compulsion and Contract in Postbellum America." *Journal of American History* vol.78 No.4, March 1992, 1265-1293.
- Tyack, David and Michael Berkowitz. "The Man Nobody Liked." *American Quarterly*, 29, no. 1, 1977, 31-46.
- Watson, Amey E. "Employer-Employee Relationships in the Home." *The Annals*, May 1929, 49-60.
- Welter, Barbara. "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860." *American Quarterly*, 18 (Summer 1966).
- West, Elliott. "Heathens and Angels: Childhood in the Rocky Mountain Mining Towns." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 14 (2) April 1983, 145-164.
- The Westchester County Historical Bulletin "75th Anniversary Edition," vol. 25 no.4 October 1949.
- Wintien, John G. "The Village of Mount Vernon, New York from 1851 to 1891." Historical Pamphlet no. 2, Mount Vernon Public Library, 1940.
- Zimand, Gertrude Folks. "The Changing Picture of Child Labor." *The Annals* vol. 236 November 1944, 83-91.

Zmora, Nurith. "A Rediscovery of the Asylum: The Hebrew Orphan Asylum Through the Lives of Its First Fifty Orphans." *American Jewish History* vol.77, March 1988, 452-475.

UNPUBLISHED SECONDARY SOURCES

Bellingham, Bruce. "'Little Wanderers': A Socio-historical Study of the Nineteenth Century Origins of Child Fostering and Adoption Reform, based on early records of the New York Children's Aid Society." Ph.D. thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1984.

Black, Mildred G. "The History of the Development of a Foster Care Program in Westchester County." Unpublished Master's thesis, 1942.

Burne, Eda, Assistant Director and Archivist at the Jay Heritage Center. Telephone interview, December 11, 2002.

DiGirolamo, Vincent R. "Crying the News: Children, Street Work and the American Press, 1830s-1920s." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1997.

Graham, Janet and Edward Gray, producers and directors. "The Orphan Trains." PBS Home Videos: The American Experience. Videotape.

McGrath, Bill. "Camp Woods, Ossining, New York: Methodist Camp Ground to Secular Suburb 1831-2001." Unpublished paper, 2002.

Miller, Julie. "Gotham's Waifs: Foundlings in Nineteenth-Century New York City." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The City University of New York, 2003.

"Mindful of Children: A photographic exhibition of Westchester institutions serving children, 1828-1940 presented by the Westchester County Historical Society, 26 September 1993 to 2 January 1994."

Phillips, Harry J. "Social Control or Benevolent Intervention: State Intervention in the Family and the Case of the Children's Village." Unpublished paper, 1992.