

Haverhill Old Ladies Home Association Collection, 1856-2007

Collection Summary

Reference Code:	MRQ, US.
Repository:	Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
Call Number:	MSS 24
Creator:	Haverhill Old Ladies Home Association
Title:	Haverhill Old Ladies Home Association Collection, 1856-2007
Dates:	1856-2007
Size:	1.834 linear feet (3 boxes, 8 volumes)
Language(s):	Collection materials are in English.
Abstract:	This collection provides information about the history and activities of the Haverhill Old Ladies Home, later renamed the Stevens-Bennett Home.

Organizational History

Early in 1856, fourteen women chosen from the seven churches in Haverhill, Massachusetts, held a levee (an entertainment) to raise funds for charitable purposes. The group wanted to build a "home for aged women." The original name of the Ladies Charitable Society was changed in 1865 to Old Ladies Home Association. Their goal was to raise \$20,000; they raised money from annual dues, memberships, festivals, and bequests. In 1875, George Stevens bequeathed \$5000 to the organization and they decided to build a house at 337 Main Street.

On 18 October 1876, the home was dedicated, but only two floors were available. Later eleven men donated \$600 so that the rooms on the third floor could be finished. In 1900, the northeast wing was added thanks to a bequest from the estate of Decatur Bennett and other gifts. In 1902, a much needed hospital room was added. There were then 23 women living at the Home. A hospital wing was added in 1908. The women who entered the Home were required to pay an entrance fee and in addition, they signed over to the Home all that they owned. In return, the Home took care of every need for the rest of their lives. The residents were involved with the actual work of caring for the Home, canning, and gardening.

The Community Chest was formed in Haverhill in 1942, and the Old Ladies Home Board of Managers voted to join it. The Home received funds yearly from it. In 1953, major renovations were completed. Due to state regulations, in 1973 it became necessary to close the infirmary

and to become a “level 4” rest home. In 1976, it was decided to rename the Home, the Stevens-Bennett Home, in recognition of the philanthropy of George Stevens and Decatur Bennett. In 2017, the property was sold to Ivy Hill Court. As of 2021, the Home operates as an assisted living facility.

Scope and Content Note

This collection provides information about the history and activities of the Haverhill Old Ladies Home, later renamed the Stevens-Bennett Home. The collection is made up of ten series. Series one provides information about the history of the Stevens-Bennett House. Series two contains the charter and additional information about the charter. Series three contains twelve subseries; included are materials about the board, committee assignments, treasurer reports and agreements. Series four has the rules and regulations for the women. Series five has letters and correspondence to the home. Series six has listings of members. Series seven has programs from entertainments for the women or to raise money for the home. Series eight has two newsletters that the women put together. Series nine has newspaper clippings that provide an overview of the home and historical information. Series ten has one undated photograph of the Stevens-Bennett Home.

Arrangement

Series 1: History, undated

Series 2: Charter, 1865, 1873

Series 3: Governance, 1856-1987, undated

Subseries 3.1: Constitutions and By-Laws, 1868-1869, 1876, 1987

Subseries 3.2: Board, 1924-1977, undated

Subseries 3.3: Committees and Members, 1882-1952, undated

Subseries 3.4: Annual Reports, 1884-1917

Subseries 3.5: Memberships of the Old Ladies Home, 1929, undated

Subseries 3.6: Meeting Minutes, 1856-1977

Subseries 3.7: Treasurer Reports, 1887-1899

Subseries 3.8: Payments Received, 1874-1891

Subseries 3.9: Donations and Bequests, 1889, 1908, 1941, undated

Subseries 3.10: Expenditures 1897-1898, undated

Subseries 3.11: Agreements, 1883

Subseries 3.12: Specifications for Heating Old Ladies Home, 1888

Series 4: Rules and Regulations for the Women, undated

Series 5: Letters and Correspondence, 1877-1889, 1994-2001, undated

Series 6: Members, 1876-1929, 1950-1952, undated

Series 7: Entertainments, 1871, 1882-1884, 1996, 2001, undated

Series 8: “The Ladies Diary” Newsletter, 1994

Series 9: Newspaper Clippings, 1868-2007, undated

Series 10: Photographs, undated

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation:	[Item Identification], Haverhill Old Ladies Home Association Collection, 1856-2007, <i>Reference Code</i> , Special Collections, Haverhill Public Library, Haverhill, Massachusetts.
Custodial History:	Found in collection.
Acquisition Information:	Found in collection. One copy of the 1869 Constitution was a gift of Mrs. Arthur Jacobs.
Processing Information:	Processed by Erik R. Bauer, 2020. Updated by Tamara Gaydos, 2021.
Access Rights:	Collection is open for research.
Phys. Access Restrictions:	None.
Tech. Access Restrictions:	None.
Copyright:	Copyright has not been assigned to the Haverhill Public Library. All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the Board of Trustees. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the Haverhill Public Library as the owner of the physical items and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder, which must also be obtained by the researcher.
Related Material:	MSS 21 Haverhill Female Benevolent Society
Separated Material:	None.
Conservation Notes:	Newspaper clippings were photocopied onto archival quality paper. Staples were removed. Loose sheets of paper from bound volumes were removed and placed in the appropriate series or subseries. Some materials received deacidification spray to ensure further preservation.
Subjects:	Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.) Charitable societies Kimball, Mary J. Nursing homes Old Ladies Home Older women Stevens-Bennett Home

Collection Inventory

Series 1: History, undated

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Story of the Steven-Bennett Home, undated	1	1

Series 2: Charter, 1865, 1873

Charter, 1865	1	2
Appendix to Secretary's Report, 1873	1	3

Series 3: Governance, 1856-1987, undated

Subseries 3.1: Constitutions and By-Laws, 1868-1869, 1876, 1987

Constitution and By-Laws, 1869, 1876, 1987	1	4
Constitution and By-Laws in <i>The May Blossom</i> , 1868-1869	1	5

Subseries 3.2: Board, 1924-1977, undated

Old Ladies Home Officers and Addresses, undated	1	6
Board Communications, 1937, 1949, 1952, undated	1	7
Board Voted Authorizations, 1924-1977	1	8
Board Voted Authorizations, undated	1	9

Subseries 3.3: Committees and Members, 1882-1952, undated

Committee Members, 1882-1952	1	10
Report of the House Committee, undated	1	11

Subseries 3.4: Annual Reports, 1884-1917

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Annual Reports, 1884-1917	1	12

Subseries 3.5: Memberships of the Old Ladies Home, 1929 undated

List of Honorary Members, undated [circa 1950]	1	13
Life Memberships, 1929	1	14
Members of the Old Ladies Home, undated	1	15

Subseries 3.6: Meeting Minutes, 1856-1977

Monthly Meeting Notes, 1880-1888	1	16
Monthly Meeting Notes, 1888-1899	1	17
Special Meeting Notice, 1888	1	18
Special Meeting Notes 1888	1	19
Constitution & Meeting Minutes, 1856-1864	3	
Meeting Minutes, 1908-1918	Volume 2	
Meeting Minutes, 1918-1934	Volume 3	
Meeting Minutes, 1934-1943	Volume 4	
Meeting Minutes, February 1944-January 1953	Volume 5	
Meeting Minutes, February 1953-February 1965	Volume 6	
Meeting Minutes, February 1965-1977	Volume 7	

Subseries 3.7: Treasurer Reports, 1887-1899

Treasurer Reports, 1887-1899	1	20
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Subseries 3.8: Payments Received, 1874-1891

Payments Received, 1874-1891	1	21
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Subseries 3.9: Donations and Bequests, 1889, 1908, 1941, undated

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Donations and Bequests, 1889, undated	1	22
Copy of Ella S. Marble Will, 1908	1	23
Florence M. Chance Bequest, 1941	1	24

Subseries 3.10: Expenditures 1897-1898, undated

Expenditures, 1897-1898, undated	1	25
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Subseries 3.11: Agreements, 1883

Agreement Between Old Ladies Home and Alice Tufts, 1883	1	26
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Subseries 3.12: Specifications for Heating Old Ladies Home, 1888

Specifications for Heating Old Ladies Home, 1888	1	27
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Series 4: Rules and Regulations for the Women, undated

Rules & Regulations for Women Living at the Home, undated	1	28
Rules for the Inmates, undated	1	29
Rules for Old Ladies Home, undated	1	30

Series 5: Letters and Correspondence, 1877-1889, 1994-2001, undated

Old Ladies Home Seal, undated	1	31
Note, 1877	1	32
Letters, 1878	1	33
Letters, 1879	1	34
Letters, 1886	1	35
Correspondence with N. F. Sawyer, 1888	1	36

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Letter from Moody & Bartlett to Mrs. John Crowell, 1889	1	37
Letters, undated	1	38
Christmas Cards, 1994-1995, 1999, 2001	1	39
Life Membership Certificate, 1869	1	40
Series 6: Members, 1876-1929, 1950-1952, undated		
Applications for Residency, 1884-1890, undated	1	41
Account of Admissions, 1880-1896	1	42
Lists of Residents, 1876-1899	1	43
Age of Residents, undated	1	44
Calling Schedule, 1950-1952, undated	1	45
Old Ladies Home Residents, 1876-1929	Volume 8	
Series 7: Entertainments, 1871, 1882, 1884, 1996, 2001, undated		
Entertainments, 1871, 1882, 1884, 1996, 2001, undated	1	46
Series 8: "The Ladies Diary" Newsletter, 1994		
"The Ladies Diary" Newsletter, 1994	1	47
Series 9: Newspaper Clippings, 1868-2007, undated		
Newspaper Clippings, 1868	2	48
Newspaper Clippings, 1875	2	49
Newspaper Clippings, 1876	2	50
Newspaper Clippings, 1878	2	51
Newspaper Clippings, 1879	2	52
Newspaper Clippings, 1880	2	53
Newspaper Clippings, 1882	2	54
Newspaper Clippings, 1885	2	55

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Newspaper Clippings, 1886	2	56
Newspaper Clippings, 1888	2	57
Newspaper Clippings, 1889	2	58
Newspaper Clippings, 1890	2	59
Newspaper Clippings, 1891	2	60
Newspaper Clippings, 1892	2	61
Newspaper Clippings, 1894	2	62
Newspaper Clippings, 1895	2	63
Newspaper Clippings, 1896	2	64
Newspaper Clippings, 1897	2	65
Newspaper Clippings, 1898	2	66
Newspaper Clippings, 1899	2	67
Newspaper Clippings, 1900	2	68
Newspaper Clippings, 1901	2	69
Newspaper Clippings, 1903	2	70
Newspaper Clippings, 1904	2	71
Newspaper Clippings, 1905	2	72
Newspaper Clippings, 1906	2	73
Newspaper Clippings, 1907	2	74
Newspaper Clippings, 1908	2	75
Newspaper Clippings, 1909	2	76
Newspaper Clippings, 1910	2	77
Newspaper Clippings, 1911	2	78
Newspaper Clippings, 1912	2	79
Newspaper Clippings, 1913	2	80
Newspaper Clippings, 1914	2	81
Newspaper Clippings, 1915	2	82

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Newspaper Clippings, 1916	2	83
Newspaper Clippings, 1917	2	84
Newspaper Clippings, 1918	2	85
Newspaper Clippings, 1919	2	86
Newspaper Clippings, 1921	2	87
Newspaper Clippings, 1922	2	88
Newspaper Clippings, 1923	2	89
Newspaper Clippings, 1925	2	90
Newspaper Clippings, 1926	2	91
Newspaper Clippings, 1927	2	92
Newspaper Clippings, 1928	2	93
Newspaper Clippings, 1930	2	94
Newspaper Clippings, 1931	2	95
Newspaper Clippings, 1932	2	96
Newspaper Clippings, 1933	2	97
Newspaper Clippings, 1934	2	98
Newspaper Clippings, 1935	2	99
Newspaper Clippings, 1936	2	100
Newspaper Clippings, 1938	2	101
Newspaper Clippings, 1939	2	102
Newspaper Clippings, 1940	2	103
Newspaper Clippings, 1941	2	104
Newspaper Clippings, 1942	2	105
Newspaper Clippings, 1947	2	106
Newspaper Clippings, 1948	2	107
Newspaper Clippings, 1950s	2	108
Newspaper Clippings, 1960s	2	109

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Container Number</u>	<u>Folder Number</u>
Newspaper Clippings, 1976	2	110
Newspaper Clippings, 1984	2	111
Newspaper Clippings, 2003	2	112
Newspaper Clippings, 2004	2	113
Newspaper Clippings, 2006	2	114
Newspaper Clippings, 2007	2	115
Newspaper Clippings, undated	2	116
Clippings Scrapbook, 1868-1905	Volume 9	
Series 10: Photographs, undated		
Photograph of Stevens-Bennett Home, undated	2	117