



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

Riverdale Children's Association Records

1889-1957

Sc MG 300

Schomburg NEH Automated Access to Special Collections Project

Summary

Creator: Riverdale Children's Association (New York, N.Y.)

Title: Riverdale Children's Association Records

Date: 1889-1957

Size: 1.5 linear feet (3 boxes)

Source: Gift of the Riverdale Children's Association, 1989.

Revision History: Finding aid updated by Lauren Stark.

Abstract: The Riverdale Children's Association was founded by a group of Quakers in 1836, as the Colored Orphan Asylum in New York City; it was the first institution in the United States dedicated to the care of African American children. The Asylum organized its own school, as there were no public school facilities for orphans, and at age 12, the children were indentured to learn a trade. Members of the Board of Trustees were Protestant. The Asylum's facilities moved several times, and its second home at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan was burned to the ground during the New York City Draft Riots in 1863. In 1918, children began to be placed in foster homes, and in 1944, the name was changed to Riverdale Children's Association; at this time, the majority of the children were not orphans but were neglected and dependent. White children were also admitted at this time. The home is presently closed and the association now serves as a foster home placement agency. Records of the Riverdale Children's Association consist of registers listing names of children admitted; cause of admission; parents' names; name and address of individual who brought in the child; amount of payment person or city agreed to pay per week for board, tuition and clothing; and contagious diseases and immunization records. Some entries include whether the child was baptized, whether siblings were admitted, and discharge date and name of person taking responsibility for child. Registers cover the years 1889-1916, with discharge dates extending to 1925. Collection also contains admission and discharge registers, which includes information on the disposition of the child, 1900-1914; scrapbooks containing news clippings, 1936-1957; and a centennial edition pamphlet of the history of the asylum, 1936.

Conditions Governing Access:

No photographs of registers; confidentiality form required.

Preferred citation: [Item], Riverdale Children's Association Records, Sc MG 300, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Processing note: Accessioned by Janice Quinter, December 1991.

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs.

Creator History

The Riverdale Children's Association was founded by a group of Quakers in 1836, as the Colored Orphan Asylum in New York City; it was the first institution in the United States dedicated to the care of African American children. The Asylum organized its own school, as there were no public school facilities for orphans, and at age 12, the children were indentured to learn a trade. Members of the Board of Trustees were Protestant. The Asylum's facilities moved several times, and its second home at 42nd Street and Fifth Avenue in Manhattan was burned to the ground during the New York City Draft Riots in 1863. In 1918, children began to be placed in foster homes, and in 1944, the name was changed to Riverdale Children's Association; at this time, the majority of the children were not orphans but were neglected and dependent. White children were also admitted at this time. The home is presently closed and the association now serves as a foster home placement agency.

Scope and Content Note

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Key Terms

Subjects

African American children
African American families
Children -- Institutional care -- United States
Orphanages
Orphans

Names

Colored Orphan Asylum and Association for the Benefit of Colored Orphans (New York, N.Y.)
Riverdale Children's Association (New York, N.Y.)

Container List

Admissions registers

- b. 1 f. 1 1889-1907
- b. 1 f. 2 1907-1923
- b. 1 f. 3 Admission and Discharge register 1900-1914
- b. 1 f. 4 Centennial edition of the history of the asylum pamphlet 1936

Scrapbooks

- b. 2 f. 1 1936-1946
- b. 2 f. 2 1940-1944
- b. 3 f. 1 1947-1950
- b. 3 f. 2 1954-1957