



The New York Public Library
Manuscripts and Archives Division

Guide to the

**United States Sanitary Commission records. New England Women's
Auxiliary Association archives**

1861-1865

MssCol 18579

The conservation, arrangement, and description of the collection was made possible by generous funding from the Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust.

Compiled by Elizabeth Delmage, 2013

Summary

Creator: United States Sanitary Commission

Title: United States Sanitary Commission records. New England Women's Auxiliary Association archives

Date: 1861-1865

Size: 5.04 linear feet (12 boxes, 1 volume)

Source: Donated by the United States Sanitary Commission to the Astor Library, 1879

Abstract: The New England Women's Auxiliary Association (NEWAA) was established on November 28, 1861 in Boston, Massachusetts as an auxiliary branch of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC). The New England Women's Auxiliary Association Archives, 1861-1865, consist of the extant records of its Executive Committee. Included are correspondence, packing lists, record books, and index volumes documenting its efforts to collect and distribute supplies for the USSC, and to spread information about the Commission's work throughout New England, particularly in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Preferred citation: United States Sanitary Commission records. New England Women's Auxiliary Association archives, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library

Processing note: Compiled by Elizabeth Delmage, 2013 Revised December 2013

Related Materials:

New England Women's Auxiliary Association records, 1861-1887. Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts..

Creator History

The New England Women's Auxiliary Association (NEWAA) was established on November 28, 1861 in Boston, Massachusetts as an auxiliary branch of the United States Sanitary Commission (USSC). NEWAA worked throughout New England to solicit contributions and supplies for Union forces, and to

forward those supplies to Union camps and hospitals, and to USSC supply depots, departments and relief stations that the USSC deemed most in need. In addition, NEWAA endeavored to raise public awareness of the USSC and its mission.

NEWAA's business was conducted by four officers, initially John Ware as president, Samuel G. Howe as vice-president, Rufus Ellis as secretary, and George Higginson as treasurer, as well as three standing committees and a group of associate managers from towns throughout New England. The three standing committees were the Executive Committee, the Industrial Committee, and the Finance Committee. NEWAA's premises were located at 22 Summer Street, Boston, until the spring of 1864, when it moved to 18 West Street. At that time, the Industrial Committee took separate space at a savings bank on Temple Place.

The Executive Committee was responsible for the general management of NEWAA's affairs, including all goods and supplies sent to the Association. The Executive Committee maintained records of all the supplies received and forwarded each day, and communicated regularly with the general and assistant secretaries of the Commission in Washington, DC, in order to determine which supplies were most needed and where to forward them. They also worked with the Executive Committee of Boston Associates from its inception in April 1863, providing supplies for their special relief services to local soldiers; Henry B. Rogers of that Committee also served as President of NEWAA from 1864-1865. Abby W. May (1829-1888), a well-known Boston philanthropist associated with NEWAA from its founding, served as chairman of NEWAA's Executive Committee from February 1862 until the Association was dissolved in the spring of 1866.

The Industrial Committee, chaired by Mrs. Frank W. Andrews, oversaw the making of clothing and bedding for soldiers and hospitals. It provided patterns and fabric for distribution to sewing circles and soldiers aid societies throughout New England, and to women in need whose work was paid for by benefactors. The Finance Committee worked to solicit and obtain subscriptions to the Bulletin and donations for the use of the Commission.

In addition to these three committees, women in communities throughout New England were invited by the Executive Committee to become associate managers. Associate managers were asked to determine where sewing circles and soldiers aid societies existed within their districts, to encourage them to associate with the USSC, and to organize societies if none existed. The managers corresponded regularly with members of the Executive Committee and submitted monthly reports on the state of affairs in their district. Isa E. Gray handled much of this work until early 1864; eventually individual Committee members were assigned to correspond with managers of a particular state.

In 1862, NEWAA narrowed its field of operations to Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. Connecticut and Rhode Island contributors sent their supplies to the USSC's Woman's Central Association of Relief (WCAR) in New York, since it was more efficient geographically for these states to ship to New York rather than Boston for supplies destined to go south or west. However, Katharine P. Wormeley of Newport, Rhode Island and Mrs. S.J. Cowen of Hartford, Connecticut served as associate managers for NEWAA.

The USSC was not alone in seeking individual and community support to reach its goals. Various relief organizations, such as the U.S. Christian Commission, were often canvassing in the same localities. In October 1864, NEWAA began a series of lectures throughout New England in an effort to gain more support and promote awareness about USSC activities, asking those who had worked in the field for the Sanitary Commission to speak to the general public of their experiences. NEWAA offered over 200 lectures throughout New England during the final months of the war.

When NEWAA's supply work ended in July 1865, it shifted its efforts to meet the needs of discharged soldiers and their families by distributing clothing, food, and fuel, and assisting with rent, employment, and transportation. Abby May encouraged NEWAA's members to circulate information about the USSC's claim agencies, and to support efforts to employ disabled discharged soldiers. The work of the Association came to a close on April 1, 1866.

Scope and Content Note

The New England Women's Auxiliary Association Archives, 1861-1865, consist of the extant records of its Executive Committee. Included are correspondence, packing lists, record books, and index volumes documenting its efforts to collect and distribute supplies for the USSC, and to spread information about the Commission's work throughout New England, particularly in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

The Committee's incoming correspondence, 1861 Dec-1865 Oct, is comprised of letters received chiefly from associate managers and representatives from soldier aid societies in Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Associate managers were asked to report monthly to the corresponding Executive Committee member describing the activities and progress in their district. There are acknowledgments of the receipt of materials (e.g. pamphlets, reports, circulars, and sewing patterns) from NEWAA's Boston office, and requests for advice on how to generate support for NEWAA and the USSC. Letters also include packing lists of supplies sent to NEWAA for distribution, and acceptances and regrets to invitations from the Executive Committee to attend annual meetings or to become associate managers or committee members. Outgoing correspondence, 1861 Dec-1865 Oct, consists of a single letterpress copybook of letters sent primarily to the USSC's Washington office, and a record book of telegrams sent by Abby W. May. Also present are two correspondence registers, 1862-1865 Aug.

NEWAA's efforts in 1863-1865 to increase support for the USSC by holding public lectures throughout New England are reflected in a record book providing details about individual lectures, and a related index of lectures by town.

Supply records, 1861 Dec-1865 Oct, consist of registers of the supplies collected and forwarded by NEWAA, as well as inventories and tabulations. Supplies included clothing, bedding, foodstuffs, alcohol, books, and medical items such as bandages and crutches. Shipments were sent to various USSC supply depots, offices, lodges, and locations in the field, as well as Army camps, regiments, and hospitals. Receiving locations frequently included Baltimore; Philadelphia; New Bern, North Carolina; New York; and Washington, DC.

Indexes, 1862-1865, identify individuals, aid societies, associate managers and localities that cooperated with NEWAA in its endeavor to support the USSC. Also present is an index of soldiers who received individual relief, such as items of clothing, from NEWAA.

During the USSC's 1878 arrangement, a large amount of numbered letters and other documents were identified as destroyed. A limited number of financial records from the early months of this organization can be found in the USSC Accounts and Vouchers record group.

Container List

I. Correspondence 1861 Dec-1865 Oct

b. 1 f. 1-6 **Numbered documents 1861 Dec-1862 Jan**

The numbered documents in this series (1-107) are the remnant of a much larger group of records. Documents 1 through 10700 were individually numbered, abstracted, and listed in Archive Department register, New York volume 12 during the 1865 arrangement. During the 1878 arrangement documents 108 through 10700 were removed and identified for destruction. According to the register, those documents consisted of letters and other documents, such as packing lists, concerning shipments, applications of nurses, donations, and other matters. Readers may wish to consult the register for additional context. Numbers 10701 through 11233 comprise the letters from associate managers described below. They are identified only by their number range in the register. The majority of these numbered documents are packing lists of supplies sent from aid societies to NEWAA for distribution. Also present are letters from persons working with the USSC, individuals, and aid societies to members of the Executive Committee, including Hannah Appleton, Isa E. Gray, Sarah L. Hunt, Abby W. May, and Samuel G. Howe, the vice president of NEWAA.

Letters from associate managers 1862 Nov-1865 Sep

Letterbooks for each state were disbound at a previous date. With the exception of letters from Maine, USSC Archive Department clerks assigned red numbers 10701 through 11233 to letters from early war years. These were perhaps meant to be registered individually in Archive Register 907, but this was never carried out and only the range of numbers appears in the register. No other indexes have been found. Thus, the red numbers found on these letters are no longer functional for access. For this time period, letters for each state (Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont) have since been arranged alphabetically by town and chronologically by date within, reflecting the original order underlying the red numbering system. USSC Archive Department clerks did not continue this practice with letters from later war years. Instead, letters from each state are numbered consecutively reflecting rough chronological order. They are accessible through the original letter book indexes providing alphabetical access to towns, with corresponding letter numbers. This system applies to all letters from Maine. Indexes are present for letters from Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The index for Massachusetts letters also includes a list of all the numbers assigned to the letters, in numerical order, with the corresponding Massachusetts town that the letter was from.

Maine

These letters were addressed to members of the Executive Committee including Isa E. Gray, Abby W. May, Annie T. Endicott, and Mary S. Felton.

1862 Nov-1864 May

b. 1 f. 7-17 **1-216**

Letter 12 from Bath, Maine not found.

b. 1 f. 18 **Index**

1864 May-1865 Aug

b. 2 f. 1-9 **1-167**

b. 2 f. 10 **Index**

Massachusetts

These letters were addressed to members of the Executive Committee including Hannah Appleton, Isa E. Gray, Annette P. Rogers, and Martha C. Stevenson.

1862 Nov-1864 Oct

Towns represented: Abington, Andover, Attleboro, Barre, Barnstable, Cambridge, Concord, Danvers, Dedham, Deerfield, East Bridgewater, Fall River, Fitchburg, Framingham, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Hingham, Ipswich, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lexington, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Medfield, New Bedford, Newburyport, Newton, North Adams, North Bridgewater, Northampton, Northfield, Pepperell, Plymouth, Provincetown, Quincy, Reading, Salem, Sheffield, Somerville, Southbridge, Taunton, Uxbridge, Wareham, West Brookfield, West Medfield, West Tisbury, Westfield, Woburn, Worcester

b. 2 f. 11-35 **A - M**

b. 3 f. 1-25 **N - W**

I. Correspondence (cont.)

Letters from associate managers (cont.)

Massachusetts (cont.)

1864 Sep-1865 Sep

b. 3 f. 26-35 1-200

b. 3 f. 36 Index

New Hampshire

These letters were addressed to members of the Executive Committee including Hannah Appleton, Isa E. Gray, Abby W. May, Annie T. Endicott, and Miss F. P. Fox.

1862 Nov-1863 Dec

Towns represented: Amherst, Atkinson, Boscawen, Charlestown, Claremont, Concord, Derry, Dover, Exeter, Fitzwilliam, Hampstead, Hanover, Hartford (Connecticut), Keene, Lancaster, Manchester, Meredith Centre, Meredith Village, Nashua, North Weare, Ossipee, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Rindge, Winchester

b. 4 f. 1-25 A - W

1864 Jan-1865 Aug

b. 4 f. 26-30 1-104

b. 4 f. 31 Index

Vermont

These letters were addressed to members of the Executive Committee including Isa E. Gray, Abby W. May, Grace Heath, Mrs. G. S. Curtis, Annie T. Endicott, and Miss S. G. Cary.

1862 Oct-1865 Jul

Towns represented: Barre, Bennington, Berlin, Brattleboro, Burlington, Chelsea, Concord, Coventry, Danby, Derby, East Calais, East Dorset, East Hardwick, East Warren, Fayetteville, Hardwick, Hyde Park, Irasburg, Johnson, Manchester, Middlebury, Montpelier, Moretown, New Haven, Newbury, Newport, Northfield, Rutland, St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, South Hero, South Woodbury, Vergennes, Waitsfield, Washington, Waterbury, Watertown (New York), Waterville, West Brattleboro, West Concord, Windsor, Woodstock, Worcester

b. 4 f. 32-50 B - I

b. 5 f. 1-25 J - W

1863 Dec-1865 Jan

b. 5 f. 26-31 1-122

b. 5 f. 32 Index

Outgoing correspondence 1861 Dec-1865 Oct

v. 1 **Letterpress copybook 1861 Dec 27-1865 Aug 18**

Letters sent by members of NEWAA's Executive Committee primarily to Alfred J. Bloor, assistant secretary of the USSC, in Washington, DC. Also included are brief letters sent by John S. Blatchford, secretary of the Executive Committee of Boston Associates on 1863 Jul 8-9 in Boston to Frederick L. Olmsted, general secretary of the USSC, concerning the shipment of supplies for Gettysburg.

b. 12 **Telegrams 1864 Oct-1865 Oct 9**

v. 1 Transcriptions of telegrams sent by Abby W. May to persons working with the USSC.

Correspondence registers 1862-1865 Aug

b. 12 **Register of correspondence with Maine associate managers 1864 Oct-1865**
 v. 2 Aug

Entries include the dates that letters were sent and received, listed separately in chronological order. Entries are arranged by county, and thereunder by town, with the name of the associate manager. Place names are not in alphabetical order.

b. 12 **Register of correspondence with associate managers 1862-1864**
 v. 3

Entries include the dates that the Executive Committee, predominately Isa E. Gray, answered letters received from associate managers in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. Entries are arranged by state, thereunder by county, and thereunder by town, with the name of associate manager. These dates correspond with Gray's notations in the letterbooks.

II. Lectures 1863-1865

II. Lectures (cont.)

b. 12 **Record of lectures 1863-1864**

v. 4 Information includes the date, place and brief description of lecture given; with occasional reference to correspondence. Entries are arranged by name of lecturer (not in alphabetical order) and thereunder chronologically. Lecturers are listed on the inside back cover. The volume contains Abby W. May's initials.

b. 12 **Index of lectures 1864-1865**

v. 5 Entries include town, state, date of lecture, and lecturer's name, with brief comments on attendance and relative success. Entries are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of town name. Lecturers are listed on inside back cover.

III. Supplies 1861 Dec-1865 Oct

Outgoing supplies 1861 Dec-1865 Oct

Forwarding books contain detailed records of individual packages readied for shipment. Invoice books reflect actual shipments, generally arranged according to destination or depot for further shipment. The method of transportation and shipping costs are usually noted. It is possible to correlate the entries in these two groups of volumes by comparison of the data.

b. 9 f. 1-4 **Forwarding books 1861 Dec-1865 Oct**

Journals recording outgoing shipments, mainly to USSC locations, such as offices, homes, lodges and depots, but also to U.S. Army hospitals, camps, regiments, individual soldiers, and others. Entries include the packing letter and number for each individual package, date of packing, shipping number, brief description of contents, date of shipment, destination, and name of the Executive Committee member who shipped the package. Entries are initially in one chronological order. Beginning in February 1863, shipments were classified under general headings, such as shirts, drawers, bedding, sundries of clothing, stores (e.g., alcohol and foodstuffs), special boxes, special soldiers, and miscellaneous. Special boxes were usually shipments sent as a courtesy for various persons, and special soldiers generally referred to items given or sent to soldiers as a form of individual relief.

Invoice books 1862-1865

Journals recording outgoing shipments, mainly to major eastern USSC supply depots or offices, organized generally by destination. Entries include the shipping number and packing letter and number (corresponding to those found in the forwarding books), the contents of the shipment, and the name of the Executive Committee member who prepared the shipment. Later entries also include the method of transportation and/or shipping agent, and shipping costs.

b. 9 f. 5 **Washington, DC and New Bern, North Carolina 1862-1864**

Shipments 1862 Apr 30-1864 Apr 9 are mainly to Washington; other locations include Baltimore and Philadelphia. Entries beginning from the back cover, dating 1862 Nov 4-1864 Oct 13, are mainly to New Bern. Other locations include New York, New Orleans, other points in North Carolina and South Carolina, Baltimore, and Philadelphia.

b. 10 f. 1 **Washington, DC 1864 Apr 14-1865 Sep 8**

b. 10 f. 2 **New York 1864 Sep 15-1865 Jul 12**

b. 10 f. 3 **Baltimore 1864 Oct 19-1865 May 31**

Shipments mainly to Baltimore; other locations include Annapolis, Maryland and Martinsburg, West Virginia.

b. 10 f. 4 **Supplies received, forwarded, on hand 1863 May 2-1865 Jul 15 (1 v)**

Record book of weekly inventories

b. 10 f. 5 **Statements showing receipts in kind 1862-1863, 1865**

Monthly tabulations of supplies received

Incoming supplies 1861 Dec-1865 Sep

Volumes listing supplies received reflect the initial control over arriving shipments. Daily record books reflect the subsequent unpacking and inventory of each shipment's contents. Dates and item numbers found in each group of volumes reflect the date and probably the sequence in which the work was done. Entries in both groups can be correlated with each other, but the dates and item numbers do not match exactly.

III. Supplies (cont.)

Incoming supplies (cont.)

- b. 12 **Supplies received 1861 Dec-1865 Sep**
 - v. 6-14 Journals recording shipments received. States typically represented include Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Entries include the name of sender (associate managers, aid societies, individuals, companies, and localities) and, in some cases, a brief description of the shipment's contents. Shipments entered each day are numbered in order from 1. Contents are listed in detail in the daily record books.
- Daily record books 1862 Jan-1865 Sep**
 - Journals recording the unpacked contents of shipments received. Entries include the sender, place, and list of contents. Senders include associate managers, aid societies, individuals, companies, and localities as well as NEWAA's Industrial Committee. Shipments entered each day are numbered in order from 1.
- b. 6 f. 1-7 **1862 Jan 23-Sep 29 (7 v.)**
 - b. 7 f. 1-5 **1862 Sep 30-1864 Apr 18 (5 v.)**
 - b. 8 f. 1-5 **1864 Apr 19-1865 Sep 20 (5 v.)**
- b. 8 f. 6 **Register of supplies received from associate managers 1863 Dec-1865 Jul (1 v.)**
 - Entries (date of receipt) are arranged by state (Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts), and thereunder alphabetically by district with name of associate manager and list of associated towns. This volume contains an alphabetical index (with appendix) to towns with page numbers. Dates correlate with entries in the daily record books for incoming supplies.

IV. Indexes 1862-1865

- b. 10 f. 6-9 **Indexes of towns cooperating 1862-1865**
 - Entries include town, state, aid society name (abbreviated), and name of individual or officer representing the society. States represented typically include Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont; other states are also found. Entries in each volumes are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of the town name. The 1862 volume contains a key for the abbreviations used for aid society names.
- b. 11 f. 1-4 **Indexes of individuals cooperating 1862-1865**
 - Entries include name of person supporting NEWAA, abbreviated name of aid society (if affiliated with one), town and state. Entries in each volume (one for each year) are in alphabetical order by initial letter of town name.
- b. 12 **Donations to individual soldiers 1862 Jun-1863 Apr**
 - v. 15 Entries include the name of the soldier receiving individual relief (articles of clothing), regiment or branch of service, and the date and kind of supplies issued. Entries are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of surname. Names can be correlated to entries under special soldiers in the forwarding books for this time period.
- b. 12 **Index of associate managers 1863**
 - v. 16 Entries provide the town, state and name of associate manager, and are arranged alphabetically by initial letter of town name. States represented include Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont.
- Indexes of cooperating societies**
 - Entries include town, state and abbreviated society name. States represented include Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. Entries in each volume are arranged alphabetically by town.
- b. 12 **1863-1864**
 - v. 17
- b. 12 **1865**
 - v. 18
- b. 12 **Undated**
 - v. 19