

**Guide to the  
Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House  
Records, 1817-1985**

Prepared for the Historical Society of Pennsylvania

May 1998

Collection 3099  
63 boxes

**[REVISED AUGUST 2007]**

## NOTE ON REVISIONS

This finding aid was originally prepared by the Ralston House prior to the collection's arrival at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. It has been revised by Cary Majewicz, HSP's Technical Services Archivist, August 2007.

## NOTES ON RESTRICTIONS

### Closed file

Box 49, folder 2, "Bellosi, Anna, 1977-1978" is closed to researchers until 2053.

### Use restrictions [in effect until 2017]

Researchers may not quote from or photocopy the following records:

"Case Files"	Series II Residents, Boxes 20-25
"Bank Statements"	Series III Financial, Boxes 47-48
"Estate files"	Series IV Legal, Boxes 58-62

## **INDIGENT WIDOWS' AND SINGLE WOMEN'S SOCIETY / RALSTON HOUSE**

**Records, 1817-1985**

31 linear ft.

### **Provenance**

Gift of the Ralston House to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, 1998.

### **Arrangement**

The records of the Ralston House are arranged in four series – Board Papers, Resident Records, Financial Records, and Legal Records.

### **Agency History**

Founded in 1817 by Sarah Ralston, the Indigent Widow's and Single Women's Society, represented the first charitable organization in Philadelphia exclusively devoted to the needs of the elderly. Ralston recognized that many women faced destitution in their old age and as a result, often spent the final years of their lives in the almshouse. The goal of the Asylum was to provide a decent home life for those born of the middle class or higher, but who fell into less economically advantaged positions at the close of their lives.

From 1817 to 1820 the Society was housed in a small building on Market Street where it leased its first quarters. This building accommodated thirty women and was soon deemed insufficient in size. In 1820 the Managers succeeded in raising the funds needed to construct a commodious home on donated grounds located on Cherry Street below 18<sup>th</sup> Street. The Society's new building quickly exceeded demand. By 1852 clear indication in deficiencies of heating and ventilation became

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evident. Additional fears of fire called for the improvement to the existing structure and the erection of a new, enlarged space.

The Managers commenced the building of a fireproof addition that would permit an increase to the family, then numbering 60 residents. The cost of the new building and alterations to the old building came to \$11,000.00. In 1853 the grounds included a Refectory, a Gallery for exercise, and bedrooms for the residents. The improved facility allowed for an increase to 73 residents. Nevertheless, in short order, demand outstripped supply, and the Managers were forced to look again for expansion possibilities.

Initially the Board sought to purchase additional land adjacent to the existing property. This option, with a price tag of \$87,000.00, proved too costly, and the Board decided to seek new grounds. Some initial thought was given to moving to the country, but both the Managers and the residents opposed such a plan. After much consideration, the Society purchased property on Chestnut Street between 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Streets in West Philadelphia for \$75,000. The Society hired the Wilson Brothers architectural firm to build a home suitable for over 100 residents at a cost of \$105,000. This expanded facility allowed for an increase of twenty-five residents – the number of accepted applicants then waiting for an opening. Not only did the new home allowed for a greater number of residents, but also it included an Infirmary and expanded facilities for improved services.

As the city's first institution exclusively devoted to the care of the elderly, the Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society set the example for many such institutions to follow. Throughout the nineteenth century the need for such homes became increasingly evident, and by 1900 there were more than sixty-four of these institutions within the city of Philadelphia, greater than any other major city in the country. The management of this institution, which in turn served as a model followed by others, fell to a Board of Managers and a series of committees dedicated to specific functions in support of the whole. These committees include the Committee for Receiving Applications, the Visiting Committee, the Work Committee, the Church Committee, the Purchasing Committee, the Real Estate Committee, and the Committee on Investments. Ad hoc committees were routinely created and disbanded as necessary.

While the Home was non-sectarian, the Managers were interested in attracting a resident of

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high personal character, the traits of whom, in their view, typically belonged to members of the Protestant Christian sects. The application process called for each potential resident to formally state her interest and provide references to attest to her upstanding moral character. The Application Committee would then interview the candidate and during said discussion, assess both the fiscal need and her character. References were regularly checked, and these became especially critical for borderline cases. Once an applicant was considered acceptable, the potential resident submitted to a medical examination by the house doctor.

Of great concern was the potential admission of residents suffering from any terminal illness which prevented them from caring for themselves once entrance was granted. This would place too great a strain on the staff and would not permit the appropriate level of care necessary. As a result, the Committee filtered out these cases. A requirement for those entering the homes, therefore, included proof of good mental and physical health. Specifically, those suffering from dementia and insanity were not considered suitable for residence in the home.

Mental health presented great difficulty for most old age homes, and this was no different for the Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society. Like several other homes, the Asylum initiated an "insanity clause." Residents and their families agreed that in the case of severe mental illness, certified by a doctor, a resident would be either brought home to the family or relocated to an almshouse or to an asylum devoted exclusively to mental illness. In the case of the Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society, benefactors provided the home with perpetual beds at the Pennsylvania Hospital for the Insane. This gave the Board and in turn the residents a more dignified alternative to the almshouse. Barring these high maintenance cases, women with minor illnesses were almost always granted entrance. Provided the applicant passed the medical examination, the potential resident was then required to furnish their own rooms, pay an entrance fee (when required), and sign agreements both to abide by the rules of the house and to relinquish all personal and real property to the institution. Once residency was established the work of the admission committee passed to the Visiting Committee.

The Visiting Committee was charged with daily visits to the home (unless illness or business prevented them from fulfilling this commitment). It was composed of as many as twenty women

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broken up into visiting members of two. The members visited each resident in her own room, listened to her concerns and responded to them appropriately. In addition to addressing the needs of the residents, the committee monitored a range of quality of life areas. These included -- the temperature and building conditions, the quality food and service of the wait staff in the dining room, and the success of all house staff in accomplishing their work and in meeting the goals of the managers and the mission of the institution. As the point of contact for the board in all daily matters, particularly in ensuring that house rules were followed, the committee members were skilled in cajoling and comforting.

The quality of daily life was also a focal point for other committees -- the Church Committee, the Library Committee, the Works Committee, and the Entertainment Committee. The Church Committee arranged for representation of a full range of Protestant Christian ministries among the services offered weekly to the residents in the Chapel. The Library Committee and the Works Committee tended to daily activities such as maintenance of the books and periodicals and the provision of work related activities such as quilting and carpet making. Many of the products created by the residents, including fine needlework, were sold at Donation Day -- the annual event in which the home was opened to the public to receive contributions of food, furniture, dry goods, clothing, and financial support. The ladies sold refreshments, produced goods, and items procured by the Board of Managers. With the proceeds, the residents collectively determined what improvements to make to contribute to the quality of their daily lives. The Entertainment Committee took the women on excursions and arranged for individuals and/or groups to visit the home for lectures, concerts, plays, and other activities.

The Purchasing Committee, the Real Estate Committee, and the Investment Committee each, on varying levels, sought to provide sound fiscal management of the home's resources. The Purchasing Committee attended to daily needs of the residents and the acquisitions of goods for the Home. This committee maintained detailed accounts of money spent on food, furniture, improvements, salaries, and a range of other expenditures. Many benefactors continued to entrust assets with the home; the Real Estate and Investment committees were charged with yielding the best return for each dollar invested.

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This corporate structure of a Board and its committees remained principally unchanged throughout the institutional history. As special needs arose, committees would be established to study and recommend solutions. Action would be taken by the full board with legal counsel when necessary. The fluidity of this management style allowed for an institution responsive to changing needs.

Over the years, for example, the admissions policies grew increasing democratic. With the merger with the Tilden Home for Aged Couples, men and couples were granted entrance to the home. With changing times also came a change in the corporate name. In 1964 the Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society dropped the word indigent from its name to convey a more contemporary value system and to offer a greater sense of dignity to those in the home. In 1973, to better reflect the home's mixed gender constituency, and to simultaneously honor its founder Sarah Ralston, the institution changed its name to the Ralston House. Finally, in 1985 the mission of the Ralston House changed from a residential care community to a community health facility. Despite these changes, the institutional focus on the care of the elderly and in improving quality of life never changed. Addressing the vital needs of the elderly remains its mission today.

### **Scope and Content**

The records of the Ralston House offer researchers one of the richest sources of documentation extant for a benevolent institution devoted to the needs of the elderly. The collection is at once broad and deep spanning across all corporate functions and daily concerns throughout the institution's long history. There are very few, and minor, gaps in the records. Thus, this collection represents, if not the most, one of the most comprehensive records of a benevolent institution founded in the Early Republic through the late twentieth century.

The Board of Managers papers document the core decision making process of the corporation. Minutes from 1817 to 1982 represent the largest sub-series of Board Papers. The minutes record not only the decisions but the discussion surrounding the process of governance.



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Topics include issues brought before the collective group from each of the committees representing the fullest range of concerns – admission decisions, rule infractions, daily activities, staffing evaluations, health reports, and information on day to day lives of the women living and working in the home. Incorporation, Constitution, By-laws, and Annual Reports, 1817-1971, offer the official and public outreach of the Society. The Board published annual reports which provides full information on the year's events. Topics brought to the public's attention in the reports include -- lists of the Board and committee members; House Rules; legacy and bequest information; inventories of items contributed to the home for donation day; financial accounting for the year; and a summary statement of events for the year, including important events, entertainment given to the residents, illnesses, and deaths.

There is Board correspondence, much of which dates to Sarah Ralston and the founding, and information on the establishment, support, and operation of the home may be found here. In addition to correspondence, miscellaneous files offer information on daily life in the home. After the minutes, the next largest sub-series within the Board papers series includes records pertaining to the physical building of the home. There is a general building file for the home on Market Street, two files for the Cherry Street property, and a comprehensive record for the Chestnut Street property. The Chestnut Street property files include information on lot deeds dating from 1841 through 1884; brief of title; information on the construction including architectural drawings by Wilson Brothers; correspondence, 1929-1964; and photographic prints.

The Resident records series is broken into four sub-series – Admissions, Visiting Committee, Miscellaneous Committee report, and Personal Effects and Funeral Arrangements. The Admissions sub-series includes a scrapbook of correspondence, 1854-1866, largely of letters requesting admission opportunities and their responses. There are application abstracts, 1893-1954 giving demographic information on the applicant and her references. The committee members not only recorded the demographic information but would, on occasion, make evaluative statements on the applicant and the relative success of the candidate in favorably impressing the Board members. Residents were required to sign agreements stating that all personal and real property would be transferred to the Society. These statements are present in this series (Agreements with the Residents, 1817-1951).



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In addition, potential residents needed to pass medical certification. Once all agreements were signed, appropriate admission fees received, and medical examinations passed, the resident was given a Certificate of Admission to present to the Matron upon entry. These certificates, from 1889 to 1953 are also represented in the collection.

The Visiting Committee records, 1826, 1836-1978, are perhaps the richest source of insight on daily life. The committee took their charge seriously and carefully interviewed and recorded the concerns of the residents. When rules were violated, the committee took action. When the staff was not performing satisfactorily, the committee evaluated and conveyed expected improvements. Careful attention was paid to the quality of the meals and the care with which they were served. All daily activities are recorded from the ordinary and mundane to the extraordinary events and entertainments.

There is information on illness and death and the changing attitudes toward health care. For the latter part of the twentieth century, case studies offer some insight into the residential community but these files lack the depth and richness of the earlier records.

Personal effects and Funeral Arrangements sub-series largely documents the possessions of the resident at the end of her life. These possessions usually included room furnishings, clothing, jewelry, books, and other personal belongings. While the Society required that all property become the possession of the home, the Board often conceded to resident's wishes that their personal effects be given to family members. Residents often came to the home with burial plots and prearranged funeral plans. This sub-series documents the range of cemeteries used by the residents during the height of the cemetery as public park movement.

The Financial series is comprised on ledgers, daybooks, cash books and other records of accounts maintained by the Purchasing Committee, the Real Estate Committee, the Investments Committee and the Treasurer. Again, present is financial information since the founding the institution to the late twentieth century. The final series, the Legal series, provides information on mergers, corporate changes, litigation, staff relations, and estate management of residents and benefactors. Of particular interest here is a fairly comprehensive record for the merger with the Tilden Home. These records include full representation of the historical record from early minute books to application and bond books to accounting journals. This group of papers offers strong

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insight into the economy of scale sought after by these non-profit institutions struggling to make ends meet.

The records of the Indigent Widow's and Single Women's Society, through to the institution's changes to the Ralston House, offer rich documentation on benevolent institutions, social history, and Philadelphia from the Early Republic to the late twentieth century.

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**Inventory**

**I. BOARD PAPERS**

**Minutes**

Box 1	1817-1834
	1834-1851
	1852-1869
	1870-1883
Box 2	1883-1890
	1890-1896
	1896-1903
	1904-1910
Box 3	1910-1916
	1929-1930
	1931-1936
	1937-1943
Box 4	1944-1951
	1951-1953
	1954-1956
	1956-1958
	1958-1960
	1961-1962

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## I. BOARD PAPERS

## Minutes

Box 4 1963-1964

Box 5 1977-1982

## Incorporation, Constitution, By-laws, and Annual Reports

## Annual Report volumes (Secretary Desk)

1817-1881

1874-1894

1895-1909

1910-1922

1923-1937

1938-1952

1952-1971

Box 6

FF 1                      Act of Incorporation, 1819

FF 2                      Constitution, 1828, 1832, 1853

FF 3 By-laws, 1932

FF 4 By-laws, 1941

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**I. BOARD PAPERS**

**Box 6**

Annual Reports (duplicates from above)

Bound Volumes

FF 5	1817-1834
FF 6	1835-1861
FF 7	1862-1881
Single volume reports	
FF 8	1819
FF 9	1821-1824
FF 10	1828
FF 11	1830-1834

**Box 7**

FF 1	1836-1837
FF 2	1839-1845
FF 3	1846-1850
FF 4	1851-1852
FF 5	1856
FF 6	1859-1860
FF 7	1866
FF 8	1869

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**I. BOARD PAPERS**

**Box 7**

**Annual Reports**

FF 9	1873
FF 10	1875-1876
FF 11	1878-1881
FF 12	1898
FF 13	1935
FF 14	1954-1956
FF 15	1957-1962
FF 16	1962-1964
FF 17	1966-1967
FF 18	1968-1969

**Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers**

**Box 8**

FF 1	Annual Report Manuscript, 1818, n.d.
FF 2	Correspondence, 1817-1819 (much of Sarah Ralston)
FF 3	Correspondence, 1820-1886
FF 4	Correspondence, 1900-1906
FF 5	Correspondence, 1953-1967, n.d.
FF 6	Address of Thomas G. Allen, 1852

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**I. BOARD PAPERS**

**Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers**

Box 8

FF 7	Entertainment, 1891, 1904
FF 8	Letter of Attorney, 1883
FF 9	Subscriptions, 1817-1823
FF 10	Subscriptions, 1955
FF 11	Purchasing Committee, 1831-1833, 1840
FF 12	Fundraising Events, 1821, 1826
FF 13	Centennial Celebration, 1917
FF 14	Cost analysis, 1919-1949
FF 15	Reports to Pennsylvania Board of Public Charities, 1898-1919
FF 16	"Bits of History," 1939
FF 17	Donation Day, 1944
FF 18	Notice of Name Change, 1978
FF 19	Admission Statement, 1979-1983
FF 20	National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, 1982
FF 21	Citation from Governor, 1982
FF 22	Brochure, [1960], and flyer, n.d.



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**I. BOARD PAPERS**

Box 8

**Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers**

FF 23	Clippings and ephemera on the home, elderly, and the community
FF 24	Clippings and ephemera on the home, elderly, and the community
FF 25	Clippings and ephemera on the home, elderly, and the community

**Building Papers**

Box 9

FF 1	General file, 1819-1822
	Cherry Street property
FF 2	Veranda Iron Work, 1853
FF 3	General file, 1875-1886
	Chestnut Street property
FF 4	Bond and Warrant, 1884
FF 5	Lot deed to IWSWS, 1884
FF 6	Brief of Title
FF 7	Lot deeds, 1841-1861
FF 8	Lot deeds, 1806-1814
FF 9	Building Fund

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**I. BOARD PAPERS**

**Box 9**

**Building Papers**

Chestnut Street property

FF 10	Agreements with Contractors, 1885-1887
FF 11	Dedication, 1887
FF 12	Work Orders, 1891
FF 13	Lighting and wiring, 1895
FF 14	Stone Work, 1896
FF 15	Power and Boiler House, 1896-1898
FF 16	Coal Supply, 1896-1898
FF 17	Contract with Robert Miller, general caretaker
FF 18	Furniture Appraisals, Samuel T. Freeman, 1938-1973
FF 19	Photographic prints, 1958-1967

**Box 10**

FF 1	Correspondence, [1929]
FF 2	Correspondence, 1946
FF 3	Correspondence, 1951
FF 4	Correspondence, 1960
FF 5	Correspondence, 1961-1964
FF 6	Zoning, 1958

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## I. BOARD PAPERS

Box 10

## Building Papers

FF 7 Health and Welfare Regulations, 1962

FF 8 Electrical Specifications, n.d.

FF 9 Plans, [1885]-1967

Box 10A	Building papers, 1963-1967
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Box 11	Rolled drawings, 1885 by Wilson Bros., n.d. [1920s] by Charles Hickman, and 1951 by A&E Hoffman
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## II. RESIDENTS

## Admissions

Box 12	Scrapbook of correspondence regarding admission, 1854-1866
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Box 13 Application Abstracts

FF 1	1893-1897
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FF 2 1870-1907

FF 3 1915-1915

FF 4 1916-1925

Box 14

FF 1	1925-1937
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FF 2 1935-1951

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II. RESIDENTS

**Admissions**

FF 3                                      1943-1970

FF 4                                      1948-1954

Agreements with Residents

Box 15

FF 1                                      1817-1835

FF 2                                      1835-1853

FF 3                                      1853-1865

FF 4                                      1866-1885

FF 5                                      1886-1889

Box 16

FF 1                                      1889-1898

FF 2                                      1901-1914

Box 17

Volume 1                                1914-1925

Volume 2                                1925-1937

Oversize volume                       1937-1951

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**II. RESIDENTS**

**Admissions**

**Box 18**

FF 1                      Petitions, 1826-1839

FF 2                      Applications, [1890s]

FF 3                      Notice of Vacancy, 1879

Certificates of Admission

FF 4                      1889-1893

FF 5                      1893-1911

FF 6                      1912-1918

FF 7                      1918-1930

FF 8                      1933-1935

FF 9                      1936-1939

FF 10                    1940-1945

FF 11                    1946-1950

FF 12                    1951-1953

FF 13                    Residents without bond agreements, 1894

FF 14                    Notes regarding admission, 1932, 1940-1953

**Box 19**

FF 1                      Record Book of Inmates, v.1, 1889

*[Materials in Boxes 20-25 are use restricted until 2017. Researchers may not quote from or photocopy these records.]*

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II. RESIDENTS

**Admissions**

Box 19

FF 2	Record Book of Inmates, v.2, 1889-1901
FF 3	Record Book of Inmates, v.3, blank
FF 4	Record book, birth dates

Box 20

**Case Studies**

FF 1	Abbott, Charlotte, d. 2/18/1983
FF 2	Abend, Ethel, d. 2/18/1963
FF 3	Arnold, Janet, d. 2/7/1979
FF 4	Aston, Auston, d. 12/20/1982
FF 5	Bachman, Rose, d. 5/31/1979
FF 6	Barr, Agnes, d. 9/7/1979
FF 7	Beare, Violet, d. 7/28/1980
FF 8	Beers, Anna, d. 4/28/1983
FF 9	Becker, Nellie, d. 11/21/1980
FF 10	Begnaud, Lucy E., d. 11/1/1978
FF 11	Belles, Ida, d. 3/25/1977
FF 12	Belz, Clara, d. 11/28/1977
FF 13	Bergin, Mary, d. 8/5/1977
FF 14	Billingsley, Elsie, d. 3/28/1983

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II. RESIDENTS

**Admissions**

Box 20

Case Studies

FF 15	Bissell, Ruth B., d. 1/3/1983
FF 16	Bourke, Ethel M., d. 8/19/1979
FF 17	Brewster, Frank V., d. 6/11/1982
FF 18	Bunn, John (left home 11/16/1975)
FF 19	Butler, Mary Ruth,
FF 20	Cardner, Mary F., d. 8/28/1978
FF 21	Chandler, Elizabeth (left 2/7/1983) d. 4/1985
FF 22	Claudner, Anna C., d. 1/18/1969
FF 23	Clements, Alice, d. 1/27/1983
FF 24	Cooke, Christina O.
FF 25	Cooke, Christina, d. 1/14/1983
FF 26	Delany, Ada V.,
FF 27	Doll, Ruth, d. 11/27/1982
FF 28	Donaldson, Mabel, d. 1/24/1982
FF 29	Donecker, Helen M., d. 6/11/1980
FF 30	Dosch, Elsie, d. 9/26/1982
FF 31	Drumm, Kathryn, d. 1/14/1981
FF 32	Duffy, Florence, d. 12/4/1976



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**II. RESIDENTS**

**Admissions**

Case studies

Box 21

FF 1	Ellinger, Josephine, d. 5/31/1981
FF 2	Elliot, Margaret S., d. 8/10/1975
FF 3	Elser, Josephine
FF 4	Entzminger, Frank, d. 10/16/1983
FF 5	Fenner, Willer, d. 4/7/1983
FF 6	Ferguson, Ethel M., d. 9/16/1978
FF 7	Fetteroff, Jennie
FF 8	Frederick, Thomas R., d. 1/11/1983
FF 9	Gautschy, Lillian B.
FF 11	Gibbs, Matilda, d. 2/1/1978
FF 12	Goddard, Fraces E., d. 4/13/1983
FF 13	Gray, Florence, d. 12/24/1979
FF 14	Greaves, Estelle, d. 1/22/1983
FF 15	Greaves, Richard, d. 1/7/1983
FF 16	Green, J. Russell
FF 17	Greenway, Simon
FF 18	Greenwood, Walter, d. 2/19/ 1983

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II. RESIDENTS

**Admissions**

Case Studies

Box 21

FF 19	Grosskettler, Marie, d. 2/17/1983
FF 20	Haight, Edna O., d. 8/17/1979
FF 21	Halfacre, Ianatha (left 1/17/1983)
FF 22	Hammond, Martha, d. 12/2/1982
FF 23	Hanna, Laura
FF 24	Harris, John
FF 25	Harshaw, Anna, d. 1/15/1983
FF 26	Haughey, Emelina, d. 3/18/1978
FF 27	Hayres, Irene
FF 28	Hawkins, Elise, d. 1/20/1979
FF 29	Heaton, Myrtle, d. 5/8/1979
FF 30	Hemsley, Katherine M., d. 8/14/1980
FF 31	Hitzenhammer, Anna G., d. 3/17/1980
FF 32	Hobbs, Marion, F., d. 11/24/1979
FF 33	Holbrook, Minnie, d. 7/21/1977
FF 34	Holden, Ethel

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**II. RESIDENTS**

**Admissions**

Case Studies

Box 22

FF 1	Janson, Catherine, d. 10/15/1981
FF 2	Jenson, Catherine M., d. 12/1980
FF 3	Johnson, Edith
FF 4	Keast, Anna V.
FF 5	Kehner, Grace V., d. 6/12/1980
FF 6	Keller, Irene, d. 11/1/1982
FF 7	Kennedy, Anna
FF 8	Kenton, Henrietta I., d. 1/4/1978
FF 9	Kerst, Estella S., d. 2/22/1980
FF 10	Kilpatrick, Jane W.
FF 11	Knight, Georgie, d. 4/11/1983
FF 12	Kracker, Pauline
FF 13	Kuepart, Elsa A.
FF 14	Kyne, Mary J.
FF 15	Lear, Mary R., d. 2/9/1977
FF 16	Lekites, Beulah M. d. 5/17/1981
FF 17	Lo, Mee
FF 18	Long, Maude, d. 1/26/1983

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II. RESIDENTS

**Admissions**

Case Studies

Box 22

FF 19	Loughlin, Josephine Teresa, d. 1/21/1983
FF 20	Luckenbach, Edwin, d. 4/19/1983
FF 21	Lutrell, Margaretta, d. 8/27/1982
FF 22	Magen, Mae, d. 12/7/1981
FF 23	May Eleanor, d. 3/10/1983
FF 24	McAdams, Anita
FF 25	McAffee, Elizabeth
FF 26	McElwee, Caroline, d. 1/27/1983
FF 27	McHugh, Margaret
FF 28	McLauren, Evelyn S., d. 12/15/1982
FF 29	Michel, Oscar
FF 30	Mildish, Ida, d. 4/8/1983
FF 31	Milgren, Pearl, d. 1/13/1983
FF 32	Moroney, M. Agnes, d. 9/1/1988
FF 33	Montgomery, Frances S., d. 8/21/1981

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**II. RESIDENTS**

**Admissions**

Case Studies

Box 23

FF 1	Munro, Elizabeth, d. 4/15/1979
FF 2	Murphy, Lina, d. 6/15/1980
FF 3	Murphy, Mary
FF 4	Passion, Elsie, d. 12/16/1981
FF 5	Pearlman, Phillip, d. 6/16/1983
FF 6	Potter, Ellen, d. 6/21/1981
FF 7	Pratt, Hullda, d. 11/14/1979
FF 8	Prendergast, Mary, d. 3/29/1983
FF 9	Rabold, Pauline, d. 3/20/1977
FF 10	Ramov, Mamie, d. 3/20/1983
FF 11	Rankin, Harley
FF 12	Ratiner, Sarah, d. 4/27/1983
FF 13	Richardson, Bertha, d. 1/26/1982
FF 14	Rinnert, Emilie S., d. 5/19/1982
FF 15	Robinson, Margaret, d. 12/20/1982
FF 16	Ross, George, d. 5/27/1980
FF 17	Ross, Inez, d. 4/19/1980
FF 18	Safiraba, Sessie

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**Indigent Widows and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**II. RESIDENTS**

**Admissions**

**Case Studies**

**Box 23**

FF 19	Saunders, Pauline S., d. 2/10/1981
FF 20	Scanlon, Elizabeth, d. 6/30/1977
FF 21	Schenken, Catherine F., d. 2/19/1981
FF 22	Schussler, Marjorie A., d. 12/15/1982
FF 23	Seigeldorf, Helen (left 7/28/1976)
FF 24	Senft, Grace, d. 7/11/1982
FF 25	Shearon, Margaret A., d. 6/25/1979
FF 26	Shriver, Elizabeth, d. 1/11/1981
FF 27	Skelton, Maud A., d. 1/2/1978
FF 28	Smith, Emma M., d. d. 5/21/1981
FF 29	Sohl, Mabel E., d. 2/24/1980
FF 30	Stine, Lottie, K., d. 3/13/1979
FF 31	Tennis, Laura, d. 9/20/1982
FF 32	Thornton, Julia, d. 8/14/1982
FF 33	Thorp, Kathryn, d. 7/23/1981
FF 34	Tomlinson, Emma, M., d. 1/15/1978

**Box 24**

FF 1	Troxel, Susie M., d. 9/14/1979
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**Indigent Widows and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**II. RESIDENTS**

**Admissions**

Case Studies

Box 24

FF 2	Tucker, Ethel, d. 5/1/1992
FF 3	Twiss, Edith A., d. 3/4/1980
FF 4	Underwood, Pauline B., d. 11/13/1981
FF 5	Valentine, Bertha, d. 7/2/1980
FF 6	Varden, Katherine R., d. 4/18/1981
FF 7	Victor, Blanche, d. 9/13/1978
FF 8	Whitehead, Joanna M., d. 8/9/1980
FF 9	Wiest, Bertha C., d. 5/16/1980
FF 10	Williams, Lydia, d. 2/9/1981
FF 11	Wright, Mabel, d. 6/5/1980
FF 12	Wynings, Kate A., d. 3/10/1979
FF 13	Young, Kathryn, R., d. 3/17/1983

Incident Reports

Box 25

FF 1	1975-1976
FF 2	1976-1978
FF 3	1979-1981
FF 4	1982-1983



**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**II. RESIDENTS**

**Visiting Committee**

**Box 26**

FF 1	1826
FF 2	1836-1844
FF 3	1844-1851
FF 4	1867-1881
FF 5	1881-1885

**Box 27**

FF 1	1895-1906
FF 2	1906-1915
FF 3	1915-1925
FF 4	1925-1935

**Box 28**

FF 1	1935-1946
FF 2	1940-1946
FF 3	1946-1978

**Miscellaneous Committee reports**

FF 4	1956-1959
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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**II. RESIDENTS**

**Miscellaneous Committee reports**

Box 28

FF 5	1960
FF 6	1962-1964
FF 7	1965-1966

**Personal Effects and Funeral Arrangements**

Box 29

FF 1	Purchases and effects, 1878-1901
FF 2	Effects, 1908-1926
FF 3	Deaths, 1917-1946
FF 4	Register of Wills, 1918-1924
FF 5	W. Hargesheimer, bill for burial, 1868
FF 6	Oliver Bair Correspondence and bills, 1898-1903
FF 7	Burial Instructions, 1908-1912, n.d.

Cemeteries

FF 8	Blockley
FF 9	Cedar Hill
FF 10	Colestown
FF 11	Evergreen Cemetery, N.J.
FF 12	Fernwood

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**II. RESIDENTS**

**Personal Effects and Funeral Arrangements**

Cemeteries

Box 29

FF 13	First Baptist Church
FF 14	Friends Burial Ground
FF 15	Glenwood, Del.
FF 16	Greenwood

Box 30

FF 1	Hillside
FF 2	Honeybrook Presbyterian
FF 3	Lawnville
FF 4	Montrose
FF 5	Mount Bethel
FF 6	Mt. Moriah – Orders for Interment, 1890-1912
FF 7	Mt. Moriah – Correspondence
FF 8	Mt. Moriah – Charter, By-laws, and rules, 1886
FF 9	Mt. Moriah – Maps
FF 10	Mt. Moriah – Deeds
FF 11	Mt. Peace

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**II. RESIDENTS**

**Personal Effects and Funeral Arrangements**

Cemeteries

Box 30

FF 12	Northwood
FF 13	Oakland
FF 14	Odd Fellows Monument
FF 15	Philanthropic
FF 16	Pomfret Manor
FF 17	Presbyterian
FF 18	Sunset Memorial Park
FF 19	United American Mechanics and United Daughters of America
FF 20	West Laurel Hill
FF 21	Woodlands
FF 22	Miscellaneous

**III. FINANCIAL**

**Purchasing Committee**

Box 31

FF 1	Account Book, 1825-1839
FF 2	Daybook, 1842-1849

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**III. FINANCIAL**

**Purchasing Committee**

**Box 31**

FF 3	Daybook, 1850-1853
FF 4	Loose material, 1850-1853
FF 5	Daybook, 1854-1859
FF 6	Daybook, 1861-1873

**Box 32**

FF 1	Daybook, 1874-1879
FF 2	Account book, 1885-1894

**Cashbooks**

FF 3	1889-1896
FF 4	1897-1900

**Box 33**

FF 1	1901-1905
FF 2	1905-1909
FF 3	1909-1912
FF 4	1913-1916

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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III. FINANCIAL

**Purchasing Committee**

Box 34

FF 1	1916-1920
FF 2	1920-1923
FF 3	1923-1926
FF 4	1926-1929

Box 35

FF 1	1929-1931
FF 2	1931-1939
FF 3	1934-1939
FF 4	1939-1942

Box 36

FF 1	1942-1946
FF 2	1946-1950
FF 3	1950-1953
FF 4	1953-1955

Box 37

FF 1	Ledger, 1900-1916 (food)
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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**III. FINANCIAL**

**Purchasing Committee**

**Box 37**

FF 2	Ledger, 1900-1905
FF 3	Ledger, 1915-1922
Oversized	Monthly Statements, 1927-1954

**Box 38**

FF 1	Receipts, 1818-1881, n.d
FF 2	Receipt book and memorandum, 1827-1876
FF 3	Receipt book, 1835-1839
FF 4	Memorandum, 1834-1878
FF 5	Receipt book, 1890-1896 (wages)
FF 6	Receipt book, 1902-1908 (wages)

**Box 39**

FF 1	Skilled Care Invoices, 1976
FF 2	Skilled Care Invoices, 1977
FF 3	Skilled Care Invoices, 1978
FF 4	Skilled Care Invoices, 1978-1979
FF 5	Philadelphia County Board of Assistance, 1977-1978
FF 6	Philadelphia County Board of Assistance, 1978-1979

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**III. FINANCIAL**

**Investments and Securities**

Stocks, investments, securities, 1819-1895

Treasurer's accounts, 1895-1896

Treasurer's accounts, 1897-1898

Treasurer's book, 1817-1826

**Box 40**

FF 1                      Treasurer's book, 1826-1848

FF 2                      Treasurer's book, 1848-1861

**Box 41**

FF 1                      Treasurer's book, 1861-1873

FF 2                      Treasurer's book, 1874-1889

Oversize volume        Investments 1888-1914

**Box 42**

FF 1                      Security book, 1854-1907

FF 2                      Security book, 1870-1920

FF 3                      Principle account, 1905-1939

FF 4                      Principle account, 1939-1956



**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**III. FINANCIAL**

**Investments and Securities**

Ledger Accounts, 1923-1938

Ledger Accounts, 1938-1952

Securities Investments, 1951-1962

Special Accounts, 1951-1953

Keene Memorial Account, 1952-1953

**Box 43**

Miscellaneous

FF 1                      Securities sold, card file, 1966-1972

FF 2                      Securities and Accounts, 1963-1973

**Box 44**

FF 1                      Audit, 1954-1955

FF 2                      Audit, 1956-1957

FF 3                      Audit, 1967

FF 4                      Audit, 1975-1976

FF 5                      Audit, 1977-1978

**Box 45**

FF 1                      Assets, 1970

FF 2                      Budget and Salaries, 1956-1971

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**III. FINANCIAL**

**Investments and Securities**

Miscellaneous

Box 45

FF 3	Journal Entries, 1973-1976
FF 4	Fundraising Campaign, 1974-1975
FF 5	Insurance, 1967-1970, 1973
FF 6	Investments, 1956-1957
FF 7	Investment Accounts, 1960
FF 8	Sun Company Shares, 1985-1986
FF 9	Taxes, 1933-1945, 1970

**Bank Statements**

Box 46

Girard Life Insurance and Annuity Company

FF 1	1894-1895
FF 2	1895-1896
FF 3	1896-1897
FF 4	1897-1899
FF 5	1899-1900
FF 6	1900-1902

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**Indigent Widows and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

III. FINANCIAL

**Bank Statements**

Box 46

Girard Life Insurance and Annuity Company

FF 7 1902-1903

FF 8 Cover with notes, [1903]

Box 47

FF 1 Philadelphia Trust and Safety Deposit Insurance Company, 1879-1882

FF 2 Beneficial, Glenmede Fund, 1977-1981

FF 3 Beneficial Burial Reserve, 1982

FF 4 Fair Fund, 1927-1985

FF 5 Fidelity, 1973-1974

FF 6 First Pennsylvania, 1983

FF 7 Girard, J.S. Keen Fund

FF 8 Girard, A. Tuttle

FF 9 Philadelphia Savings Fund Society, 1959-1974

**Provident**

FF 10 1974

FF 11 1975

FF 12 1975

FF 13 1975

FF14 1977-1982

*[Materials in Boxes 47-48 are use restricted until 2017. Researchers may not quote from or photocopy these records.]*

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

III. FINANCIAL

**Bank Statements**

Box 47a

FF 1	Provident Bank, 1975-1978
FF 2	Provident – Boarders, 1973-1974
FF 3	Provident – Boarders, 1975
FF 4	Provident Burial Reserve, 1975-1980
FF 5	Provident Maintenance Reserve, 1976-1980
FF 6	Western Savings Fund, 1961-1979
FF 7	Bank accounts, signers, 1971-1977
FF 8	Miscellaneous bank statements, 1963-1980

*[Materials in Boxes 47-48 are use restricted until 2017. Researchers may not quote from or photocopy these records.]*

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

III. FINANCIAL

**Bank Statements**

Box 48

FF 1	Boarders Accounts, 1942-1958
FF 2	Boarders Accounts, 1953-1955
FF 3	Boarders Accounts, 1969-1976
FF 4	Department of Public Assistance checks, 1954
FF 5	Department of Public Assistance checks, 1954-1955

IV. LEGAL

**General Legal files**

Box 49

FF 1	Alto, Amanda, 1973
FF 2	Belloso, Anita, 1977-1978 <b>[RESTRICTED UNTIL 2053]</b>
FF 3	Bissel, Ruth, 1971-1976
FF 4	Clothier, I.H., 1975-1981
FF 5	Clothier, I.H., 1968-1974
FF 6	Clothier, I.H., 1956-1967
FF 7	Code Compliance

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

IV.   LEGAL

**General Legal files**

Box 50

FF 1	Department of Public Welfare
FF 2	Endowed Bed at Pennsylvania Hospital
FF 3	Endowed Funds, 1968-1973
FF 4	Hinchman House, 1968-1973
FF 5	Hinchman House, 1956-1963
FF 6	Income Tax
FF 7	Leamy Home
FF 8	Munro, Elizabeth – Personal Injury
FF 9	Withheld tax
FF 10	Miscellaneous, A-F
FF 11	Miscellaneous, G-M
FF 12	Miscellaneous, N-Z

Box 51

Ralston House

FF 1	Change of Name, 1973-1975
FF 2	Change of Name
FF 3	Labor, 1974-1976
FF 4	Labor, 1975-1976

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

IV.   LEGAL

**General Legal files**

Box 51

Ralston House

FF 5                      Labor, 1971-1975

Box 52

FF 1                      Schenkel vs. IWSWS – Action to Quiet Title

FF 2                      Schenkel vs. IWSWS

FF 3                      Schenkel vs. IWSWS

FF 4                      Schenkel vs. IWSWS

Box 53

FF 1                      Schenkel vs. IWSWS

FF 2                      Schenkel vs. IWSWS

Tilden Home Records

FF 3                      Merger, 1962-1963

FF 4                      Merger agreement, 1962-1963

FF 5                      Barton, John W.

FF 6                      Bush, John S.

FF 7                      Chance, Henry

FF 8                      Clapper, Samuel

**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

**IV. LEGAL**

**General Legal files**

Tilden Home Records

FF 9                      Combes, Mary

Box 54

FF 1                      Dobbins, Mary A.

FF 2                      Graham, John S.

FF 3                      Gross, Joseph W.

FF 4                      Patterson, Robert

FF 5                      Tuttle, Arthur E.

FF 6                      Tuttle, Arthur E.

Box 55

FF 1                      Charter and By-laws, 1876, n.d

FF 2                      Minutes, 1876-1894

FF 3                      Minutes, 1936-1942

FF 4                      Minutes, 1942-1949

FF 5                      Donation Receipt book, 1937-1942

Box 56

FF 1                      Application and Bond book, 1876-1935



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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**IV. LEGAL**

**General Legal files**

**Tilden Home Property**

**Box 57**

FF 1	Property sale, 1962
FF 2	Checkbook stubs, 1876-1882
FF 3	Checkbook stubs, 1882-1910
FF 4	Checkbook stubs, 1910-1916
FF 5	Checkbook stubs, 1916-1945
FF 6	North Philadelphia Savings Association, 1965-1973
FF 7	Cashbook, 1917-1925
FF 8	Cashbook, 1925-1932

**Estate files**

**Box 58**

FF 1	Ashbridge, Samuel, 1957
FF 2	Beck, Minnie, 1963
FF 3	Bletz, Charlotte, 1949-1961
FF 4	Bliss, Eleanor, 1974-1975
FF 5	Brown. Eleanor J., 1946-1964
FF 6	Brownlee, Helen, 1977
FF 7	Burkley, Mary Evelyn, 1962

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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**IV. LEGAL**

**Estate files**

**Box 58**

FF 8	Carroll, Alice, 1955-1964
FF 9	Cochran, Isabella, 1955-1964
FF 10	Craig, Elizabeth M., 1947-1966
FF 11	Curtiss, Elise D.H., 1957-1970
FF 12	Davies, Ann Owens, 1945-1960
FF 13	Doggett, Elizabeth K., 1956-1958
FF 14	Eckhardt, William, 1852
FF 15	Eldrege, Anna L., 1972
FF 16	Ellinger, Josephine, 1981-1982
FF 17	Evans, Selina, 1959
FF 18	Fisher, Sarah, 1964
FF 19	Floss, Adelaide, 1965-1972
FF 20	Foster, Elizabeth M., 1914
FF 21	Franklin, Emma Y., 1958-1960
FF 22	Frazier, Lina, 1957-1959

**Box 59**

FF 1	Frowert, Elzabeth H., 1937-1958
FF 2	Gillardon, Cecelia, 1962-1966

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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**IV. LEGAL**

**Estate files**

**Box 59**

FF 3	Graham, Lulu B., 1944-1964
FF 4	Grimm, John, 1944
	Hinchman, Margretta S.
FF 5	Correspondence, 1953-1956
FF 6	Deeds and papers, 1931-1956
FF 7	Deeds -- Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, 1979
FF 8	Deeds -- Keen Family, 1837-1884
FF 9	Deeds -- Denman, Samuel, 1846
FF 10	Deeds -- Packman, Morton (lease), 1956
FF 11	Miscellaneous, 1884-1951
FF 12	Gray Panthers lease, 1979
FF 13	Hoopes, Edith A., 1964-1965
FF 14	Hume, Anna J., 1935-1967
FF 15	Jayne, Alma C., 1964-1968
FF 16	Jeffries, Anna P., 1929-1942
FF 17	Jenter, Mrs., 1956

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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**IV. LEGAL**

**Estate files**

Box 60

FF 1	Karch, Anna K., 1948-1956
	Keene Memorial Infirmary
FF 2	1951
FF 3	1952 Apr.-May
FF 4	1952 June-July
FF 5	1952 Sept.-Dec.
FF 6	1953 Jan.-Mar.
FF 7	1953 Apr.-June
FF 8	Contract, Conditions, Release of Liens
FF 9	Blueprints
FF 10	Bank Statements, 1952-1953
FF 11	Fund Book, 1952-1953
FF 12	Kenton, Henrietta, 1965-1967
FF 13	Kershaw, Elizabeth W., 1936-1951
FF 14	Keyser, M. Frances, 1957
FF 15	Legar, Mary Ann, 1960-1961

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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**IV. LEGAL**

**Estate files**

**Box 61**

FF 1	Lewis, William, 1819
FF 2	Lindsay, Josephine, 1934
FF 3	Lloyd, Fleurette B., 1959-1962
FF 4	Luccareni, Mabel E., 1956-1959
FF 5	Mascher, Catherine, 1956-1957
FF 6	Marshall, Florence, 1963
FF 7	Martel, Andown, 1962-1963
FF 8	MacDonald, Thomas A., 1967
FF 9	McBride, Mabel, 1946-1977
FF 10	Moore, Leila Ada, 1960-1962
FF 11	Moore, Leila Ada, 1921-1960
FF 12	Moore, Leila Ada, Bank Statements, 1952-1960
FF 13	Morris, Francis E., 1961
FF 14	Peachey, Lillian, 1950-1959
FF 15	Praul, Mary, 1964
FF 16	Price, Mary E., 1961-1963
FF 17	Redmond, Nellie, 1963-1970

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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
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**IV. LEGAL**

**Estate files**

**Box 61**

FF 18	Sauer, Laura, 1964
FF 19	Savill, Mattie, 1941-1962
FF 20	Sayre, Clara B., 1965-1966
FF 21	Schelly, C.Y., 1957
FF 22	Schuyler, M. Eloise, 1962-1963

**Box 62**

FF 1	Sheilds, Mary, 1880-1884
FF 2	Sheilds, Mary – Court proceedings, 1880-1884
FF 3	Smith, Russell, Taylor, 1959-1962
FF 4	Sommers, Sarah M., 1944
FF 5	Stine, Lottie, 1976-1978
FF 6	Super, Mary, 1963-1965
FF 7	Tait, Susan D.
FF 8	Taylor, Ethel, 1963
	Tripple, Matilda
FF 9	Vital papers, 1877, n.d.
FF 10	Correspondence, 1911-1932
FF 11	Correspondence, 1933-1934

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**Indigent Widows' and Single Women's Society /  
Ralston House Records**

IV. LEGAL

**Estate files**

Box 62

FF 12	Insurance, 1925-1956
FF 13	Mary Welsh Estate Correspondence, 1928-1944
FF 14	Mary Welsh Estate Wills
FF 15	Tax Receipts and Employment Records, 1937-1953
FF 16	Miscellaneous
FF 17	Vail, Eleanor, 1962-1967
FF 18	Walker, Sydnor H., 1959
FF 19	Willson, Olive Strong, 1970-1971
FF 20	Wilson, Flora, 1962
FF 21	Wurts, Henrietta Tower Memorial, 1934-1944
FF 22	Miscellaneous

Related Collection Materials Previously at the Historical Society of Pennsylvania – Collection #1400. 400 items.

Includes: Mary L. Richards Butler Subscription List, 1823-1855; Memorandum Book, 1845-1848 and Petty Ledger, 1845-1850; Working Committee Receipt Book, 1835-1840 / reverse - Hannah Tumey Account, 1847; Farmers & Mechanics Bank Account Memorandum, 1839-1853; Correspondence, 1824-1839, 1843-1862, n.d.; Business papers, 1823-1839, 1842-1862; Canceled Checks, 1847-1861; Annual Reports, 1819-1915, 1919, 1925-1949; Constitutions, 1828, 1832, 1847, 1853, [1870?]; Dedication of New Asylum, June 9, 1887; and Dietary Study by Miss Emma Smedley, 1909