

The Filson Historical Society

**Baptist Orphan's Home
Records, 1871-1910**

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Size of Collection:

1 cubic foot

Location Number:

Mss. BJ B222

**Baptist Orphan's Home
Records, 1871-1910**

Scope and Content Note

Correspondence, 1873-1910, to Mary A. Hollingsworth, matron, and others about the placement of orphan children, the occasional return of the same to the home, recommendations for foster parents, descriptions of children, medical treatment, accomplishments, etc. Also, miscellaneous bills and receipts, arranged alphabetically, 1871-1897, from Kentucky businesses concerning payment for food, fuel, repairs, equipment, etc., plus a few listings of donations from various churches and others.

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Historical Note

The Louisville Baptist Orphan's Home (also known as the Home for Helpless Children) was the first Baptist orphanage in the United States and is the oldest continuously operating children's home in the south. The home was founded to address the needs of a community left orphaned and impoverished by the Civil War. The home was established in 1869 in Louisville, Kentucky by the Ladies Aid Society of Walnut Street Baptist Church. George Lorimer, pastor of Walnut Street, was also an instrumental leader in its founding. In 1870, a building was constructed to house the children at First and St. Catherine Streets.

By 1888, over 500 children had been admitted to the orphanage. Roughly half of the children were eventually adopted into families. Although the home initially sought to care for children left destitute or orphaned by the Civil War, its mission in later years has included many other children in need. By its centennial anniversary in 1969, the home had cared for an estimated 8,000 children.

In 1947, the charter was amended and the name of the home changed to Spring Meadows Children's Home. In 1950, the home moved to Middletown, where it became a refuge for abused and troubled children.

References: "Baptists." Encyclopedia of Louisville, edited by John Kleber.
"Orphanages." Encyclopedia of Louisville, edited by John Kleber.

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Folder List

Box 1

- Folder 1: Correspondence, 1873-1882.
- Folder 2: Correspondence, 1883-1889.
- Folder 3: Correspondence, May 1890 – November 1892.
- Folder 4: Correspondence, February 1893 – December 1893.
- Folder 5: Correspondence, January – June 1894.

Box 2

- Folder 6: Correspondence, July – December 1894.
- Folder 7: Correspondence, 1895-1898.
- Folder 8: Correspondence, 1899.
- Folder 9: Correspondence, 1900-1906.
- Folder 10: Correspondence, 1907-1910.
- Folder 11: Correspondence, incomplete. Letters, 1893-1910, with pages missing. Also some undated fragments.
- Folder 12: Correspondence, undated.

Box 3

- Folder 13: Bills and receipts under "A", 1895, 1896.
- Folder 14: Bills and receipts under "B", 1894-1896, 1902.
- Folder 15: Bills and receipts under "C", 1872-1896.
- Folder 16: Bills and receipts under "D", 1876-1897.
- Folder 17: Bills and receipts under "E & F", 1896, 1908.
- Folder 18: Bills and receipts under "G & H", 1877, 1895-1897.
- Folder 19: Bills and receipts under "I", 1895-1897.
- Folder 20: Bills and receipts under "J", 1895.
- Folder 21: Bills and receipts under "K", 1893-1897.
- Folder 22: Bills and receipts under "L", 1871-1897.
- Folder 23: Bills and receipts under "M", 1887, 1895-1897.
- Folder 24: Bills and receipts under "N", 1896-1897.
- Folder 25: Bills and receipts under "O & P", 1882, 1895-1897, 1901.
- Folder 26: Bills and receipts under "Q & R", 1876-1896.
- Folder 27: Bills and receipts under "S", 1893-1897.
- Folder 28: Bills and receipts under "T & U", 1876, 1895-1897.
- Folder 29: Bills and receipts under "V & W", 1887, 1895-1897.
- Folder 30: Bills and receipts under "X-Y-Z", 1895-1897.

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Subject Headings

Hollingswoth, Mary A.
Weller, William LaRue, ca. 1826-1899.
Baptists – Kentucky.
Orphanages – Kentucky – Louisville.
Orphans – Kentucky – Louisville.