



Rhode Island History

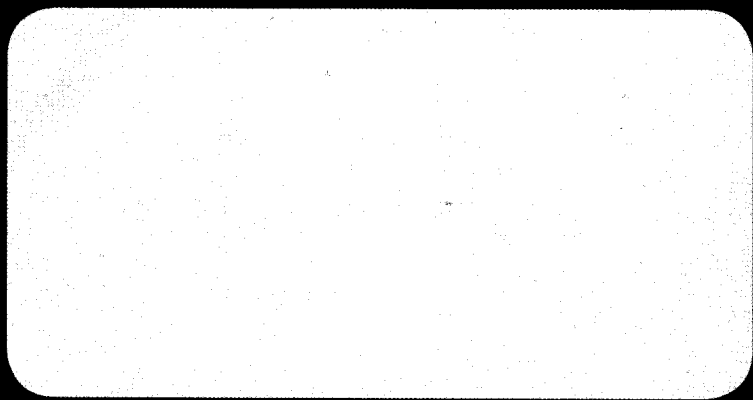
A RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATION

Volume 65, Number 3 Fall 2007



Rhode Island Historical Society
110 Benevolent Street
Providence, Rhode Island, 02906-3152

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Cover

*Rhode Island's State Home and School for
Dependent and Neglected Children, shown in
this early view, was established in Providence in
1885. Rhode Island Images Collection, gc 2218,
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Fall 2007 Volume 65, Number 3

Published by
The Rhode Island Historical Society
110 Benevolent Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02906-3152

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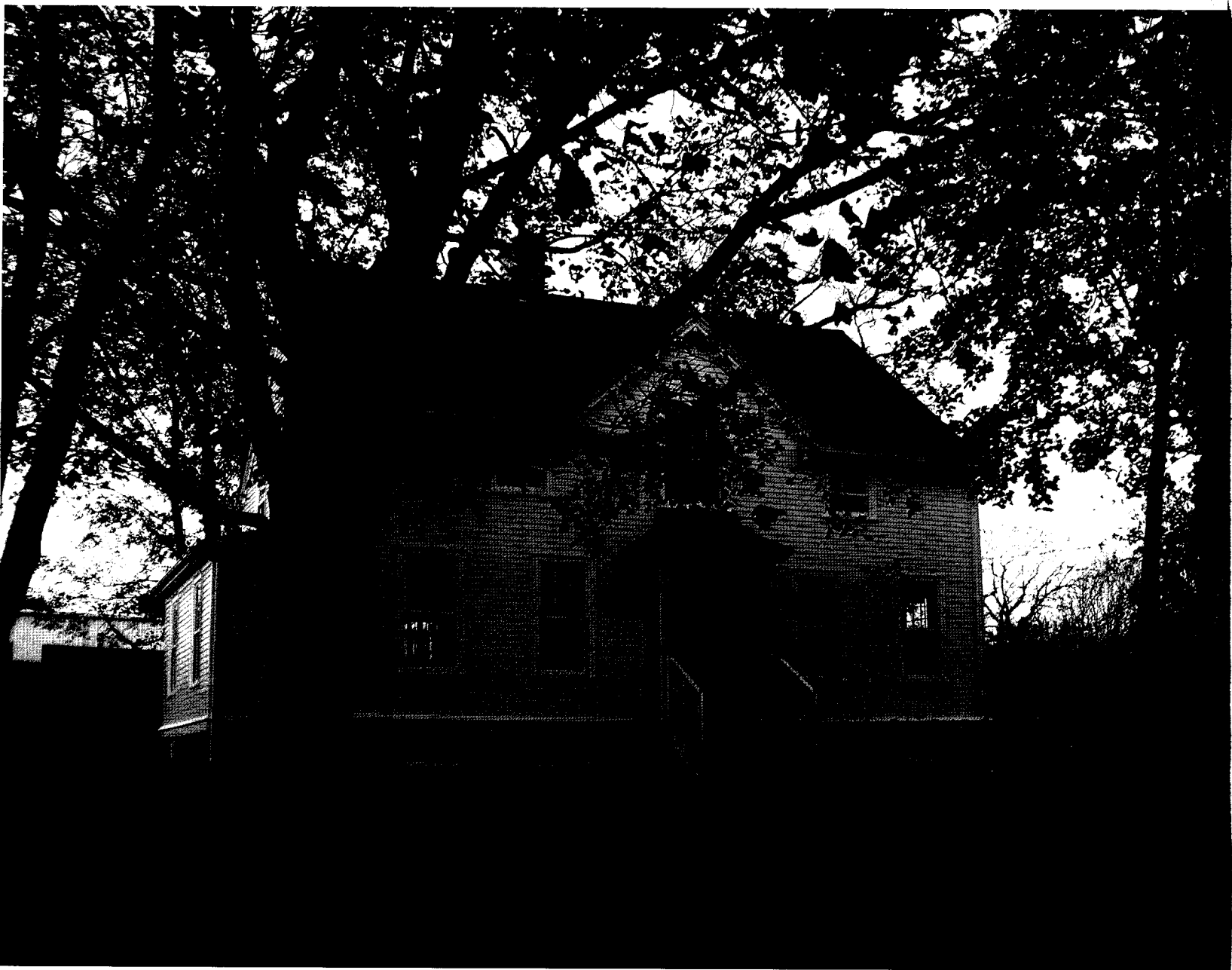
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The renovated Yellow Cottage, on the East Campus of Rhode Island College, is one of the two original buildings that have survived

from Rhode Island's State Home and School for Dependent and Neglected Children. Photograph, 2006, by Sandra Enos.

The Emergence of Child Welfare

at the State Home and School, Rhode Island's Public Orphanage

Beginning in the late eighteenth century and gaining momentum in the second half of the nineteenth century, an array of institutions designed to address the needs of vulnerable children emerged in the United States. These included orphanages, foundling homes, infant asylums, homes for working boys and girls, recreational organizations designed to build character and divert youth from the attractions of the cities, and institutions for delinquent and wayward children. The child-saving era, which can be dated from the years after the Civil War through the early decades of the twentieth century, was a remarkable period of reform on behalf of children, as advocates extended their middle-class ideas of childhood to the broader population. Legislation established the juvenile court, restricted child labor, created mandatory schooling, raised the age of sexual consent, improved child health, reduced infant mortality, and extended the reach of the state into the family as never before. The era also moved child welfare from the voluntary sector, where private agencies oversaw the majority of children under care, to the state sector, where the government gradually assumed responsibility for such functions as child protection and the support of care for children, either in their homes or in state foster care, with tax dollars. Characterizing this period, Walter Trattner notes, "a broad child welfare movement swept through America . . . one unlike anything before or after it."¹

The first orphanage was established in the New World in 1738 with the founding of the Ebenezer and Bethesda orphanages in Georgia.

Ursuline nuns established an orphanage in New Orleans ten years later. In the last decade of the century, orphanages were established in Philadelphia, New York City, and Baltimore. Rhode Island's first orphanage, the Providence Children's Friend Society, was founded in 1834; the Providence Association for the Benefit of Colored Children followed four years later. These institutions relied on private donations to support their work and often found themselves in financial difficulties. Created and managed by women, they were established to save children from difficult and compromised conditions. Except for one institution's designation of "colored indigent children" as its beneficiaries, the founders of Children's Friend and the Association for the Benefit of Colored Children created their orphanages with identical missions: "for the purpose of providing for the support and education of indigent children of both sexes, not otherwise provided for, and who, for want of paternal care, are in a suffering and dangerous condition."² By the late nineteenth century thirteen private institutions had been organized in the state to provide residential care for five hundred children and young adults. In Providence, these included the Catholic Orphan Asylum (founded in 1850), the Receiving Home for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (1882), the Nursery Association for Homeless Infants (1888), the St. Vincent de Paul Infant Asylum (1891), and the Home for Working Boys (1898). Other institutions were the Home for Friendless Children (1866) in Newport, the Home for Destitute Children (1875) in Bristol,

SANDRA L. ENOS

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St. Mary's Orphanage (1879) in East Providence, the Day Nursery and Children's Home (1889) in Woonsocket, and St. Andrew's Industrial School (1893) in Barrington.³

It was in 1885 that the "institutional inclination"—that is, the choice of a congregate, state-managed institution as the answer to the problems presented by poor children—was taken up by Rhode Island with the founding of its own facility, the State Home and School for Dependent and Neglected Children.

The state's history of caring for dependent children reaches back to the colonial era. From Rhode Island's earliest days, the responsibility of caring for the poor fell to individual towns. As mandated by England's Elizabethan poor laws, communities were held responsible for caring for their own needy residents—the lame, the blind, the deaf, the crippled, the feeble-minded, the poor, and the children deprived of support by the abandonment, death, or other misfortune of their parents. With frequently strained finances, in which aid to the needy could constitute as much as 55 percent of a town's budget, municipalities sought to minimize demands by the poor and dependent on their treasuries.⁴

Town governments were especially eager to avoid costs that they believed were more properly the responsibility of other jurisdictions, and thus they accepted as legitimate only those claims for support that came from residents with so-called settlements, or legal residence, in their town. Such settlements were typically the result of one's having been born in a town to a parent who had a legal settlement there. Mere long-term residence in a community did not entitle an individual to settlement status, although those owning real estate and paying taxes to a town could obtain such status, as could those completing indenture contracts. Local authorities relied on indentured servitude to care for children. Under this arrangement poor, abandoned, and

orphaned children were placed with a master or caregiver; and in exchange for the child's labor, the master was responsible for providing the child with the "necessities of life," training in skills important to a household or a farm, and some basic education.⁵ Individuals without legal settlements were "warned out"; that is, they were directed to leave the jurisdiction and return to the communities considered responsible for their care. Failure to abide by that directive could be punishable by a fine and whipping.

With the aim of housing dependents at low cost, the first town almshouse or poor farm in Rhode Island was established in Newport in 1723.⁶ Those who could work on the farm were expected to do so. "Here," according to a historian's description, "the poor, the sick, the blind and the insane were bundled together without attempt at classification of any sort in indiscriminate misery."⁷ By the mid-nineteenth century there were asylums (facilities for housing the poor) on public property in fifteen of the state's thirty-one towns. One of these asylums was the Providence Workhouse, founded in 1828 and operated under a series of regulations that specifically addressed the care of children: "That when any children shall be received into the house there shall be some suitable women appointed to attend them, who are to take care that they be washed, combed and dressed every morning and taught to read and instructed in the Holy Scriptures and . . . when they arrive at a suitable age they shall be bound out [indentured] into good families as the law directs."⁸

Rhode Island's settlement laws could cause particular difficulties for children. Families on the move to search for work or for other reasons would likely have children born in towns different from that of their parents, and of their siblings as well, a situation that could complicate the determination of which town, under settlement rights, was to care for the children should they become dependent, and of what form that care was to take. To minimize costs to a town, children could be separated from their parents and, under

indenture contracts, be bound over to other families until they reached the age of majority. The most vulnerable children were those who had been abandoned or whose parents had died; these children were most likely to be indentured. Indenture exacted valuable labor from children and adolescents while educating and training them in domestic and agricultural arts. In some cases, individuals taking children into indenture were assessed a fee based on the purported value of the children's work. Those caring for infants or very young indentured children whose contributions to the family economy would be minimal were sometimes awarded a compensatory stipend. Forty percent of the children placed under indenture contracts in the latter part of the eighteenth century were under the age of six.⁹

In dealing with the poor and other dependent persons, town overseers of the poor reviewed appeals for aid, made recommendations to the town fathers, and managed workhouses and other forms of relief. Overseers could warn out those without settlements, or they could confine the poor in workhouses, a provision known as indoor relief. Another form of poor relief was "vending," or consigning the poor to those who would offer to support them at the least expense to the town; for some towns, this was the least expensive way to care for the needy. Still another method was outdoor relief, in which funds were granted directly to poor individuals, allowing them to remain in their homes rather than being placed in a workhouse or on a poor farm; this kind of relief was frequently criticized on the grounds that it made the poor dependent on the town treasury and robbed them of the incentive to be self-supporting.

In 1850 the General Assembly appointed Thomas Robinson Hazard, a manufacturer of woolen goods and social reformer, to study the condition of the "pauper poor and insane persons" in Rhode Island. Hazard dispatched surveys to overseers of the poor throughout the state, asking for detailed information about how they provided care for the needy, and he visited all of the state's almshouses,

This Indenture witnesseth that Richard Corey of one town in the County of Washington and State of Providence Labourer doth place and bind his Daughter Hannah Core Elizabeth Hazard of the Town County and State aforesaid Thomas Hazard of the Town County and State aforesaid to learn the art trade or Mystery of Houswifery to serve unto shall arrive to the age of Eighteen years the being born Eighteenth day of the eighth month in the year one seven Hundred and Eighty one and will conclude and Ex the Eighteenth day of the Month Month one thousand Hundred and Ninety nine and during all which Term the said Apprentice her Mistress shall faithfully serve all not absent herself from her said Mistress service we leave but in all respects and at all times during said term behave herself as a good and faithful Apprentice ought. The said Elizabeth Hazard doth hereby promise and engage-ment and learn the said Apprentice the Art and Mystery of wifery and to provide for said Apprentice fortable Cloath Drink Whopping and Lodging during said Term and to be Apprentice to read and at the end and Expiration of said Term to discharge said Apprentice and give unto her one new wearing Apparel.

In witness whereof the parties to these presents have interchangeably set their hands and seals in so Washington aforesaid this Twenty eighth day of the Month of August 1794 and Eighteenth year of the Independence of the United States

Richard Corey
Elizabeth Hazard
Thomas Hazard

Richard + Corey
witness

except for the one on Block Island, in the course of his investigation. Hazard discovered that the treatment of the poor and dependent varied widely among the municipalities. For example, he found the residents of Coventry's poor farm living in "the most deplorable condition imaginable"; on the other hand, he reported that East Greenwich cared for its poor in a "substantial and commodious

With this agreement, drawn up in 1794, Richard Corey indentured his daughter Hannah to Elizabeth Hazard "to learn the art trade or mystery of houswifery," the agreement to remain in effect until Hannah reached her eighteenth birthday. MSS 483, Sg3, Thomas Hazard Papers, Rhode Island Historical Society; RHIS Collection (RHIS X17 157).

building, well situated on the road; . . . well furnished and apparently well conducted."¹⁰ His inventory of almshouse inmates included persons "insane and confined to grated room," "the idiotic," those suffering from "old age and loss of property," the intemperate, those with palsy, those confined to bed, "those insane, perfectly harmless, [who] will not harm an insect," an orphan, a "lame [man], father of 21 children," and others. Of the just under four hundred inmates he inventoried, 25 percent were children, most of whom were attending community schools.

Hazard praised those towns that employed both almshouses and outdoor relief in caring for their poor and dependent. This use of multiple approaches for public welfare, he found, allowed municipalities the ability to separate populations according to their needs and conditions (e.g., the able poor, the lame, the insane, the diseased), an ability that he considered the most important element in a system providing such welfare.

Along with its detailed descriptions of the care supplied to the poor and dependent, Hazard's widely circulated report to the General Assembly included recommendations for improving that care. Some of his recommendations—for example, prohibiting cruel punishments in asylums and assigning the insane to the state hospital—were made into law. However, his recommendation that the state oversee the operations of local almshouses was not acted on. Hazard's report took no special note of children and made no recommendations for their treatment.

One of the most significant outcomes of the Hazard report was that it set in motion the creation of the Board of State Charities and Corrections (BOSCC) in 1869, signaling a movement from local responsibility for social welfare to the state's gradual assumption of that responsibility. "The duties of the Secretary of your Board have never been defined," wrote

board secretary Edwin Snow in his first report. ". . . The establishment of the Board of State Charities and Corrections, and its duties, its responsibilities and its objects, are all novel in the State of Rhode Island, though destined to exert a most important influence upon the management of all our reformatory, penal, and charitable institutions."¹¹ Other states had already established similar bodies to oversee their public charities; Massachusetts, which had opened the first state-run almshouse in 1853, had established the nation's first State Board of Charities in 1863.¹²

The founding of Rhode Island's Board of State Charities and Corrections marked the beginning of an ambitious building program. The State Workhouse, the BOSCC's first project, was opened in July 1869. Between 1869 and 1909 the board created institutions that housed the insane, the feeble-minded, juvenile delinquents, male and female prisoners, those awaiting trial, those assigned to the workhouse and state poor farm, neglected and destitute children, deaf children, veterans of the Civil War, and consumptives.¹³ Once established, these institutions grew rapidly.¹⁴ Forty years after the founding of the BOSCC, the population housed in state institutions—most of them located at the Howard Farm in Cranston—was larger than the population of twelve of Rhode Island's municipalities.¹⁵ The Howard complex was created when the state purchased the Stukeley Westcott and the William Howard farms at the site in 1869. The complex not only housed many of the state's dependents; it also served as a place of productive labor. Prison labor in fact proved profitable for most state penitentiaries in the nation; while convict labor was embraced for its rehabilitative effect, correctional authorities were able to extract valuable work from the prison population.¹⁶

With the population of the state institutions at Howard growing and the state assuming leadership in examining the conditions of the poor, attention was increasingly focused on children. A BOSCC report examining the

treatment of paupers and the insane expressed concern about the mixing of children with pauper adults: "It is a common dictate both of common sense and of humanity, that the vicious should not be placed where the virtuous must be constantly associated with them . . . and children should be kept from mingling familiarly with all varieties of character."¹⁷

In 1874 Rhode Island established the State Almshouse at the Howard Farm by converting a wooden building formerly used as a workhouse to a new purpose, to house paupers without legal settlement in any town. "The old workhouse was remodeled to a considerable extent, and has been found to answer the purpose required as well as could be expected," said the BOSCC's report that year. "It is, however, at best, but an old and inconvenient building, and must be considered only as a temporary abode for the inmates of the Almshouse, until the State shall deem it proper to furnish them with a more appropriate home." Only a limited amount of work could be expected from the inmates, the board found: "Those of the men who are able to do light work, have been employed preparing the vegetables in the cook-house, whitewashing, &c., and in the summer will work in the garden; but, judging from the experience of the past few months, and the feeble condition of those here now, it is not thought that much aid can be expected from them."¹⁸ Yet with the facility relieving localities of frequent and lengthy negotiations to determine which town was responsible for the care of dependents, the population of the almshouse grew steadily. At the end of its first month of operation the almshouse held 58 adults and 23 children; in 1888, to accommodate the unexpectedly large flow of poor and dependent persons, the BOSCC would construct a new stone State Almshouse, providing accommodations for 300 adults and 60 children, to replace the wooden one it had established fourteen years earlier.¹⁹

This growth occurred despite arguments advanced by those who believed that there were more efficient and more humane ways for towns to deal with their needy residents. In



1873 George Wightman, the well-respected superintendent of the BOSCC, had urged that the towns provide cash payments to at least some of the needy rather than sending them to the almshouse. "No frugal and industrious widow, with a family of children, should be compelled to go to an Alms House when the small sum of one or two dollars per

The first State Almshouse at the Howard Farm (top) was opened in 1874. In 1888 the Board of State Charities and Corrections replaced it with a new almshouse (below), which included the specially designed children's wing at the building's right-hand side in this photograph. Rhode Island Images Collection, gc 2225 and gc 2227, Providence Public Library.

week, a little fuel, and a little assistance from friends will carry them safe through winter," said Wightman.²⁰ But the state had virtually no power to enforce public policy in this area, and the towns continued freely sending their poor, including children, to the State Almshouse. During its first six years there were 392 children committed to the institution; 84 were born and 44 died there, and 334 were discharged. A small number of children were bound out to such private institutions as the Children's Friend Society and the Catholic Orphan Asylum, and others were boarded out to private families.²¹

The BOSCC voiced its concerns about the mixing of adults and children at the almshouse as early as 1875. Its sentiments were widely shared by reformers in a national movement to remove children from almshouses and similar institutions.²² Echoing the concerns of reformers, the board feared that children who remained with their pauper parents in such institutions would be likely to become paupers themselves, a situation that would lead to the development and growth of a permanent pauper class. "What proportion of the whole number of children [at the State Almshouse] are from families in the habitual receipt of public or private assistance, the Superintendent of State Charities is unable to ascertain with precision, as they come to him from all parts of the state," said the board's 1876 report. "He is of the opinion, however, that more than one-half, perhaps three-fourths, of them belong to the permanently dependent class. Pauperism, like vice and crime, with which it is so often associated, tends to run in families. The children of paupers, if left to their surroundings, rarely rise above the condition of their parents. . . . Nothing is more unfounded than the common idea that the inmates of our poorhouses, in general are the victims of unavoidable misfortune."²³

Expressing its belief that the inclination to poverty could be eliminated through the provision of a proper environment for children in pauper families, in the same report the board

strongly supported the idea of separating such children from their parents, letting the parents suffer the loss of their children as "the natural consequences of idleness and vice."²⁴ Because children could not be blamed for their family's poverty, as the board emphasized in its 1884 report, an effort should be made to lift them out of their present condition, educate them, and give them a chance to become respectable members of society.²⁵ The BOSCC first expressed its concern about children living in the State Almshouse in a report presented to the General Assembly in 1875, and in a series of reports it recommended that separate quarters be provided for children somewhere on the almshouse grounds. In 1880 some of the children were moved into the home of the almshouse chaplain, a measure that the board condemned as inadequate in its annual report of 1884, at a time when the almshouse population was continuing to expand and to experience a growing incidence of illness and disease: "The condition of the children who cannot be so disposed of [i.e., safely accommodated on the almshouse grounds or placed out of the institution], of whom there are always a considerable number at the Almshouse, is what calls most loudly for action. . . . It is terribly wrong to place these little waifs among such companions as they have been compelled to associate with—the girls in the room with women, many of them dissolute; the boys separated from their mothers, and turned in amongst the male inmates, where they soon come to know what they had not already learned of filthiness and wickedness."²⁶

Along with this criticism, the board's 1884 report did note a positive development in the care of children at the almshouse: "During the past year . . . one of the smaller buildings in the Almshouse yard was enlarged and remodeled, at no great expense, the labor having been mostly done by Workhouse men, for the separate accommodation of children sufficiently old to be taken from the nursery."²⁷ And, on an especially optimistic note, the board declared itself "well pleased to carry

out the instructions of your honorable body [the General Assembly] by transferring at the earliest moment many of these children to the State Home and School for Children. . . . [The board's members] have much desired to see a school of the kind established, having long believed that it is wrong to compel children that are brought to the Almshouse to associate with adult paupers."²⁸

Rhode Island was one of many states where campaigns were mounted to remove children from almshouses. By 1900 twelve states had passed legislation prohibiting the placement of children on poor farms or in almshouses and directed that they be sent to live with families or in suitable institutions such as infant asylums, orphanages, or children's homes (although in some jurisdictions placement in almshouses or on poor farms was permitted for children who were very young or were untrained—that is, lacking in skills that would be useful in a household or on a farm.²⁹ Removing children from almshouses raised questions about their disposition: Where should they go and what should be done with them? Should they be indentured and placed in families? Should they be sent to rural families eager for the farm labor that children could provide? Should they be placed in state-run facilities, separate from adults? Should they be entrusted to institutions run by private agencies?

In the mid- to late 1800s, states were experimenting with four different approaches to child welfare.³⁰ These included (1) the county system, (2) the boarding-out system, (3) the subsidy, or contracting-out, system, and (4) the state school.

The first approach featured a network of tax-supported institutional homes within the jurisdiction of counties, homes under the direction of trustees, separate and apart from the oversight of the supervisors of the poor. Ohio created a system along these lines in 1866, and Connecticut adopted this approach in 1884. The county system was more likely

to bring more children into care and relied very little on placing them in family homes through indenture. Per capita, twice as many children were state charges in institutions in Connecticut than in Rhode Island.³¹ County-based government has never been very strong in Rhode Island, and there is no evidence that state officials considered this alternative in caring for needy children.

The second approach focused on boarding-out and placing-out. Under this system children were temporarily boarded with private families until permanent homes (where no state supporting funds were required) could be found for them. This system—adopted by Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey—relied on private families to care for dependent children, with placements either arranged by the state or delegated to private agencies. In 1864 Massachusetts had established a residential state institution, which it called a Primary School for Dependent Children, at a facility that had been serving as a state almshouse in the town of Monson. With an Office of Visiting Agent assigned responsibility for supervising children who were placed in private homes from almshouses, juvenile reformatories, and the school, a series of laws reduced the school's population, and the Monson school was closed by the state in 1895.³² Massachusetts was the first state to rely entirely on foster placements to care for its public wards. Pennsylvania relied on the Children's Aid Society, a private organization, to arrange placements and to visit children in family-based care and in private institutions.³³

The third approach, the subsidy system, was typified by the state of New York. Under this system the state provided cash payments to institutions based on the number of children in their care, thus encouraging the managers of these institutions to admit children and maintain them for extended periods of time. This system placed large numbers of children in institutional settings in which resident populations numbered in the hundreds and daily life was regimented and uniform.³⁴ By 1890

one of every thirty-five children in New York City was living in an orphanage.³⁵ This approach became the object of severe criticism by welfare professionals and child advocates on the grounds that it created incentives for the development of very large congregate institutions, which were increasingly believed to damage children by imposing highly structured and routinized conditions. Homer Folks, a well-regarded leader in the emerging field of social work, argued that this system was among the worst devised because of the large size of the institutions it created, the length of time that children remained there, and the temptation for parents to relieve themselves of the responsibility of supporting their children by placing them in such institutions, where they would be fed, clothed, and educated.³⁶

The fourth approach to deal with the growing population of dependent children—and the one eventually adopted by Rhode Island—was the state school. The first institution of this type was established at Coldwater, Michigan, in 1874. Under this system dependent and neglected children could be taken from their parents, as well as from almshouses and poor farms, declared wards of the state by a probate court, and placed in the state school. Enabling legislation in Michigan broadly defined the population to be served as children under the age of fourteen who could be educated. The aim of this system was to gather wards at a central location—the residential school—and then place them from there in family homes as quickly as possible. Like that of Massachusetts, Michigan's plan incorporated a visiting agent who was responsible for finding homes for children and for overseeing the children in the homes found for them. Eleven states adopted the state school system, some with an especially strong emphasis on boarding- or placing-out children from the schools. Families were given funds to support their care of children in some of these systems; in others, children were placed under indenture agreements.³⁷

By removing children from almshouses, housing them at a state home, and placing them out of a state school and into the community as

soon as practicable, the Michigan system drew strong praise from child welfare reformers. One of these, Homer Folks, who served as the head of the New York State Charities Aid Association, observed in 1902 that “[t]he amounts spent by the states of Michigan and Minnesota for the care of destitute children seem almost ridiculously small when compared with the amounts expended in other states; yet there is every reason for believing that the needs of the destitute and neglected children are nowhere more adequately met than in those states.”³⁸

Proponents of state schools faced the concerns of some political leaders that the proliferation of such facilities made it easy and attractive for parents to rid themselves of their responsibility to care for children, especially when their children were young. Critics of privately run children's homes and state facilities contended that neglectful parents would leave young children at a home, only to reclaim them when their labor became useful on the farm, on the street (as newsboys or in similar occupations), or in the factory. However, defenders of such child care pointed out that parents leaving their children at these facilities had to transfer legal guardianship to the state, and that this was something most parents were very loath to do.

The choice of the state-school model for Rhode Island was the result of long deliberations about the school's location, its management and control, and the sort of children to be served there. The state's Board of Women Visitors to the Penal and Correctional Institutions of the State (BWV)—created by the General Assembly in 1870—called for the establishment of a state home and school as early as 1876.³⁹ One strong advocate of the Michigan model was social reformer and women's suffragist Elizabeth Buffum Chace, who voiced her support for a state school both individually and as a member of the BWV.⁴⁰ “[O]ur experience in all these institutions,” she wrote in 1880, “confirms and deepens our conviction, that it is the duty of the State to provide, as speedily as possible, an

educational institution for the prevention of pauperism and crime. To this school, children now consigned to the Almshouse, and other children deprived of the guardianship of their parents, should be sent, not as offenders, but as wards, to be trained in the habits of honest, self-supporting industry. . . . [W]e urge, that it shall be wholly under the management of a board of trustees having no connection with any penal institution, which shall be composed of men and women, who shall be appointed as guardians of children to be sent there."⁴¹

The facility for which Chace and the board were appealing would focus on needy children, and not—as some others in the state were proposing—on truants, runaways, and other types of delinquent children. In an 1877 letter to the *Providence Journal*, Chace offered some details about what she believed should be provided for children in need of the state's understanding care: "Let us build a home for such children, and let this home be so situated and so managed that it shall entirely remove its inmates from all degrading and disreputable circumstances; and let us adopt therein every possible method to train them into good citizenship. . . . Life in it may be as much as possible like family life. There should be a large central building . . . a circle of cottages around the central house, all facing toward it, with plenty of space between them for free circulation of air. . . . In each cottage I would place a good woman and a certain number of children: and this should be their home."⁴²

With support from the Board of Visitors and armed with statistical information that she had collected on seventy-five children in the State Almshouse and local almshouses, along with research on children in the state's Juvenile Reformatory and those living in neglectful families, in 1879 Chace presented a memorial to the General Assembly, urging the creation of a state school. She noted that the Juvenile Reformatory was increasingly populated with children under the age of fourteen who were inappropriately assigned to that penal institution. Needy children were also living in

situations "where drunken fathers and mothers abuse, and starve, and train to vice, the little ones they have brought into the world." She quoted from an annual report of Michigan's Coldwater School in her presentation: "It is a source of gratification that the success of this institution still continues to attract the attention of social scientists, legislators, in the several states of this country and also in Europe. The Michigan system of state support for dependent children, in a school, no taint of crime attaching to any inmate by reason of the manner of his admission, is so original in its plan, that its career has been watched with unusual interest. And now that it has been demonstrated that all the most desirable results are reached here, at less expense than bare support is had in the average county poorhouse, the interest has become greater among legislators. . . . It is believed that the best attainable results are yet to be secured for these children of the poor."⁴³

The Board of Women Visitors recommended that children inappropriately placed at the Juvenile Reformatory be sent to the school it envisioned for the state's needy children. The BWV also urged special protection for young girls, many of whom were dependent on their own resources for support. This concern paralleled widespread anxieties about the involvement of young girls in prostitution. "There is another class not yet under the care of the City or the State," declared the BWV, "who are as needy as any of the others, of the protection of such an institution. And that is the very young girls, able to be self-supporting, innocent of crime, but whom poverty, consequent upon the death, intemperance or misfortune of their parents, has left homeless and unprotected in the City."⁴⁴

There were, however, competing calls for another kind of institution for children, one that would focus on those who were truant. In 1877 Governor Seth Padleford appointed a Joint Special Committee on the Subject of Establishing a State Industrial School and charged it with assessing the feasibility and wisdom of establishing such a school for

Unlike the accommodations at many of the large congregate institutions of the time, these two small SH&S cottages, each housing about twenty boys, were designed to provide a homelike atmosphere for their residents. Photograph from the annual report of the SH&S Board of Control, 1897, p. 5; courtesy of Rhode Island State Archives.

truant and illiterate children.⁴⁵ Having long advocated the development of an institution where children not attending school would be housed and trained, in its 1876 annual report the State Board of Education expressed its belief that at the proposed institution

children would be rescued from what it called "contaminating influences by the willfulness, cupidity, or imbecile neglect of their parents or proper guardians, and . . . be placed and receive such mental and physical discipline as shall be formative of character rather than reformative."⁴⁶

In contention was the design and mission of the state school. Chace was a strong advocate of the Michigan model; others, such as the commissioner of public education, supported an institution for the forcible detention and education of truant children.⁴⁷ The Providence Journal summarized the situation in 1878: "It all comes down to what we have so often said: There is no specific plan proposed by anybody save Mrs. Chace; the promoters of the industrial school have varying theories, none of which are founded upon any statistics, or any definite principle. There is simply a groping after something which is either incomprehensible or which its advocates are incapable of explaining. Mrs. Chace has an intelligent and worthy conception; if it is not carried out now, some day, and in some way, it may be."⁴⁸

Providence Children's Friend, a private agency that had established a well-respected home for destitute children in 1835, expressed concerns about a state-supported institution for children in its 1881 annual report. The sentiment reflected a broader national concern that children were harmed when they were housed in the kind of large congregate facilities that were created after the Civil War. "These become depositories for children for whom there seems to be no other place," said the report, "but in them they lose their individuality, and become mere machines. What one does, all do. Sleeping, eating, working, praying cannot be spontaneous, because all must be done by the rule. When these children are removed elsewhere they are bewildered, having no mental strength. For these and other waifs, the pressing need is a home, where they will be tenderly cared for, and grow up in family order."⁴⁹



This SH&S cottage housed girls, who made up about a third of the State Home's population. Photograph from the annual report of the SH&S Board of Control, 1897, p. 9; courtesy of Rhode Island State Archives.



The General Assembly reached a consensus about the location and management of the State Home and School before it reached an agreement on its mission. The BWV argued that the institution should be located elsewhere than at the Howard complex, where children could be exposed to the contaminating influences of pauper parents, the depraved, the intemperate, and the insane housed there. The General Assembly eventually supported this argument; the new facility would be built in what is now known as the Mount Pleasant section of Providence.⁵⁰ To further preserve the State Home from the stigma of institutionalization, its management was to be assigned not to the Board of Charities and Corrections but rather to the State Board of Education, as was done with the Sockanosset School for delinquent boys and the Oaklawn School for delinquent girls, the successors to the Juvenile Reformatory. This decision was in accord with the expressed wishes of the Women Visitors, although the final version of the law establishing the State Home assigned management oversight to a board of men, and not, as the BWV had wanted, to a board composed of both men and women.

After years of steady agitation by the Women's Board of Visitors and other proponents, including the BOSCC, in 1884 the General Assembly voted to establish the State Home and School for Dependent and Neglected Children (SH&S). The prescribed plan of operations was similar to that of the successful Michigan plan, but without specific provisions for placing out children in family homes, and without regard for developments in Massachusetts, where the state was moving away from the institutional answer to child welfare and into community-based care.

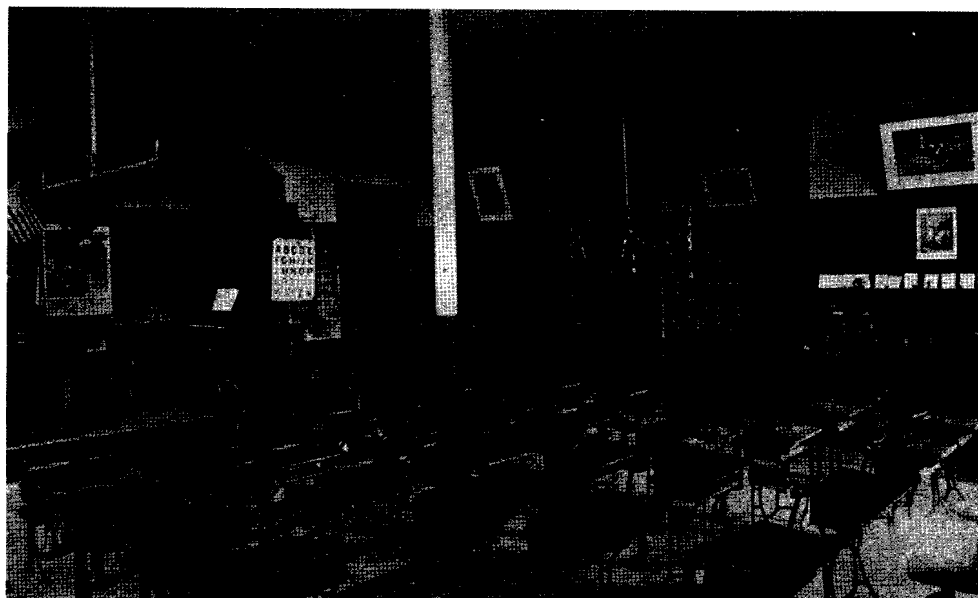
The controversy over which children should be served by the State Home was finally settled. Passed on 29 April 1884, legislation identified who would manage the State Home and which children would be accepted there: "The state Board of Education shall

constitute the board of control for dependent and neglected children. They shall receive, in accordance with rules by them established, such children as may be declared vagrant, neglected, and dependent on the public for support . . . who are over three and under

This State Home building had three schoolrooms and, on the second floor, an auditorium. Photograph from the annual report of the SH&S Board of Control, 1897, cover; courtesy of Rhode Island State Archives.



The State Home used this schoolroom for its smallest children. Photograph from the annual report of the SH&S Board of Control, 1902, p. 10; courtesy of Rhode Island State Archives.

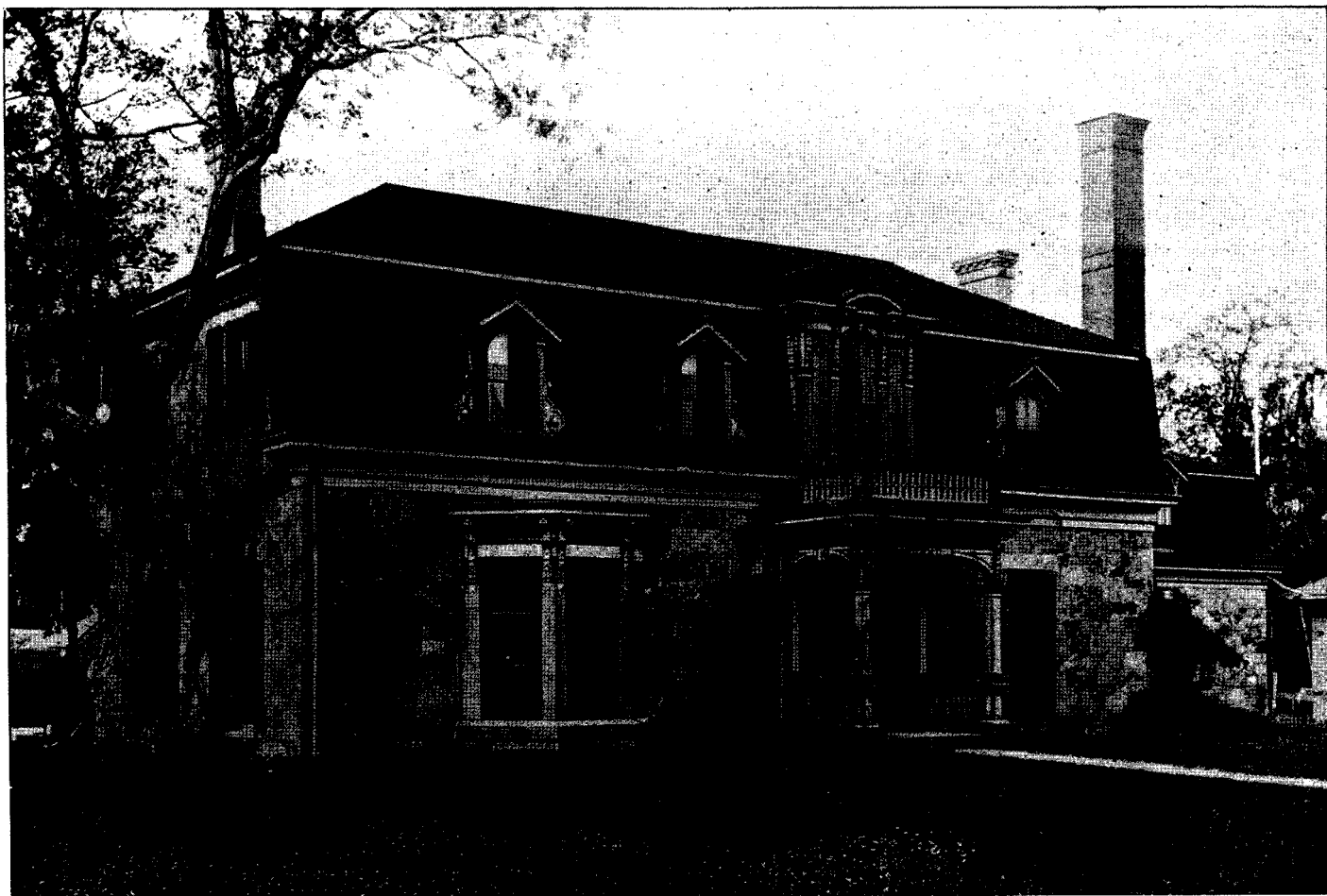


fourteen years of age, and who are in suitable condition of mind and body to be instructed; for exceptional reasons, children under three years may be received, should the board deem it advisable. . . . All children admitted shall remain until they are sixteen years of age, unless otherwise ordered by the board."⁵¹ The institution was to provide "such influences as will lead toward an honest, intelligent and self-supporting manhood and womanhood," and "if at any time in the discretion of the board, this object can be better attained by placing a child in a good family, they shall have the power to do so, on condition that its education shall be provided by such family in the public school of the town and city where they may reside"⁵² Children could also be returned to the State Home if the board believed that the children placed in these homes were not receiving "kind and proper treatment and a fair elementary education."⁵³

Amendments to this act allowed the Home's managers to return to the committing authorities any child deemed untrainable or unfit for the SH&S. Records that were maintained at the State Home and School show that children were returned to town and state overseers because of unruliness, repeated escapes from the Home, unapproved absences from homes in which they were eventually placed, misbehavior, and other problems.⁵⁴

It rested with overseers of the poor and with the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children to bring children living in almshouses, dependent on public support, or "found to be in a state of vagrancy, want, or suffering, or abandoned by their parents or guardians, or not having any home or settled abode," before the probate courts, where they could be declared wards of the state and sent to the State Home.⁵⁵ These courts were authorized to make investigations, summon

This stone building, one of the structures on the former Chapin Estate, was used by the SH&S as its superintendent's house and for receiving new arrivals at the Home. Photograph from the annual report of the SH&S Board of Control, 1902, cover; courtesy of Rhode Island State Archives.



witnesses, and gather information regarding such cases. If a child was deemed in need of care, the overseers of the poor were responsible for bringing that child to the SH&S, where they would present commitment papers to the superintendent.

Although the Board of Education was authorized to place children in good families if doing so would “better attain” the institution’s objective, and there were stipulations regarding these placements, such as the requirement that the families educate such children in a public school, there was little enforcement of these directives and little supervision of the children in these placements. The board was to act as the legal guardian of the children in these cases, “following such children as may be placed in families, with watchful care, and of taking them back to their immediate supervision if at any time they fail to receive kind and proper treatment and a fair elementary education.”⁵⁶ But no mechanism was established to carry out this purpose; no official was named to monitor children placed in the community, nor were funds provided to track how these children were faring.

In 1887 the General Assembly passed an act allowing the binding out of children at the State Home, as well as at other state institutions and private agencies, to “suitable homes as a servant for the privileges of a home.”⁵⁷ These institutions were empowered to cancel an agreement with a family to whom a child was indentured if the arrangement was found unsatisfactory. The act also extended the authority of the State Home to move children into a variety of placements in Rhode Island or in other New England states.

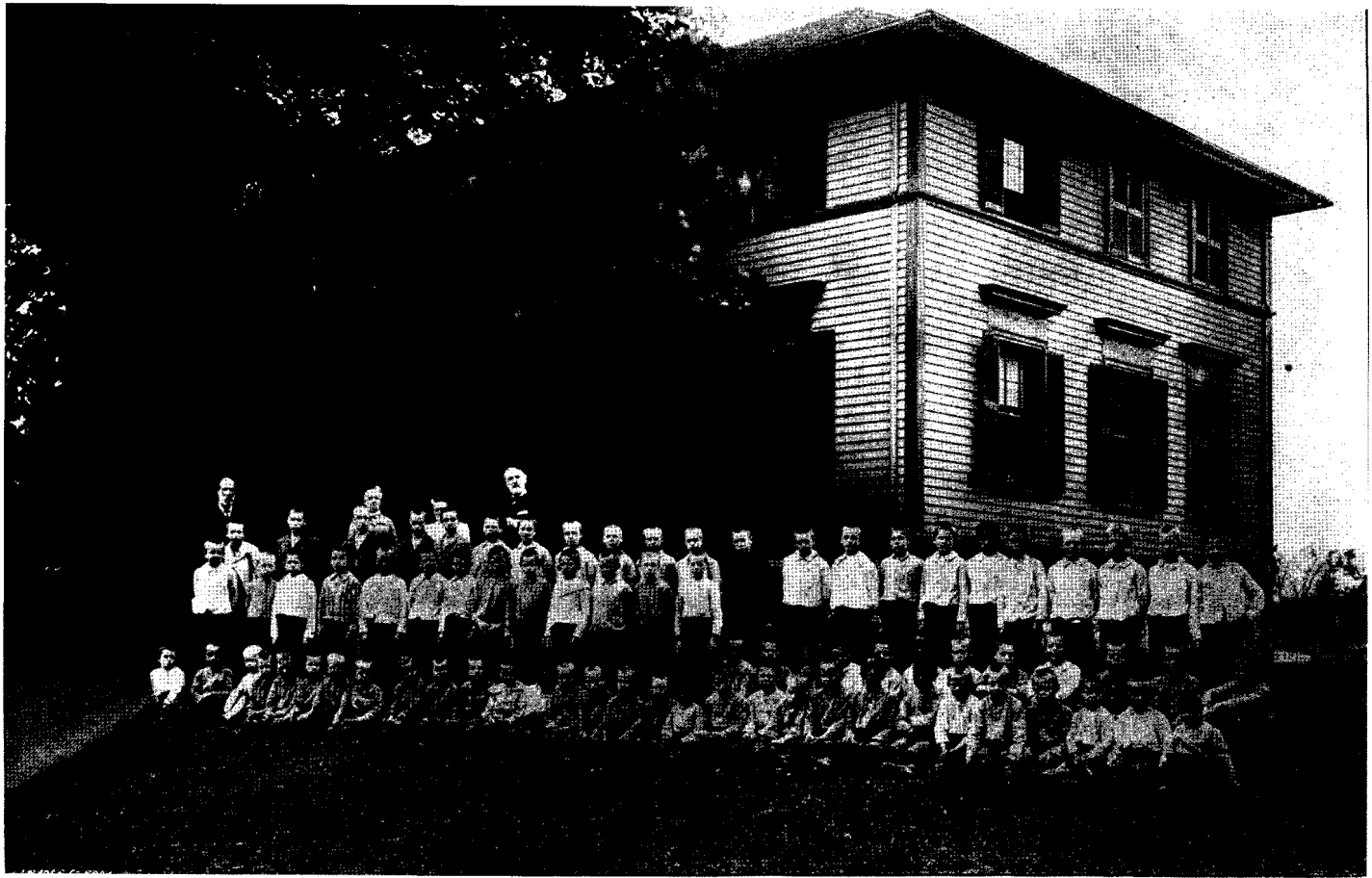
The State Home received its first residents—two brothers, ages seven and eleven, Irish American and Protestant—on 25 April 1885. The whereabouts of their father was unknown; their mother was a resident of the State Asylum for the Incurable Insane.

In 1888 the older brother went to live with a teacher of drawing in the Providence schools who resided in Massachusetts. In 1892 it was learned that the boy was working for a Mr. Parker in Cranston. His younger brother, born “utterly unable to walk,” was sent to Rhode Island Hospital in 1887; he was much improved when he returned to the Home five months later, but the record noted that it was “ever doubtful that he will be entirely well.” In 1891 the boy was placed with the Dickenson family of Northfield, Massachusetts, and there is no further record of him in the Home’s files.⁵⁸

These cases are typical of the children admitted to the Home in the first decade of its operation. Admission records allow some idea of the Home’s population during that time. Fewer than 10 percent of the children admitted were true orphans, both of whose parents had died; a more sizable number, 25 percent, were so-called half orphans; but the majority had surviving parents whose whereabouts were unknown, who were confined in institutions, or who were unable to care for them. Boys outnumbered girls, 3 to 2. Children ranged from two to sixteen years of age, with most between six and ten. Fifty percent of those admitted had siblings—as many as three—with them at the Home. Most of the children were Protestant; one in five was Catholic.⁵⁹

The population at the SH&S grew from 27 children at the end of its first year of operation to 150 at the end of 1900. The population exceeded the Home’s planned capacity early in its history; and with funding from the state, the State Board of Education, acting as the Board of Control, undertook construction of additional cottages, a chapel, a school, and other facilities to meet the demand.⁶⁰ Yet the experience of the SH&S was similar to that of the State Almshouse, the Sockanosset School for Boys, the Oaklawn School for Girls, and other institutions where the rapid influx of populations was seldom matched by state support of buildings, staffing, and operations.

The SH&S faced challenges of inadequate funding in its early years. Annual reports show



With the population of the State Home increasing, this double cottage for boys was constructed in 1902. Report of the Superintendent to the SH&S Board of Control, 1903, p. 12; courtesy of Rhode Island State Archives.

repeated requests for additions to the physical plant and to the staff. The Board of Visitors reported in 1887 that adequate funds had not been forthcoming for the SH&S: "We would say in regard to our State School, let it go on in its work of growth . . . and may it be extended and elevated in the same way as its prototype in Michigan. . . . Each succeeding legislature [in Michigan] made appropriations to extend the work, and cottages from time to time have been added. . . . Our own state has made a fair commencement, and can well afford to carefully and thoughtfully devote much time and some money to perfect the system. . . . In conclusion, we would say that our State is engaged in a noble work, as it is extending its influence in reaching out its hand in child saving work. The three P's: press, pulpit and politicians should serve as a quickening power to make the project successful."⁶¹

One of the aims of the SH&S was to remove children from the State Almshouse. In

1888 the state replaced the older facility with what it considered a model almshouse, one with separate quarters for men, women, and children, and it may therefore be conjectured that the children sent to the State Home were thought to be the most likely to benefit from the school's education and training, while those that remained at the almshouse were considered too young, untrainable, or otherwise unsuited for what the SH&S was designed to provide.⁶²

The issue of placing children in private homes became increasingly important at the State Home as its population grew and as managers and leaders in the evolving child welfare field became concerned about the harmful effects suffered by children in long-term institutional care. Economic and humanitarian arguments were advanced for removing children from congregate institutions as quickly as possible; but some leaders in the field worried that an effort to place children out of institutions as

swiftly as possible would be ill-advised, since it could mean that children might be placed with families willing to take them solely for the value of their labor.⁶³ Moreover, some argued that children of the poor were not prepared for life in families, and that those who were placed in private homes before they had been sufficiently trained in good habits and discipline in institutions would be quickly and repeatedly reinstitutionalized. There was apparently some merit in these arguments, for 40 percent of the children placed with families were returned to the SH&S during its first ten years of operation.⁶⁴

The location of suitable homes for institutionalized children received little attention at the SH&S at first, and for many years no funds were specifically allocated by the state to support that purpose. The placement of children was typically driven not by the state's interest in finding homes well matched to the needs of children but by farmers' and other individuals' need for labor, and children were sometimes recruited under indenture contracts. Representatives from Shaker colonies also visited the State Home in search of children to populate their communities. Children were placed in homes throughout the New England states, some as far away as Maine and New Hampshire.⁶⁵

In 1893 the Home's Board of Control reported on the difficulty of finding appropriate situations for children: "A printed circular sent to influential people throughout the State, making known the wish of the Board to locate children in private homes, on the conditions of our agreement, has created a new interest in the Home and led to good results. We aim to do more. It is not our choice to congregate too many children in institution life. . . . It is a constant anxiety to find the reliable *parental* [italics in original] interest in these children. Because they are indigent is no reason they should not have a fair chance, with the best influences."⁶⁶ The board expressed its concern again in 1901: "Almost invariably too much is expected and demanded of indentured

children. They are expected to have about every virtue known to an intelligent being, and they are seldom put on the same plane of training and consideration as one's own kin."⁶⁷

In searching for appropriate placements for children from the State Home, the Board of Control informed the public that it was seeking families, not employers, for children. "We do not wish our children to be raised in idleness," said the board, "but we want them placed in good homes, where they will receive a mother's love and a father's kind care, and be taught in the habits of industry and self-reliance. Many people have a desire to secure a child to do the work of a man or a woman, and thereby save the expense of a hired servant. . . . When you have decided to take a child, visit the Home, that you may select for yourself the child you wish, but do not expect to take it with you then. . . . Mistakes are made. But it is the Board's intention to send a child into a home that is mutually suitable considering intelligence, disposition, modes of living, environments, personal habits, appearance, and all conditions which will tend to affect the future welfare of the child."⁶⁸

But despite annual appeals by the State Home's superintendent and the Board of Education for financial support of the placing-out program, adequate funds were not allocated for this purpose until 1918. Monies were needed not only to support the services of home finders and a visiting agent but also to extend payments to families who wanted to care for children, especially those who were too young to work and required a primary education.⁶⁹

Placing children in the community not only relieved the pressure of overcrowding at the State Home; once adequate funding was provided, the program also put Rhode Island's child welfare policy in alignment with the generally agreed upon best practices at the time. "Appropriations for placing out work," said a 1922 report, "have allowed the State of Rhode Island to take her place among the states which are following the best practice in

social work as it is generally agreed among the best thinkers in social work, that for the normal child a home, preferably the normal home, but if this is impossible, the foster home, is better than the best institution."⁷⁰

Two legislative investigations were conducted at the SH&S early in its history. The first, in 1888, examined the management of the Home, "to ascertain all the facts and expenses of the school rather than to investigate any mismanagement" or—one of the issues compelling a subsequent investigation two years later—any mistreatment of the children. The investigating committee's report was largely favorable, with particular praise for the Home's physical plant: "The School is beautifully situated on rolling land, within full view of the City of Providence. It is admirably located for health, and with kind guardianship on the part of the managers of the institution, this plant is one of the noblest illustrations of the advancement of our civilization." Although the committee found the per capita cost of the Home high, it noted that the costs were decreasing. The report ended on a strongly positive note: "Your committee are convinced after looking this ground thoroughly over that no men ever built more wisely than they knew, than may be truthfully said of the men who planted this school. It relieves the towns, cities, and the State of the sad spectacle of seeing neglected infants growing to youth in our almshouse. It is not only beneficial to the State, but it has become an absolute necessity—a means by which one of the channels is closed through which many a youth has gone to the reform school, and from the reform school to the prison, and from the prison to the insane asylum, and from the insane asylum to a premature grave. The home and school is doing a great work, and is managed upon an economical, kind and parental basis, and in keeping with our times."⁷¹

Another investigation was conducted two years later at the urging of eighty-four-year-old Elizabeth Buffum Chace, who had been

informed by a matron at the home, Emma Carr, that children there were being treated in a cruel manner. Although many legislators were opposed to authorizing an investigation, the General Assembly eventually appointed a committee to look into the charges, engaging the services of a legal counsel to "manage the vast amount of detail necessary" to conduct a proper inquiry. A notice was placed in the daily newspapers, inviting those with information about the charges leveled against the Home's management to come forward.⁷²

Three matters were presented for investigation: physical abuse and discipline, poor care, and a deliberate disregard of the stated principles and aims of the institution. Included in the first category were allegations of brutal and cruel punishment, such as horsewhipping of the boys, confinement of children in a cellar, unnecessarily harsh discipline for minor offenses, and excessive use of corporal punishment. The second category involved charges that children were not adequately fed, that medical needs were ignored, and that children were inappropriately assigned to the daily maintenance of the institution and to the working of its farm at the expense of their education. It was also alleged "[t]hat the fundamental idea of the institution, as expressed in the act establishing it, and the rules created for its government, to make a home for the children, has been subverted by the adoption of the methods of reformatory institutions, and by a system of harsh enforcement of discipline." Finally, the commission took up the allegation "[t]hat the whole design and purpose of the school . . . has been subverted by its present management."⁷³ After hearing testimony from interested parties, including Mrs. Chace, the committee expanded its investigation, adding the question of whether the Board of Education had failed in its responsibility to oversee the Home.

The committee did not find that the children were underfed, although it suggested that a greater variety of food be provided, with more of it for certain children, especially those at work. In its examination of whether children were overworked, it noted that greater educational

opportunity should be provided for students, and that the SH&S should focus its efforts on training and instruction rather than exploiting children's labor for institutional chores.

The issue that gained most of the committee's attention was that of discipline. The committee determined that "unusual punishments were administered, as in the case of whipping on the feet. In our opinion, the superintendent was not warranted in using this method of punishment. . . . There were cases of severe punishments. . . . The swollen feet and the black-and-blue marks on certain children prove to us that the severity of punishment was not always tempered to the child's physically."⁷⁴ Although declaring that the superintendent should be authorized to use whatever methods he deemed necessary to manage the institution, the committee determined that he used inappropriate methods—whipping on the feet—and that he failed to make a record of disciplines meted out, as was required by law. The committee also found that children were harshly disciplined for minor infractions, and that the managers gave no consideration to the reasons why children may have broken the rules. While supporting the use of corporal punishment, the committee set forth a procedure under which it should be applied, which included its administration in the presence of other staff members and the preparation of a full written report, certified by witnesses.

Perhaps the committee's strongest criticism was directed at the Board of Education for its failure to exercise diligent oversight. Members of the board were found to have relied too readily on the commissioner of education to oversee and review the Home's management. The committee found that the board "allowed too many things to go without questioning. . . . They did not fulfill their duty to the State, or to the children under their charge. We believe that so long as the Home and School is allowed to continue under the present method of oversight, just so long it will be subject to charges such as have been brought before the Committee of Investigation."⁷⁵

In its recommendations, the committee supported increases in state appropriations for better education and nutrition. It also urged that permanent improvements be made to the Home, because—despite the faults identified in its report—much good had been accomplished.

Because of the critical findings of the investigation, the Home's superintendent, Martin Healey, was removed from his position in 1890 and was replaced by Dr. Robert Risk, who would remain in that post until 1906. The investigation also led to the establishment in 1891 of a new Board of Control, consisting of four men and three women, within the Board of Education.⁷⁶ The inclusion of women on a board that was assigned direct supervisory responsibility for children in care was a victory for the BWV, which had long advocated such oversight for all institutions that held women or children. "From its inception, the institution has seemed under a blight," the *Providence Journal* remarked in a lengthy 1890 article about the State Home and School. "Whatever the reason, it has never lacked as many foes as friends. It was established after weary work by the dear philanthropic dames who distribute anti-secular literature, sympathy, and impracticable advice throughout places of correction. The [General Assembly's] act that gave it birth was passed with one serious defect, at least in the opinion of these ladies. Early as the January session, 1878, there was printed and distributed an act to establish a State Industrial School to be managed by a board, 'three of whom shall be women.' Similarly framed was a bill put in type at the January session 1889, but the act of establishment which was passed in 1884 gave the control to the State Board of Education, a body in which women have no lot or part. This much, in passing, though by some it is considered to throw an important side light on the Home's recent history."⁷⁷

In the early twentieth century the SH&S became embroiled in controversies related to the religious training of children in its care and the support of children in sectarian institutions. These issues were brought to the forefront of public attention by the increasing presence and power of the Catholic Church in the state and the church's inability to provide for all of its dependent children in Catholic orphanages and homes.⁷⁸ Children at the State Home were provided Christian religious instruction that the church did not consider appropriate for Catholic children. An agent of the St. Vincent de Paul Society who visited the Home reported that he could not ascertain how many of the children there were Catholic, "since those in charge are sensitive on the point that absolutely no 'sectarian' inquiries are made." He further noted that "no set form of religious instruction is given in this home. . . . The services on Sunday are conducted by some city minister. . . . The teachers in the various cottages hold Bible class on Sunday, and all the children are of course obliged to be present at this exercise."⁷⁹ Officials of the church argued that Catholic children should be guaranteed access to religious instruction in their own faith while at the State Home, and that the state should be compelled, when placing children out, to put them in homes where the family's religion matched that of the child.

In 1909 legislation was passed stipulating that when a child was placed out, he or she should be put "in a good family of the same religious belief as the parents of the child."⁸⁰ However, the issue of religious instruction for the children at the State Home remained unresolved. The hierarchy of the Diocese of Providence believed that Dr. Risk was resistant to protecting the religious interests of the Catholic children at the institution he supervised, and that the SH&S would not provide appropriate religious instruction for these children. The diocese therefore sought to obtain state funding to support children from the State Home who were placed in private homes or sectarian institutions.⁸¹ This effort

achieved some success with the passage of an act in 1912 declaring that "[t]he board of control may in its discretion place any child requiring special treatment, training or oversight, in any institution controlled by persons of the same religious belief as the parents of such child, providing such treatment, training or oversight, and may pay such amount as may be agreed upon for the support of such child."⁸² However, the funds appropriated for this support were minimal.

The beginnings of Rhode Island's modern child welfare system can be seen in the work accomplished by reformers during the nation's Progressive Era. This included the founding of a single private organization that focused on preventing and investigating child cruelty. In 1882 a petition was presented to the General Assembly requesting the incorporation of the Rhode Island Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The petition explained the need for such a society: "It would seem to be one of the primary obligations of every community as far as may be in its power, to protect those children who would suffer cruelty, starvation, and all the wrongs and evils of abandonment, by reason of the wickedness, drunkenness, crimes or vices of their parents, and to rescue such children, as early as may be, from their suffering as from the paths leading to our almshouses, reformatory institutions and prisons where they may become expensive burdens upon the State or towns as mendicants or criminals."⁸³ Subsequent revisions of the law expanded the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the society, which became, in effect, an agency of the state. The society investigated charges of child exploitation, contributing to the delinquency of a minor, and using children in entertainments and other performances; and if such charges were substantiated, it could remove children from their parents or guardians to an emergency shelter it managed and prosecute the offending

adults. The responsibility for child protection remained under this organization's aegis until the 1960s, when it became the direct responsibility of the state.

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, new institutions were added to those already in place and providing out-of-home residential care for infants and children in 1900. These new facilities were founded by voluntary and religious groups for Italian children, French Canadian children, Jewish children, African American children and adolescents, wayward girls, and working boys and girls.⁸⁴ The state relied on private organizations to raise most of the funds and run most of the residential institutions needed to support children in care well into the twentieth century. Of all the children living in orphanages, infant asylums, and other children's homes, only a small percentage were cared for in state-run institutions or supported with public funds. A report on benevolent institutions published by the Bureau of the Census in 1910 found 1,063 of Rhode Island's dependent and neglected children under the age of eighteen in residential care; of these, fewer than one in five were in state institutions.⁸⁵

Elements of the child welfare system that were still to come after 1920 included the development of the family court; the establishment of probation (i.e., the supervision of delinquents in the community); the end of indenture; the improved enforcement of child-labor laws; the better supervision, with regulatory oversight and licensing of private care providers, of dependent children placed in the community; the development of a unified children's code by a commission that reviewed all laws pertaining to children to make certain that laws accorded with the best practice; the development of mother's pensions, which provided funds directly to mothers to avoid the removal of children from families because of poverty alone (the precursor of our modern welfare system); and the evolution of the present-day system in which public dollars are used to support

children in facilities privately run by nonprofit organizations, with centralized intake and placements organized under a state agency (currently the Department for Children, Youth and Families).⁸⁶

The State Home and School never met its founders' expectations. The Home grew rapidly and its population often exceeded the institution's planned capacity of 212. In 1918, thirty-three years after the first children entered its care, the Home's population reached its highest level, with 418 children living in facilities that were designed to accommodate a population just over half that large.⁸⁷ The managers of the SH&S requested additional state support for staffing and for the construction of living quarters, as well as school buildings and medical facilities, but with the competing needs of other state institutions, the SH&S remained underfunded.⁸⁸ The construction of additional buildings in the first two decades of the Home's operation accommodated some children, but it did not provide other buildings for education, training, or medical care for all the children.

The lack of resources; the unanticipated growth of populations; the lack of coordinated planning to place children in the most appropriate settings; the lack of development of specialized placements geared to the academic abilities, training, ages, and other characteristics of children; and changes in child welfare philosophy—all these combined to make the State Home and School an institution without a distinct mission for much of its history. As early as 1916 a report by the Social Welfare League criticized the State Home for its lack of direction, suggesting that children were needlessly placed in the institution for long periods of time, with little emphasis on moving them into the community.⁸⁹ Calls to close the institution came from commissions established by governors, from leaders of the General Assembly, from neighborhood groups, from private welfare organizations,

and from other organizations, and they continued until the State Home, then known as the Patrick I. O'Rourke Children's Center, ceased operations in May 1979.⁹⁰

Elizabeth Buffum Chace perhaps best articulated the sort of institution envisioned by reformers for Rhode Island's most vulnerable children: "[I]n providing an establishment of this kind," she said, "it is well for us to consider what sort of a place we would choose for our

own or our children's children, should they ever come to need its protection and fostering care."⁹¹ Chace has here offered us a perspective for appraising the aims and accomplishments of the reformers who worked so tirelessly to establish the State Home; and with the quality of care imagined by these leaders yet to be achieved, her vision continues to serve as a valuable standard against which contemporary child welfare may be measured.

This page from the visitors' log of the SHE&S contains the signature of Elizabeth Buffum Chace. The page was also signed by Baroness Alexandra Gripenberg of Finland, who wrote, "Happy the nation, who begins from the root, that is: who begins with the education of all her children." Courtesy of Rhode Island College, Special Collections.

	Miss J. M. Wood	Providence R.I.	
	Miss M. E. Marchant	" "	
	Mrs. W. L. Whipple	" "	
	Mrs. R. B. Strong	" "	
	Mrs. Thomas Sawyer	" "	
11	Dwight B. Adams	Centerville R.I.	
"	W. A. Atchley	Warren	
"	Daniel Cook	Providence	
"	Tom W. Davis	Eastwick	
"	S. H. Brown	Hesterly	
"	Z. P. Atchley	Providence	
17	Miss Emily Hall		
	Miss Bulter	Providence	56 Kalamian St.
20	D. Derraf	"	
	Miss Derraf	"	
	Miss Vernon	"	
	D. Derraf	"	
	Elizabeth B. Chace	Valley Falls R.I.	
21	Baroness Alexandra Gripenberg	Helsingfors	Finland
	Happy the nation, who begins from the root, that is: who begins with the education of all her children		
	Miss S. V. Matteson	Providence	Salon Home
	Maude Bonville	Providence	
	Katherine Innes	Providence R.I.	

Notes

1. Quoted in LeRoy Ashby, *Endangered Children: Dependency, Neglect, and Abuse in American History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), 110. There are many useful histories of the development of child welfare. See Robert H. Bremner, ed., *Children and Youth in America: A Documentary History*, vol. 1, 1600-1865 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970); Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004); and Timothy A. Hasci, *A Second Home: Orphan Asylums and Poor Families in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).
2. "An Act to Incorporate Providence Children's Friend Society," Rhode Island General Assembly, October session 1836.
3. Some of the Rhode Island institutions established to care for dependent, wayward, and other children between 1835 and 1900 were quite large. In a national census taken in 1904, it was reported that the Catholic Orphan Asylum housed 200 children and that the St. Vincent de Paul Infant Asylum accommodated 150 children under the age of four. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Benevolent Institutions* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1905). The national trend to create institutions for children during this time is examined in Matthew A. Crenson, *Building the Invisible Orphanage: A Prehistory of the American Welfare System* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). Whether the "child savers" sought to extend a benevolent hand to needy and exploited children or whether these individuals simply aimed to extend middle class-control over the emerging industrial classes remains a matter of dispute among scholars; see David J. Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1971), a classic and controversial work that deals with this issue.
4. An important and comprehensive review of poor-law administration in Rhode Island is provided by Margaret Creech, *Three Centuries of Poor Law Administration: A Study of Legislation in Rhode Island* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936). Focusing on the colonial era, Bruce C. Daniels, "Poor Relief, Local Finance, and Town Government in Eighteenth-Century Rhode Island," *Rhode Island History* 40 (1981): 75-88, examines the attempts by cities and towns to limit the impact of the poor on their treasuries.
5. Ruth Wallis Herndon, *Unwelcome Americans: Living on the Margin in Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 30.
6. James N. Nutting, "The Poor, the Defective, and the Criminal," in *State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations at the End of the Century: A History*, ed. Edward Field (Boston: Mason Publishing Co., 1902), 401. The terms "almshouse," "poor farm," "poorhouse," and "workhouse" are used here to refer generally to establishments in which cities and towns housed their dependents. These institutions may have varied according to their stated purpose—for example, an almshouse might ideally have provided more benevolent care than would a workhouse, where the poor were put to work in exchange for their keep—but in actuality there was little difference among these institutions; some almshouses could be harsh and cruel, while some workhouses could be well managed and kind and caring toward their residents. Thomas R. Hazard's *Report on the Poor and Insane in Rhode Island: Made to the* (Providence: Knowles, 1851) refers to all such facilities as "asylums." For a recent examination of these institutions, see David Wagner's *The Poorhouse: America's Forgotten Institution* (Lanham, Md.: Rowan & Littlefield, 2005), which compares almshouses and other forms of "indoor relief" to present-day homeless shelters. Wagner identifies four functions common to all of these facilities: (1) "a bare minimum existence . . . harsh enough to deter" the undeserving; (2) a mechanism to distinguish the deserving from the unworthy; (3) the enforcement of a "work ethic . . . so that the poor could be put to 'useful work' while in the house"; and (4) the imposition of norms and morals designed to prevent violations of "intemperance and sexual impropriety." *The Poorhouse*, 49.
7. Nutting, "The Poor," 401.
8. *Ibid.*, 404.
9. Herndon, *Unwelcome Americans*, 27-47.
10. Hazard, *Report*, 48-49.
11. Secretary's Report, Rhode Island Board of State Charities and Corrections, 20 Jan. 1870, 8.
12. Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 5th ed. (New York: Free Press, 1994), 89.
13. While the House of Correction held those who had committed serious offenses, the State Workhouse, which the BOSCC did not consider a place of punishment, housed men and women whose work could help them avoid prison sentences and earn reinstatement to the community. The board gave priority to the construction of the workhouse at the state's newly purchased Howard Farm in order to provide a source of labor there. The State Hospital for the Incurable

- Prisons for men and women in 1878; the State Almshouse (later the Infirmary) in 1874, later reconstructed in 1888; the Sockanosset School for delinquent boys and the Oaklawn School for delinquent girls in 1882; the State Home and School in 1885; the State School for the Deaf in 1891; the State Soldiers Home in 1891; the State Sanatorium on Wallum Lake in 1905; and the State Institution for Feeble-Minded in 1909.
14. For example, the population at the Hospital for the Incurable Insane quintupled in under thirty years, from 148 in 1872 to 740 in 1900; the population of the State Almshouse more than doubled, from 141 in 1875 to 376 in 1900, as did that of the Sockanosset School, from 153 in 1883 to 365 in 1900. Rhode Island Board of State Charities and Corrections (BOSCC), *Thirty-Sixth Annual Report, 1904*.
 15. BOSCC, *Forty-Fourth Annual Report, 1912*, 11.
 16. John A. Conley, "Prisons, Production, and Profit: Reconsidering the Importance of Prison Industries," *Journal of Social History* 14 (1980): 257-75; William C. Staples, "In the Interest of the State: Production Politics in the Nineteenth Century Prison," *Sociological Perspectives* 33 (1990): 375-95. The use of convict labor in Rhode Island received critical attention from the National Commission on Prison Labor, which in 1913 filed a suit against the state on behalf of an inmate to recover wages alleged to have been taken from him under a contract-labor arrangement organized by the state's leaders. "Law Evoked to Stop Practical Slavery of Convicts," *New York Times*, 13 July 1913.
 17. BOSCC, *Fifth Annual Report, 1873*, 5.
 18. BOSCC, *Sixth Annual Report, 1874*, 11, 12.
 19. *Ibid.*; *Tenth Annual Report, 1878*, 78. The 1888 building, which inmates of the institutions at Howard constructed with stone they quarried there, remains standing. It was recently renovated to house the State Department of Labor and Training.
 20. BOSCC, *Fifth Annual Report*, 61.
 21. BOSCC, *Eight Annual Report, 1876*, 16.
 22. Henry W. Thurston, *The Dependent Child: A Story of Changing Aims and Methods in the Care of Dependent Children* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), 21-22.
 23. BOSCC, *Eighth Annual Report, 1876*, 16-17.
 24. *Ibid.*, 20.
 25. BOSCC, *Sixteenth Annual Report, 1884*, 24.
 26. *Ibid.*, 21-22.
 27. *Ibid.*
 28. *Ibid.*, 23.
 29. Homer Folks, "The Removal of Children from Almshouses," *Proceedings of the National Conference on Charities and Corrections* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1894), 119-32. Rhode Island passed such a law in 1885, with exceptions made for children who were very young or untrainable. But despite such laws, children continued to be placed in almshouses well into the 1920s, although their numbers were declining. In Rhode Island, children under four and those whom authorities did not consider educable remained in the State Almshouse until all such populations were transferred to the State Home and School or to the School for the Feeble-minded in Exeter. Children under the age of four were transferred to the State Home and School in 1923 when the institution established a nursery to accommodate them. "33 Children Transferred from Infirmary," *Providence Journal*, 31 July 1923, S1, 9. Annual reports from the State Home and School, as well as from such other agencies as the Department of Public Welfare, which assumed the responsibilities of the Board of State Charities and Corrections after several reorganizations of public welfare functions, noted that "defective children" were placed in large numbers at the State Home because of overcrowding at the institution for the feeble-minded in Exeter. The State Almshouse increasingly became an infirmary and hospital for the state's dependent elderly and disabled.
 30. Homer Folks, *The Care of Destitute, Neglected, and Dependent Children* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), 161.
 31. *Ibid.*, 113.
 32. Crenson, *Building the Invisible Orphanage*, 50-53.
 33. Folks, *Dependent Children*, 151.
 34. For a good overview of institutional life in congregate institutions, with an examination of regimentation, discipline, routine, nutrition, mortality, and disease in large orphanages, see Hasci, *A Second Home*, 148-72. The Catholic Protectory, located in Westchester, New York, accommodated 1,800 males, and its sister institution accommodated 900 girls. The Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum housed more than 500 children. Hasting H. Hart, *Preventive Treatment of Neglected Children: Correction and Prevention* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), 4:77-126.
 35. Folks, "Removal of Children," 127.
 36. Folks, *Dependent Children*, 115-48.
 37. *Ibid.*, 82-102.
 38. *Ibid.*, 97. Minnesota had adopted the Michigan model in 1885.
 39. In 1870 Elizabeth Burdett and other members of the Women's Suffrage Association

that the governor appoint women to the State Board of Charities and Corrections, where they could oversee operations and the treatment of women confined in the various state institutions. This request was not granted, but in that year the General Assembly created a Board of Visitors to the Penal and Correctional Institutions of the State, which was authorized to visit any public institution where women were confined. Lillie Buffum Chace Wyman and Arthur Crawford Wyman, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace, 1806-1899: Her Life and Its Environment* (Boston: W. B. Clarke, 1914), 2:85. This board—later formally called the Board of Women Visitors to the Penal and Correctional Institutions—is also referred in *Rhode Island Manuals* as the Board of Female Visitors to Institutions Where Women Are Imprisoned (1873, 1887, 1888, 1889) and the Board of Women Visitors to the State Institutions where Women and Children Are Imprisoned (1893).

40. Writing to the *Providence Journal*, Chace expressed her frustration that the political leaders of the state demonstrated “a want of comprehension” with regard to the “intents and purposes” of the proposed State Home and School. “Although disenfranchised on account of sex, and thus prohibited from the exercise of the rights and duties of citizenship in this matter, I determined that no word of mine should be wanting until some place of safety was provided for these children, in whom lies the prophecy of great evil or of great good, according as the duties thus devolving upon our State are neglected or performed.” Wyman and Wyman, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace*, 2:93-94.
41. “Memorial of Elizabeth B. Chace, to the Senate and House of Representatives of the General Assembly of Rhode Island,” *Providence Journal*, 22 Feb. 1880.

42. Elizabeth C. Stevens, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace and Lillie Chace Wyman: A Century of Abolitionist, Suffragist, and Workers’ Rights Activism* (Jefferson: McFarland, 2003), 97.

43. Chace, “Memorial.”

44. BWV minutes, January 1876, cited in Henry J. Crepeau, *Rhode Island: A History of Child Welfare Planning* (Washington, D.C., 1941), 306. For a discussion of parents’ fear for the ruin of their daughters, see Priscilla Ferguson Clement, *Growing Pains: Children in the Industrial Age, 1850-1890* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997), and Peter C. Halloran, *Boston’s Wayward Children: Social Services for Homeless Children, 1830-1930* (Rutherford, N.J.: Farleigh Dickinson Press, 1989).

45. For a discussion of the conflicts over the purposes, location, and management of the intended school, see Crepeau, *Rhode Island*, 54-62.

46. *Ibid.*, 54.

47. *Ibid.*, 58.

48. *Ibid.*, 58-59.

49. Children’s Friend Society, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report* (Providence, 1881), 7. A series of reports and scandals about the conditions of children in the large post-Civil War institutions led to the development of alternative approaches to caring for dependent children. One of these approaches was Charles Loring Brace’s orphan-train movement, which removed over 200,000 children from their homes in eastern cities and resettled them in the Midwest and Far West from 1855 to 1929. Mintz, *Huck’s Raft*, 165.

50. Two buildings of the Home’s original physical plant remain, located on what is now the East Campus of Rhode Island College. The stone structure that remained from the original purchase

of the Chapin Estate was adapted for college use in 2002. The only remaining wooden building, known as the Yellow Cottage, has undergone significant restoration and is being considered for use as a museum and/or a research center. Other wooden cottages that were constructed during the Home’s early years were replaced by another wave of construction in the 1950s and 1960s. The newer buildings are currently in use as classroom, office, and administrative space for the college.

51. “An Act to Establish a State Home and School for Children,” *Acts and Resolves of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island*, 1884, c. 41.

52. *Ibid.*, c. 8, c. 41.

53. *Ibid.*, c. 41.

54. A sample of records from the Home’s intake ledger shows that children were returned to the overseers on several occasions. In some instances children were transferred to the Sockanosset School for Boys or the Oaklawn School for Girls.

55. “Act to Establish a State Home,” c. 41.

56. “An Act in Amendment of Chapter 418,” *Acts and Resolves of the General Assembly of the State of Rhode Island*, 1888, c. 701.

57. “An Act to Aid in Providing Employment and Homes for Orphans and Needy Children,” *Rhode Island Public Laws*, 1887, c. 632.

58. Information compiled from *State Home and School History*, vol. 1, Special Collections, Adams Library, Rhode Island College.

59. *Ibid.*

60. The population at the Home varied widely, sometimes as the result of deliberate state policy but more often as the outcome of such external events as epidemics, wars, and economic

- downturns. The population reached an all-time high of 418 in 1918, when the institution had the capacity to serve 212 children.
61. BWV, *Annual Report*, 1887, 10-11.
 62. An analysis of reports providing annual censuses of the populations at the State Almshouse shows that the number of adults and children at this institution grew from 141 in 1875 to 575 in 1914. In 1885, the year the State Home and School opened its doors, children accounted for 25 percent of the almshouse population; in 1892 less than 10 percent of the population were children. In 1914 children accounted for one of eight inmates at the almshouse. BOSCC, *Forty-Sixth Annual Report*, 1914, 118. A 1910 report prepared by the federal Bureau of the Census on paupers found that 44 children under the age of fourteen were living in Rhode Island's city and town almshouses. Bureau of the Census. *Paupers in Almshouses*, 1910. (Washington, D.C., 1910), 89.
 63. See Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), for a discussion of the rapid change in the consideration of children's work.
 64. Crepeau, *Rhode Island*, 67.
 65. Records maintained by the Home's superintendent show visits by farmers, industrialists, Shakers, and others interested in receiving children from the SH&S into their homes. The records do not indicate what happened to most of these children after they left state care. These records are currently in Special Collections at the Adams Library, Rhode Island College.
 66. Board of Control of the State Home and School, Report to the Board of Education, in *State Home and School Ninth Annual Report*, 1893, 153.
 67. Board of Control of the State Home and School for Dependent and Neglected Children, *Annual Report*, 1902, 4.
 68. Board of Control, *Annual Report*, 1910, 19-20.
 69. It was not until 1918 that the state established a fully funded and staffed unit integrated into the operations of the SH&S. Earlier reports prepared by outside consultants had provided the state with clear directions for its placement program. The director of the program was to be headquartered at the State House, and the program's funds were to be managed by the Board of Control. As described by Crepeau, this arrangement proved unworkable, with very few children being placed out and the population at the State Home continuing to expand beyond capacity. In 1921 the placement office and its budget were put under the jurisdiction of the Home's superintendent. This arrangement significantly increased the number of children removed from the Home and placed in the community, allowing for the closing of some residential cottages and the transfer of infants and young children from the State Almshouse to the SH&S that same year. Crepeau, *Rhode Island*, 72.
 70. Penal and Charitable Commission to the General Assembly, *Fifth Annual Report*, 1922, 32-34.
 71. Rhode Island General Assembly, Special Committee of the House of Representatives to Investigate the Management of the State Home and School, *Report of the Special Committee of the House of Representatives*, 1888, 1, 2, 7.
 72. Stevens, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace*, 152. Chace was outraged that organizations like the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children did not join her call for an investigation.
 73. Rhode Island General Assembly, House of Representatives, *Report of the Joint Special Committee to Investigate the Management of the State Home and School to the General Assembly*, 1890, 4.
 74. *Ibid.*, 10.
 75. *Ibid.*, 12.
 76. Wyman and Wyman, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace*, 2:248.
 77. "State Home and School: Forsaken Children Taught to Earn an Honest Living," *Providence Sunday Journal*, 25 May 1890. In her letters, speeches, and papers, Chace made a strong case that women should be assigned to leadership positions on the boards and in the management of institutions taking care of children and women.
 78. For a comprehensive history of the role of the Catholic Church in the development of Rhode Island's private and public charities, see Robert W. Hayman, *Catholicism in Rhode Island and the Diocese of Providence, 1886-1921* (Providence: Diocese of Rhode Island, 1995), 668-81.
 79. Quoted, *ibid.*, 669.
 80. "An Act in Amendment of Chapter 87 of the General Laws, entitled 'of the State Home and School for Children,'" Rhode Island Public Laws, 1909, c. 403.
 81. See Hayman, *Catholicism*, 678-81.
 82. "An Act in Amendment of Section 8 of Chapter 102 of the General Laws, as amended by Section 1 of Chapter 403 of the Public Laws," Rhode Island Public Laws, 1912, c. 833.
 83. *Providence Journal*, 10 Mar. 1882, quoted in Crepeau, *Rhode Island*, 277.
 84. Institutions and programs established in the first four decades of the twentieth

century included the Franciscan Sisters Orphanage (1904) and St. Vincent's Home (1905) in Woonsocket; the House of Good Shepherd and Preservative's House (1905), the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island (1909), and the Catholic Training School for Girls (1936) in Providence; the Newport Colored Nursery (founding date unknown) and the Mercy Home (1915) in Newport; the Watchman Industrial School (1922) in Scituate; the Benjamin Pierce Home (1937) in Pawtucket; and, in Providence, nursery schools for Italian children—L'Asilo Scalabrini (1914) and a day nursery (1915) as part of St. Raphael's Industrial Home and School. U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Benevolent Institutions, 1910*; Hayman, *Catholicism, 475-525*.

85. The Census Bureau's 1910 report found 183 children at the State Home and 880 children in private institutions. Of the latter group, 575 children were in Catholic-run institutions; 32 were in the Jewish Orphanage of Rhode Island, 96 were in homes managed by the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, and the rest were in institutions run by nonsectarian private organizations. Bureau of the Census, *Benevolent Institutions, 1910*.

86. Rhode Island's experience parallels that of other states where unprecedented advocacy work on behalf of children occurred during the Progressive Era. The achievements and limitations of the child-saving movement during that time are traced in Mintz, *Huck's Raft*; Trattner, *Poor Law*; and Ashby, *Endangered Children*.

87. Penal and Charitable Commission, *Fifth Annual Report, 28*.

88. By the turn of the century a quarter of the more than 2,600 inmates in state institutions were children; these included 40 children at the State Almshouse,

360 boys at the Sockanosset School for Boys, 44 girls at the Oaklawn School for Girls, and 150 children at the State Home and School. The state institutions experienced rapid growth; for example, the State Hospital for the Insane grew from a population of 148 patients in 1872 to 740 by 1900, and the State Almshouse from its initial count of 132 residents in 1874, its first year of operation, to an average daily population of 400 in 1900, adding an average of 10 new residents a year. BOSCC, *Thirty-Eighth Annual Report, 1906*.

89. "Welfare Commission May Close Home," *Providence Journal*, 9 Dec. 1931; "Investigation Made by Welfare League: State Home and School Conditions Described," *ibid.*, 22 Feb. 1916.

90. Articles published in the *Providence Journal* between 1912 and 1979 reflected the changing conceptions about the role and mission of the State Home. Early on, critics pointed to the lack of good homes secured for children placed in the community; see "Passing the State's Children Around," 17 Mar 1912, and "Rapid Placement of Children Hit," 14 Jan. 1924. The Home was considered a temporary detention facility by some and a diagnostic facility by others; see "By New Plan, Used as Clearinghouse," 9 Mar 1940; "New Juvenile Institution Planned to Replace Present State Home & School," 30 Sept. 1944; "R.I. Home School Building Project Opposed by Board," 7 Jan. 1947, and "Report Proposed Closing of State Home," 16 Feb. 1947. These articles can be located in the Rhode Island Collection at the Providence Public Library. The State Public Welfare Commission recommended the closing of the State Home and School in a 1932 report to the General Assembly, but noted that "[b]efore anything can be done . . . facilities must be provided to take care of

the sediment that has been settling there." The report suggests that some children be transferred to other state-run facilities, such as the School for the Feebleminded, and the others placed in foster homes as quickly as possible. State Public Welfare Commission, *Ninth Annual Report, 1932, 301*.

91. Wyman and Wyman, *Elizabeth Buffum Chace, 2:97*.

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Book Notes

*Rhode Island Book Notes:
A Selection of Recent Titles*

Patrick T. Conley and Robert G. Flanders, *The Rhode Island State Constitution: A Reference Guide* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger Publishers, 2007). This detailed analysis of the Rhode Island Constitution is part of the Reference Guides to the State Constitutions of the United States series.

Christian M. McBurney, ed., *Jailed for Preaching: The Autobiography of Cato Pearce, a Freed Slave from Washington County, Rhode Island* (Kingston, R.I.: Pettaquamscutt Historical Society, 2006). McBurney provides an introduction to this nineteenth-century autobiographical narrative.

Scott Molloy, *Trolley Wars: Streetcar Workers on the Line* (Durham, N.H.: University of New Hampshire Press; published by University Press of New England, Hanover, N.H., 2007). A paperback edition of Molloy's monograph, originally published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1996, documenting Providence streetcar workers of the Gilded Age.

Jerry E. Mueller, ed., *Autobiography of John Russell Bartlett, 1805-1886* (Providence: John Carter Brown Library, 2006). An annotated edition of Bartlett's memoir, with illustrations. Bartlett was a multitalented artist and ethnographer who also served as Rhode Island's secretary of state and librarian to John Carter Brown's family.

Charles Rappleye, *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006). An account of the relationship between Providence merchant and slave trader John Brown and abolitionist Moses Brown, his brother.

Maureen A. Taylor, *Picturing Rhode Island: Images of Everyday Life, 1850-2006* (Beverly, Mass.: Commonwealth Editions, 2007). Taylor, a former graphics curator at the Rhode Island Historical Society's library, has selected and written commentary on about 250 period photographs, organized in eight thematic sections.

Judith Watson, *South Kingstown, Rhode Island, Tax Lists, 1730-1799* (Rockland, Maine: Picton Press, 2007). A transcription of valuation bills and rate bills from the town's eighteenth-century tax lists.