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## "System of Silence": Philadelphia Orphanages and the Limits of Benevolence, 1780s-1830s

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### Recommended Citation

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“A System of Silence”:  
Philadelphia Orphanages and the Limits of  
Benevolence, 1780s-1830s

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Honors Thesis  
Professor Jason Opal  
Spring 2008

I am indebted to many for their assistance with this thesis. Funding for archival research was provided by the Dean of Faculty at Colby College and the Jonathan Barry Research Grant at Colby's History Department. I would like to thank Dan O'Sullivan of the Farnham Writer's Center for working with me throughout the writing process and Professor Robert Weisbrot for serving as this project's second reader. Most importantly I would like to thank Professor Jason Opal; his continued advising and support, grounded in his passion for history and for life, has made this paper possible.

## **Abstract:**

In 1831, Mathew Carey, a well-known Philadelphia economist, wrote a city official describing the situation of black children in the city. He called for the creation of an orphanage to aid these children and described the motives for this action as not only the “humanity and benevolence” of Philadelphians, but also “personal interest”, as this class could otherwise turn “lawless”. Unknown to Carey, the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans had been established in 1822 by a group of benevolent Quaker women dedicated to aiding this destitute class in an effort to promote compensatory justice for generations of oppression under slavery. The founders of the association were not concerned with personal interest, and operated under “a system of silence” for years. Marked by a political, controversial, and sometimes violent debate over the abolition movement and the rights of freed African Americans, the 1830s proved a tumultuous time for the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans. Despite these challenges, the female Friends who ran the organization held firm to their mission of caring for black orphans despite little support from the state and monetary donations from only a limited number of Philadelphians; progress was measured by the “humble indicator” of differences made in the lives of individual children. Unlike the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans, the Orphan Society of Philadelphia, established in 1814, saw “extensive liberality” from all corners of Philadelphia. Their asylum, which did not admit black orphans, was heralded as one of the most benevolent institutions in the city. A comparison of these two orphanages illuminates entirely different motivations, mindsets, and frameworks through which the history of humanitarianism and benevolence can be explored.

## **Table of Contents:**

Introduction: Mathew Carey's Appeal

Section 1: Benevolence in the Young Republic: Charity and Race in Philadelphia

Section 2: *The Most Worthy Institution*: The Orphan Society of Philadelphia

Section 3: *The Most Worthy Cause*: The Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans

Section 4: One City, Two Missions: Public Assertion and Compensatory Justice

Conclusion: Rescued from Obscurity

**Introduction: Mathew Carey's Appeal**

In 1831, Mathew Carey, a Philadelphia economist well known for writing on behalf of the impoverished, wrote a letter on the grave situation of black orphans in Philadelphia. Dated February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1831, the letter was addressed to a man named Samuel, whose surname is illegible. While the occupation of the addressee is unknown, the tone of the letter indicates that he was likely a public figure like Carey. The effects of this letter, too, are unknown, but it illuminated the changing attitudes towards the care of orphans, and more broadly, those in need, in nineteenth century America:<sup>1</sup>

Sir, The situation of the Children of the Coloured population of our City, makes a strong appeal to the humanity and benevolence of our Citizens; and not merely to their benevolence and humanity, but to their personal interest. These children are, for the most part, brought up without Education, and without moral and religious instruction; they are, therefore, liable to contamination and degradation, by this culpable neglect on the part of our citizens—and to become useless—and it would be almost a miracle if some of them did not become worse than useless—members of society. Moreover, the burden of their support too often reduces their unfortunate parents to pauperism—and may, it is to be feared, sometimes tempts them to crime—a result to be most seriously deprecated.<sup>2</sup>

The twenty-four men who signed Matthew Carey's letter were among the most benevolent and philanthropic gentlemen of the time in Philadelphia, a city known for its humanitarian organizations. But while the letter calls upon "humanity and benevolence" as reason for aiding this destitute class, its focus falls on the "personal interest" that may also motivate philanthropic efforts on behalf of black orphans. Carrey's letter continues: "A large portion of the evils attendant on this state of things would probably be removed by an Asylum, for Coloured Children, on a plan similar to that for white children, in Fifth Street, which has prove[n] eminently useful." Carey then invited the addressee to join the

group of undersigned gentlemen at the National Hotel “to determine [the] proper solution for these questions.”<sup>3</sup>

Mathew Carey’s appeal overlooked a key fact regarding the situation of black children in Philadelphia; nine years earlier, an orphanage was founded specifically for the care of black children. The humanity and benevolence of the women who founded the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans (ACCO) in 1822 had gone unrecognized by the philanthropists who expressed concern for this cause nearly a decade later. The fact that Carey and others were unaware of this orphanage indicates a crucial gap between those who were solely concerned with helping others and striving for compensatory justice, and those who took up benevolent causes when these actions served personal interests by establishing control over and assertion in society. Knowing that the benevolence of the women who founded the ACCO remained invisible even to philanthropists indicates a clear distinction between two types of humanitarianism in the early nineteenth century.

The “universal benevolence” of the ACCO can be set in contrast to the benevolent actions of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia (OSP), founded in 1814, to illustrate these differing forms of humanitarianism. Crucial to understanding this difference is a detailed look at the two orphanages, from the motivation for their founding to the daily lives of the children for whom they cared. Understanding the successes and failures of these two orphanages sheds light on the intellectual climate of the time, which must be investigated through two milieus. Both “Christian Benevolence” and Enlightenment philosophy influenced the history of charity in the young republic.

The individuals and organizations investigated in this essay are defined by their visibility, wealth, support from the state, and perhaps most importantly, their motivation for benevolent action. Despite all of the factors that distinguished the two orphanages, the most significant in understanding what differentiated the ACCO from the OSP, and kept it so invisible for at least a decade, is the issue of race in the early republic. No conflict would prove more divisive or limit the benevolence of Americans more than the debate over slavery. The abolition movement and the treatment of freed blacks in the young republic would compel many to aid freed blacks on the basis of self interest and the health of society, while a dedicated few would promote the welfare of this class on the basis of compensatory justice.

Carey's misinformed understanding about the history of the care of black orphans in Philadelphia is one that remains prominent to this day; historians have yet to comprehensively study the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans or give it a place in the historiography of humanitarianism. This essay will begin to look beneath the surface of this institution and understand the goals and practices of the ACCO. Additionally, it will wrestle with the interplay between racial tensions and philanthropy in the early republic. Changing racial prejudices from 1780 to 1830 greatly altered the effect of race on the benevolence of Philadelphians and, more broadly, Americans. I will investigate differing modes of humanitarianism; the motivation for charitable work, particularly the care of orphans, along the lines of benevolence and compensatory justice versus self-interest and social control will be investigated in a historical, philosophical, and religious context. The ACCO serves as an example of true universal benevolence. Separated from the unrest of the abolition movement, the concentrated goals of the

founders of the ACCO proved an effective way of beginning the battle for justice after the fall of the deplorable institution of slavery, an encouraging example of the most basic and noble form of charity.

## **Section 1: Benevolence in the Young Republic: Charity, Race, and Philadelphia**

Humanitarianism, liberality, and benevolence all imply giving to those in need. The birth of a republic in North America resulted in changes not only in government and economics but also in attitudes and actions. Communities began to re-think what it meant to live in “society,” and how drastic the changes in lifestyle might be under a new republic. The motivation, structure, and scope of charitable aid in the early nineteenth century varied greatly as citizens of the young republic had a unique outlook on their obligations to those who were less fortunate. Many no longer accepted poverty and abandonment in American society. The influence of Enlightenment moral philosophy, Christian benevolence, and economic opportunity all shaped newly liberated Americans’ attitudes towards humanitarianism and charity.

The Enlightenment debate over “universal benevolence” dominated the stage of late 18<sup>th</sup> century British Philosophy. As Evan Radcliffe notes in his article “Revolutionary Writing, Moral Philosophy, and Universal Benevolence in the Eighteenth Century,” the philosophers active in this exchange debated topics ranging from the power of benevolence as a force for action to the merits of an expansive “universal benevolence” and how less extensive sympathies such as familial and national ties may impede this notion of “universal benevolence.” The eighteenth century British debate over “universal benevolence,” which Radcliffe defines simply as “the idea that benevolence and sympathy can be extended to all humanity” was informed by Jonathan Edwards, David Hume, the Earl of Shaftesbury, Adam Smith, Francis Hutcheson, and Richard Price. Many championed the principle of “universal benevolence” as the force to promote all justice; while others thought it not powerful or practical enough to serve this

role, and still others felt the principle invalid, as it denied people the ability to form stronger sympathies and affections kind and loved ones.<sup>4</sup>

A significant rift emerges in the Enlightenment philosophy between the concept of extending a most general form of sympathy for humanity and for concentrating this sympathy on those closest. Edwards, for example, argued that a general form of benevolence expressed through love to “being in general” was the most “true virtue.” Hume and others promote the merits of what they view as a more practical human passion, as “there is no such passion in human minds, as love of mankind.” Directly in contrast to this is the sentiment that “if [benevolence] is not entire, and directed to the whole species, it is not benevolence at all.” This positive case for benevolence extended to all was made into a more specific argument by Francis Hutcheson, whose views are summarized by Radcliffe as indicating that when human “appeals move us in different directions, universal benevolence helps us to chose the best action; and thus a main purpose of universal benevolence helps is less to motivate us than to help us chose among actions to which we are already motivated.”<sup>5</sup>

Hutcheson hereby dismisses one of the key critiques of a principle of universal benevolence by stating that the concept’s purpose is not always to motivate us to action, but rather to steer us in the right direction when our passions or sympathies draw us in multiple directions. Hume and others respond to this idea with a notion that sympathy for close communities, families and self will in turn produce the universal benevolence that the human passion is in fact incapable of considering in its entirety. In this Enlightenment view is the biblical concept that “charity begins at home,” and that liberalism need only be extended as far as one is able and only after family and close kin

has been provided for. I Timothy 5:8 reads, “if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” A clear notion emerges that Enlightenment philosophers disagree as to whether the promotion of an extended benevolence is more worthy of discussion or if humanity is better served by a focused form of benevolence towards those in a family, close community, or even nation. This notion of prejudice within benevolence proved crucial. During the early years of the American republic a strong national prejudice took hold and eventually gave way to racial prejudice that Richard Price discusses as “narrow interest[s],” impeding upon “more extensive interest[s].” The power of prejudice to affect extended interests held important as Enlightenment philosophy influenced American benevolent institutions and charities after the Revolution.<sup>6</sup>

A similar discussion of prejudice emerges when looking to notions of Christian Benevolence. Many of the Enlightenment philosophers, most notably Jonathan Edwards, rooted their theories of universal benevolence also in Christian piety and benevolence, claiming that love for all humanity was an expression of love for God. However, religious motivation to express benevolence also results in a debate similar, but outside, of the philosophical discussion regarding the scope of benevolence. J.M. Opal and Lois W. Banner both tackle the concept of religious benevolence. Opal discusses the impact of Christian Benevolence on the founding of the new republic in America, specifically the arguments both for and against a “national prejudice.” He discusses in detail the role of ministers in promoting the ratification of the United States’ Constitution on the basis that our philanthropy must extend broadly to all, rather than only to those in a particular party or state. In a simplified analysis, we see that this in turn may lead to other

Federalist customs that instead of truly achieving universal benevolence through establishing a national constitution simply shift prejudices to other groups. However, in defense of the Federalist cause, we must also recognize the prejudice, perhaps even narrower, inherent in the Anti-Federalist argument that framed the other side of the debate.<sup>7</sup>

Lois W. Banner takes on the historiography surrounding Christian benevolence arguing against the idea that many missionaries and humanitarians acting as benevolent Christians sought only a form of social control, moral obedience, and public assertion. Banner refutes this “social control thesis on the basis that it is too narrow in its approach to different movements across regions and denominations in Christianity.” He points out that although the groups usually championed as the true embodiment of Christian benevolence, the Quakers and Unitarians, are sometimes credited with a strong influence on humanitarian movements, comparable to that of secular efforts, many other societies in fact accomplished a much greater amount in this regard than most historians acknowledge. Despite Banner’s defense of other groups, Quaker’s lead the way in establishing humanitarian institutions beginning in the mid eighteenth century. Banner continues, “religious benevolence for many was a transitional activity on the way to humanitarian reform.” This leaves open an apparent conscious commitment to others on the basis of Christian Benevolence that may eventually lead to humanitarianism, an idea that Banner expands upon.<sup>8</sup>

Banner emphasizes the importance of millennialism and “Christian republicanism” to the transformation of Christian benevolence into valuable humanitarian relief, and while abandoning for a time his argument against the “social control” thesis,

he effectively illustrates the way that an ideological commitment to make millennial desires a reality, as well as to promote the virtue viewed as necessary for a republic, require a strong promotion and presence of Christian benevolence. While Banner describes millennialism as “a powerful spur to benevolence,” it must also be noted that these millennial aspirations also create “unrealistic thought on the matter,” and potentially even apathy tied up in the inevitability of the arrival of the millennial age. Awaiting the millennial age produced varying convictions in society. In the early republic perhaps the strong desire to eradicate poverty and social ill was tarnished by millennial notions and a belief that in time our perfect republic and the divine providence of God will deliver us from these social ills. This notion may limit the humanitarianism acted upon by many in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as they believed in the inevitable salvation from the social ills of which they desired to rid their society.<sup>9</sup>

The role of “Christian republicanism” is much more compelling, and in fact illustrates the strong argument for a role that a religious understanding of benevolence can play in an established republic. Banner discusses the view that virtue, while a key component to republicanism, is not ensured by the establishment of this system alone and therefore the establishment of religious societies dedicated to the promotion of benevolence can fill this necessary promotion of virtue in a republican society. This concept begs for an analysis within the context of the young American republic.

Banner begins this analysis by painting a picture of the economic and political forces pulling citizens away from philanthropy as the political and economic systems were both based on service and competition; he therefore champions the role of Christian benevolence in filling a crucial role in the humanitarian advancement of this young

society. In line with this belief, Banner notes that “Protestant humanitarians believed that Christianity and especially the liberating spirit of Reformation had been responsible for all the liberal achievements of the era,” as “the Protestant faith [taught] men humility and humanitarianism.” The idea that from deep religious piety emerges a strong belief in benevolence and therefore leads to progress through sound notions of humanity seems to reconcile the idea that those promoting “Christian benevolence” were doing so only in the name of social control.<sup>10</sup>

Banner describes economic growth as competitive and therefore set against humanitarian progress. However, economic growth also makes the ability to promote benevolent values easier through an expansion of capital available to humanitarians. Thomas Haskell, in his article “Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility,” argues this thesis, providing a sound but limited model for the economic forces of capitalism that can drive individuals towards more benevolent action. Haskell discusses the flawed historiography surrounding the connection between humanitarianism and capitalist economic growth as many historians link these two solely on the basis of self-interest and social control. An argument against social control theory as the root of humanitarianism emerges; Haskell’s theory proves very strong but must be taken only as part of the motivation for humanitarian and benevolent action throughout history. Haskell argues that an advanced and progressing capitalist market changes the way individuals view their moral obligations on the basis that new resources have been made available to them and it is now easier for them to extend this hand of benevolence.<sup>11</sup>

Haskell expands upon both his argument against an idea of self interest and towards an increased moral obligation being formed by an advancing capitalist economy.

On the topic of self-interest, Haskell first opines that it is difficult for us to posit what the interests of humanitarians are, noting that these interests are often subconsciously connected to moral obligations, prohibiting the separation of personal interest and moral obligation when investigating motives: “Cognitive structure underlay *both* the reformers’ novel sense of responsibility for others and their definition of their own interest, there is indeed congruence between the reforms they carried out and the needs of their own class.” Haskell also goes on to state that “knowing that a certain consequence will follow from one’s actions does not necessarily make the production of that consequence part of one’s intentions.” This important piece of Haskell’s argument may be one of the most convincing critiques that theories of benevolent and humanitarian actions are driven solely by self-interest. However, when analyzed closely, one can interpret Haskell’s understanding as also allowing for the scenario where an intention, or motive, based solely on self interest can give way to a benevolent consequence, which even if known by the actor, ought to be separated from the actor’s motivation for engaging in that specific action.<sup>12</sup>

Recall Mathew Carey’s argument from his 1831 letter used to introduce this paper. Here we see a clear example of a moral obligation to help desperate black orphans being directly linked to the congruent service provided to Carey and the white Philadelphians to whom his appeal was directed. Creating a social control protecting the city from lawless freed blacks is a motivation that Carey intertwined in his moral desire to aid needy black orphans. Using the above analysis of Haskell’s understanding of the connections between intent and consequence and obligation and self interest, Carey’s appeal can be deconstructed in numerous ways. We must understand Mathew Carey’s

appeal as not only having the consequence of protection through social control of freed blacks, but understand that this appears to be one of his explicit intentions, as his appeal focuses on a motivation for acting on the basis that “it would be almost a miracle if some of them did not become worse than useless.” Understanding this, one may even question if Carey’s desire to help care for this destitute class of black orphans is actually a part of his intention or simply what Haskell refers to as a “known consequence.” When criticized in this manner it becomes clear that charitable causes are taken up both out of moral obligation and self interest and that through the congruence of intent and consequence it is difficult, in many cases, to define the true intention behind these benevolent actions.<sup>13</sup>

After understanding Haskell’s strong aversion to attributing all consequences of an action to the actor’s intention, we can move forward to understand his views of a heightened moral obligation that resulted from advances in economy. Haskell wrestles with his belief that all humans subscribe to the Golden Rule and searches for a reason why we do not act upon this subscription. He states that “every abstract formulation of moral obligation could remain the same; the only change needed to get us over the threshold of action is an expansion of the range of opportunities available to us for shaping the future and intervening in others lives.” In promoting this argument, Haskell views what he calls new “recipes” as being the key to moving an inherently caring public to action. In doing so he explicitly rejects some motivations to charity, objecting to the belief that “humanitarianism can be explained merely by pointing to the proliferation of sermons and other texts on the importance of love and benevolence.” Indeed it appears that still, Haskell’s argument does not hold true throughout history, as many times the

resources and moral framework to aid others existed but action still did not occur. The reluctance for many American's to speak out regarding their objection to the slave trade in the early nineteenth century perfectly illustrates that the disconnect between morality and action existed despite adequately growing economic resources that allowed for the abolition of slavery. Haskell addresses this counterargument and qualifies his "recipes," as needing also to be of "sufficient ordinariness" in order to drive the conscious observer to action.<sup>14</sup>

While certainly limited in regard to its broad application, Haskell's argument gains credibility when one looks to the expansion of the causes that dedicated humanitarians are able to take up through the increased "ordinariness" of the resources provided to them. We see that an increase in "recipes" does not serve as sufficient motivation for all to act, nor does it speak to the issue of an unquestioned universal benevolence; many are only driven to act based on a strong moral obligation, be it framed in religion or philosophy. When assessing benevolence and humanitarian action none of these factors can be investigated independently, as one's economic situation and the resources available to them certainly play a role in forming their ability to act upon their moral obligations. However, investigating whether moral duty, based in philosophy, religion, or another force, can create an obligation that surpasses the ordinary actions of citizens proves crucial to understanding if humans subscribed to a belief of "universal benevolence." A clear distinction is thus created between those whose benevolent actions come from a non-ideological desire to help when the recipes give them the ability versus those who root their benevolence in a moral and ideological framework that

requires them to act. This is the difference between those who are willing to help and those who feel that they have to help independent of other factors.

The newly established republic and a constitution promoting equality crafted a unique opportunity at the outset of the nineteenth century that allowed citizens to consider what benevolence and liberality meant to them as individuals and to the society in which they lived. There was a shift away from the eighteenth century notion of universal benevolence as it is discussed by Radcliffe, Opal, and Banner. While useful in grounding the ideas of what liberality meant to Americans as they grew into independence, it is important not to limit this notion, as the use of terms like benevolent and liberal changed rapidly as the young republic faced the challenges of racism. National prejudice quickly took root as pride in the newly established government gave many Americans great faith in the future well-being the Nation and little care for those who fell outside of their newly liberated republic. Evan Radcliffe describes Enlightenment views of national prejudice per Adam Smith as a notion “that love of country ought to prevail over mankind.” Just as this national prejudice kept Americans focused only on their fellow citizens, a racial prejudice prevailed in the early nineteenth century that kept white American philanthropists focused only the needy who shared not just their nationality but also their race. For many Americans, these prejudices grew into local customs that often went unquestioned by those with faith in the glorious new republic. Philadelphia, unique in the opportunities it accorded to citizens and caught amidst the tensions of slavery is well suited for an exploration of this struggle to identify the root humanitarian values.

Despite the divisive issues of slavery and racial prejudice, there were those who committed themselves to alleviating the plight of the less fortunate, regardless of race. Universal benevolence indeed drove much of the humanitarian action towards freed blacks; however, trends towards perfectionism and social control must be investigated as well. In 1780 the issues of racial prejudice, slavery, and rights of “freedmen” created a dynamic that Philadelphians often considered within their scope of benevolence; by 1830 these views changed dramatically. When the first laws working towards the “gradual abolition” of slavery were passed by the General Assembly of Pennsylvania in 1780, many freely spoke out regarding the necessity to end slavery. However, by 1830, a marked difference in attitudes regarding the abolition movement and race relations emerged in Philadelphia. In order to assess the extent of “universal benevolence” in this context it is crucial to understand that these changing attitudes concerning race and slavery served as major limits on benevolent action for individuals and institutions.<sup>15</sup>

Gary B. Nash writes of the changing racial tensions in Philadelphia, describing that, consistent with the passage of the 1780 legislation, the time between the American Revolution and the beginning of the nineteenth century many freed blacks “flocked” to Philadelphia “because of its reputation for benevolence and more particularly for its dedicated abolition society.” Nash also notes that the first group of emancipated slaves also found comfort in Philadelphia as it was “the center of Quaker humanitarianism,” and an increasingly industrialized city that fit Adam Smith’s mold of expanding commercialism that was incompatible with slavery. These factors made Philadelphia the center for much of the progress made both for the rights of freed blacks in the American colonies and eventually the United States, and also positioned the City of Brotherly Love

in the eyes of many on both sides of the Atlantic. Philadelphia was the example for how freed Africans would fit into society after being emancipated from the shackles and oppression of slavery. The experiment of how to incorporate freed blacks into society appeared to be working for a time as many indicated that the freed blacks were even “more industrious” than the lowest classes of white citizens.<sup>16</sup>

Despite this progress being made in Philadelphia at the end of the eighteenth century, differing opinions regarding the condition of freed slaves existed among those active in promoting the abolition of slavery in Philadelphia. Benjamin Rush and Anthony Benezet were both at the forefront of the abolition movement. In 1782, Rush still held the opinion that slaves had acquired “habits of vice” and argued that the incorporation of former slaves into society must account for this. Similarly, Benezet believed that slavery itself was the sole factor in degrading the African race when they arrived in America. By 1773, Philadelphia was exporting more slaves than it was importing, indicating clear progress in abolishing the slave trade; however, the battle for the rights of Africans in America still had a lot of ground to cover.<sup>17</sup>

A clear need emerged to “ready” slaves for their freedom by providing them with the moral and religious instruction that they had been denied when in bondage. The Quakers took on this task in the form of creating quarterly meetings for the freedmen; however, “ambivalence and standoffishness toward black Philadelphians” remained even on the part of the Quakers. Benezet, who had been tutoring slaves and freedmen in his home since 1750, remained the exception as he continued to pressure the Society of Friends to help turn freedom into a reality. Despite the efforts of Benezet, the black community in Philadelphia began to find little help from whites once they were free and

learned not to rely on “white benevolence”. Understanding this reality, Nash cites Benezet’s “greatest contribution” as “lay[ing] in his frontal challenge to the deeply rooted belief in black inferiority.” This belief in black inferiority, which Benezet believed was a direct result of the slave trade and which he fought so fervently against, proved only to increase at the beginning of the nineteenth century, resulting in what Nash describes as “the failure of the Philadelphia experiment.” The early successes in the fight for emancipation were not strong enough to outweigh the fears created by rebellions by slaves in Haiti, New York, and elsewhere in North America. The racial prejudices that were reinforced, and perhaps even created, by these fears would have drastic implications for the future of freed blacks during the early nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

Seth Rockman addresses the plight of the black population in the early republic, describing overwhelming “discrimination, disfranchisement, and violence.” It proves obvious that black orphans fit the category of the most destitute, but limits of humanitarianism existed in Philadelphia. These limits raised questions about deserving and undeserving poor. Rockman states: “Poverty imposed special burdens on African Americans, such as inferior treatment in almshouses, [and] the likelihood that courts would give custody of their children to white employers.” These most destitute children had a disadvantaged position that did not afford them equal benefits of a welfare system; black orphans fell outside the scope of benevolence for many individuals and institutions in the early nineteenth century. In order to understand what the exclusion of black children from the charitable obligations of Americans and Philadelphians meant, it is important to look more closely into the history of charity.<sup>19</sup>

A look at Seth Rockman's *Welfare Reform in the Early Republic*, illustrates the trends in changing forms of charity, focusing on the private institutions that sought to eradicate poverty. Rockman discovered the notion that the impoverished were incapable of saving themselves from this vicious cycle: "The Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of Public Economy estimated that as many as 90 percent of Philadelphia's poor were chronic drinkers who devoted their wages and whatever charity they received to purchasing alcohol." This indicates the reasons that many may be reluctant to take place in charitable giving during the early republic. The desire to eradicate poverty without giving money that will only be used to support the drinking habits of the impoverished is embodied by many charities, including the two investigated in this paper. This marks the transfer of charitable and welfare programs from *outdoor* to *indoor* programs. Those engaging in philanthropy now had direct control over the use of their money as it was kept under a specific roof where they were able to control the effectiveness of their donations.<sup>20</sup>

David J. Rothman also investigates the shifting trends in charitable work during the colonial era and the early republic. He describe the status of charity towards the impoverished and destitute during and concluding the colonial era as being wholly "at home," as the method of aid was largely in the form of help from neighbors in caring for children or in donations of money or food to a desperate family. Rothman's thesis rests on a discussion of why a transformation away from outdoor relief occurred. He investigates the reasons for a shift, by the time of Andrew Jackson's presidency, to the use of the asylum to aid the destitute; indoor relief had gone from a virtually nonexistent option to the first resort for humanitarians and reformers. Rothman goes on to argue that

there was nothing inevitable about this shift, which resembles Rockman's idea of the move from *outdoor* to *indoor* relief. He argues against the idea that with the establishment of the asylum came increased progress with regard to the care of those in need.<sup>21</sup>

The strong weight placed on asylums for all the ills of society in the young republic reflect a desire for donors and the state to know where the money they were giving to those in need was going, a definite form of social control. Additionally, we see the treatment of many different classes of destitute citizens recognized under the same institutional parameters of an asylum, offering no distinction between the isolation of those with medical conditions and those suffering of social ills. While the debate over social control emerges in Rothman's introduction he cautions us, in a Haskellian manner, not to fall into too narrow of an argument, as it is not a simple debate between coercion and benevolence. The denial that those founding these new asylums were simply tools of an economic system in which they operate is crucial; however, Rothman also cautions us not to view these institutions outside of the economic society in which they operate. Indeed the economic benefits of these societies may have existed, but Rothman also acknowledges the complexities of this situation, calling upon the philosophical motivation for seeking reform of the charitable system on the basis of Foucault's portrayal of Enlightenment thought as promoting "chains of unbreakable morality." Still, we are left with the question of why it was felt that this morality was best promoted through a shift towards indoor relief within the confines of an asylum.<sup>22</sup>

Returning to colonial times, Rothman notes that the standard view did not indicate that poverty was a major defect in the societal structure then in place, and therefore was

not being investigated or “fought” with the same vigor that it would be with the emergence of a more perfectionist, or at least appearance of that, desire in the new republic. The acceptance of poverty in Colonial America did not mean that the colonies or their inhabitants did not work to alleviate the plight of these impoverished citizens; in fact the 1735 budget for Boston included £2,500 dedicated to poor relief. This desire to aid the poor certainly reflected a more progressive approach as Boston’s budget was the largest in the colonies. The underlying principle relating to this apathetic attitude toward the poor is based, according to Rothman, on the notion that it was part of God’s plan to make children suffer and that, in the words of a particular clergyman, the presence of the poor “benefited persons at all levels of society.” Perhaps crass at first reading this notion included the idea that the poor created a “God given opportunity for man to do good”; relieving the needy was among the highest Christian virtues.<sup>23</sup>

Shifting to the specific classes cared for as new asylums emerged, Rothman argues that the principle of placing orphans and delinquent children into asylums allowed for those who ran these asylums to exercise a system of beliefs that they felt strongly in, the power of rehabilitation in a closely crafted environment. Prior to 1797 only two private orphan asylums had been established in America, one in New Orleans and one in Savannah. It is clear that this belief in rehabilitation within a confined setting had not truly taken hold in a widespread manner before this time, and that the turn of the century was in fact crucial, as the years from 1798-1850 saw the introduction of at least seventy-five private orphan asylums. The sudden increase in the number of private asylums, while certainly indicating a different outlook on the care for orphans, most also be separated from the public care for orphans, as many large cities did not view these private

homes as fitting into the “systemic approach” that usually dealt with orphans by sending them to the city-run alms homes.<sup>24</sup>

In 1798, the first private orphanage opened in Philadelphia. St. Joseph’s Female Orphan Asylum was the first in a series of at least six private asylums that would open in Philadelphia before 1850. The history of the care of these orphans, both before and during this era, proves essential to understanding the outlook of Philadelphians and Americans generally regarding their commitment to this specific needy and deserving class in society. Homer Folks succinctly describes the history of the care of orphans prior to dedicated private asylums as beginning with outdoor relief given to families, moving to the “farming out” of children to a number of families who were willing to take on children for the lowest cost to the state. Subsequently contracts were signed with similar families who were the lowest bidders in requests to take on orphaned children. Finally, the state instituted more formal systems of aid through public programs in almshouses and eventually systems of indenture. Only one public home dedicated solely for the care of children existed in 1801, and that was the orphan house in Charleston, S.C.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the clear distinction between the public and private care of orphans, it proves useful to look at the rules established by a New York almshouse regarding the care of Orphans, as much of the same pedagogy would later be adopted by private institutions across the republic. Folks quotes:

The children of the house should be under the government of capable matrons...They should be uniformed, housed, and lodged in separate departments, according to their different sexes; they should be kept as much as possible from other paupers, habituated to decency, cleanliness, and order, and carefully instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic. The girls should also be taught to sew and knit.<sup>26</sup>

This statement from October, 1800 illustrates the beginnings of the controlled environment that would become the acceptable method of best achieving rehabilitation for those previously deviant, neglected, or vagrant. The focus on “decency, cleanliness, and order,” indicates a desire to bring this destitute class to the standards of the prosperous new republic. This desire to promote prosperity, or at least the appearance of prosperity, shaped the viewpoints of many during the early years of the new nation. The desire for universal prosperity meant had very different scopes and limits for very different people; through this statement we will come to understand what aspects humanitarianism were embraced and rejected by two Philadelphia orphanages: The Orphan Society of Philadelphia and the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans.

**Section 2: *The Most Worthy Institution: The Orphan Society of Philadelphia***

The Orphan Society of Philadelphia (OSP), founded in December of 1814 serves as an example of the benevolent institutions that began to emerge in the early nineteenth century. It represents the shift towards practical implementation of humanitarianism in the early republic. The OSP also illustrates the limits of humanitarianism that existed; the society did not embrace universal benevolence. Analysis of this society must be done in a historical milieu. It does not suffice to say that the women who founded the OSP in 1814 deserve credit for attempting to alleviate the suffering of all abandoned children, nor is it fair to say that they were wrong to limit their benevolence to a small, convenient population. The reality exists between these statements, within the intricate economic, social, political, and intellectual climate of the era.

The women who founded the Orphan Society of Philadelphia indeed supported the noble mission of alleviating poverty, particularly the plight of orphaned children in the early republic. The founding of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia occurred at the Second Presbyterian Church, and while Christian religion was emphasized, it was non-sectarian, and one of the founders, Rebecca Gratz, was Jewish. These women united under a religious conviction that something should be done to help the orphans and moved on to establishing a society to accomplish this goal. Sarah Ralston became the First Directress, Julia Rush the Second Directress, Maria Dorsey the Secretary, and Mary Yorke the Treasurer. Ralston's name is noteworthy due to her extensive charitable work outside of the Orphans Society and her commitment to helping the least fortunate in Philadelphia.<sup>27</sup>

Published in 1815, the constitution and by-laws of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia offer insight into the society's institution in 1814. The constitution established a private, all female society funded by the subscriptions of its members and the charitable donations of others. Twenty-four managers ran the Orphan Society of Philadelphia from its foundation. The responsibilities of these managers included rotating weekly shifts on committees that checked on the governess and orphans. Each weekly committee recorded these minutes in writing. The constitution outlined a desire to find a governess able to teach reading and sewing, and one who "shall be faithful, tender, and unremitting in the care of the children...shall read a chapter in the Bible and pray with the family every morning...[and promote] a sacred regard to truth, the performance of every moral duty, and instill into the minds of the children the principles of religion." The emphasis on proper religious and moral upbringing for the children of the orphanage ought not to go unnoticed at this point, as these virtues will remain important to those who managed the orphanage. Additionally, the desire to hire a matron who can teach reading and sewing reflects the same importance of these skills that had been outlined by the first public orphanage in New York fifteen years earlier.<sup>28</sup>

The 1815 constitution of the OSP also laid out specific duties for the orphans, requiring that they attend each annual meeting, as well as worship each Sunday. It mentioned the need for children to follow the course given to them by the managers and governess from daily instruction through to the time they are bound out into indenture once they reach the appropriate age. All of these practices affirmed the separation of the orphans from the lives and instruction of their parents, representing a true sense of what Seth Rockman refers to as "indoor relief". A statement included in the constitution of the

OSP, which the guardians of incoming orphans were required to sign also confirms this shift to “indoor relief”: “I do hereby surrender to the Orphan Society of Philadelphia, the child A.B.... to be provided for, instructed, and bound out by the said Society, [I will not] in any way interfere with the views or directions...” This statement indicated the desire for the founders of the OSP to control the well being of the children and implied that the guardians of the orphans were incapable of and may never grow capable of caring for their children.<sup>29</sup>

The admissions policy laid out in the 1815 constitution is also very significant. The policy did not allow the OSP to care for children who were mentally or physically handicapped and required that all admitted be the children of married couples in which neither mother nor father was still living. Additionally, no boys older than six years of age, and no girls older than eight years of age, were to be admitted. It does not serve as a surprise, given the changing racial tensions in the early nineteenth century, that the women did not explicitly address race in their admissions policy or their constitution. Despite this decision, which reflects the “standoffishness” that Nash describes as encompassing many Philadelphians attitudes towards race, we learn that in order to be admitted into the OSP children needed to be white. The failure to explicitly mention the exclusion of black orphans in the admission policy of the OSP reflects the climate of racial tensions at the time and must not be read as an effort on the part of the OSP to be ambiguous on the subject; black orphans were not admitted.<sup>30</sup>

The first annual meeting of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia was held at the Masonic Hall on January 2, 1816. Following a prayer by Reverend Milnor, the managers read their report for the first year of the Orphanages operation. By the time of this first

meeting there were twenty-five Orphans living in a temporary house that had been leased. While the report mentions little about the character of the matron charged with caring for the children, it states that the managers were “satisfied with the manner in which the asylum has been governed by the present matron.” The report refers to the general health of the “family” of orphans, indicating a strong tendency towards the preservation of Christian middle-class family values and morals in the upbringing of these children, despite their unfortunate situation of being displaced from a traditional familial setting. The managers used this success to call for the continued support of the Orphan Asylum by private patrons, stating the following:<sup>31</sup>

The board of managers cannot rest satisfied, without declaring that their present prospects [are] far more flattering than at their [founding] meeting they had any right to expect, and from the great liberality already experienced from the numerous and unexpected sources, they beg leave to add their sanguine anticipations of the most ample success.<sup>32</sup>

Expressing gratitude towards the generous citizenry, the managers called for Philadelphians’ continued liberality. This represents a confidence in the broad scope of these benevolent attitudes during the nascent years of the OSP. The conclusion of the report stressed the importance of this benevolence as it called upon the “heartfelt blessings of thousands yet unborn.” The invocation of the blessings of the unborn children of others addressed the long lasting place that the OSP’s founders felt their society had in Philadelphia. The society has hereby, after only one year of success, both in drawing on the benevolence of Philadelphians and operating an asylum, asserted themselves in the public sphere of orphan care in Philadelphia. If the care for children not yet born is of concern for these women, it must be understood that these women have not the intention of serving a short term purpose of getting a particular group of children

off of the streets, but rather wish to control the social society of Philadelphia through a form of public assertion. The women of the OSP measured their success on the basis of the liberality shown to them and their ability to influence the lives of the children under their care both now and in the future. This form of public assertion, as well as the necessity for some public approval of their actions, most frequently expressed through the liberality of Philadelphians, proved the defining factor in defining success for the OSP both in 1816 and for years to come.

When the Second Annual Report for the Orphan Society of Philadelphia was published on January 7, 1817, the orphan family had expanded to include thirty-six children. The children were not only being kept warm and healthy, but also enjoyed the progressive benefits of an education based upon the Lancasterian system. The system had been in place for nearly a full year and the managers reported that “the improvement of the children...answered the expectation.” Imported to the new republic by London’s Joseph Lancaster through Quakers in the early nineteenth century, this system of education was concerned with properly educating large numbers of predominately impoverished children. Lancaster’s system quickly spread across the new United States, only to find its effectiveness greatly called into question by the middle of the nineteenth century. Pedagogically, this method focused on teaching large numbers of students using only one principal teacher and a number of “monitors,” or older, advanced, pupils who were charged with aiding in the instruction of the remainder of the students. Divisions within the classroom were always passed upon prior ability level. The system had an appeal to educators in the young republic as it had “potential to create citizens to a new society.” This concern with creating a new republican citizenship represents a form of

social control that was used to educate the impoverished classes on their role as citizens. The OSP's decision to use this system reflects the trends of other benevolent institutions of the era; however, it does exemplify the common trend of social control in these institutions.<sup>33</sup>

The managers clearly detailed the daily operation of the orphanage in the society's constitution. Additionally, the American Sunday School Union published a children's book that discusses the daily lives of orphans in the asylum and also provides excellent woodcuts depicting life at the OSP. The daily regimen of the orphans reflected a strong focus on order, keeping the children in a structured environment, similar to that outlined by their education system, at all parts of the day. Children rose every morning at daybreak and attended to their cleanliness.<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 1 Orphans' Sleeping Room<sup>35</sup>**

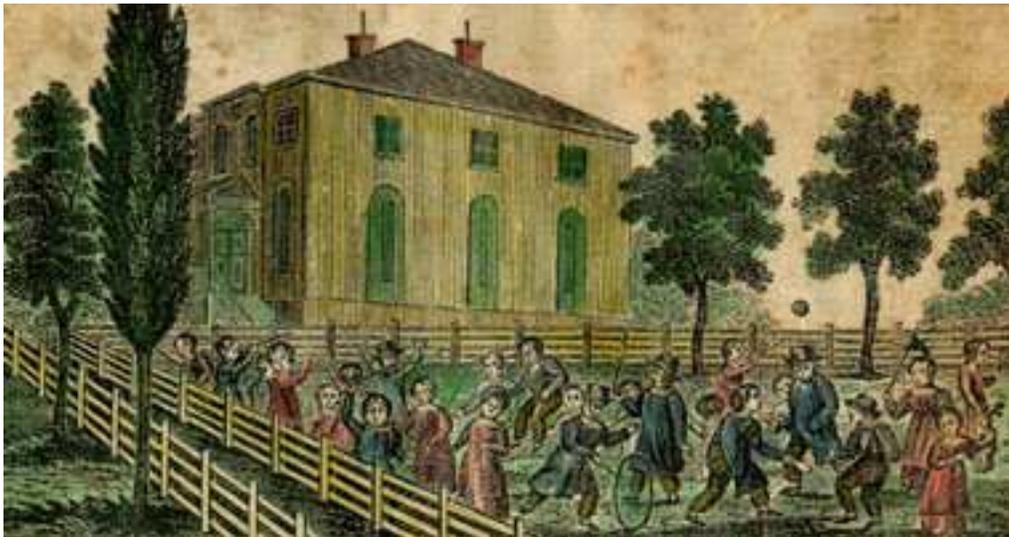
Each morning they prayed and read a chapter from the bible before breakfast. The matron said grace before and after every meal and it was required that all members of the orphan family were in attendance at every prayer.<sup>36</sup>



**Figure 2 The Children at Supper<sup>37</sup>**

Orphans then attended school for the remainder of the day, breaking for dinner at noon.

They had time given for recreation before the return to schooling in the afternoon.<sup>38</sup>



**Figure 3 The Philadelphia Orphan Asylum<sup>39</sup>**

After supper, the children were quickly moved to bed; any discipline that needed to occur happened during this time.<sup>40</sup>

Children were only to be disciplined by the matron or the teacher; all discipline took on a “serious and affectionate manner.” Discipline occurred when orphans were found stealing, lying, quarrelling, and engaging in mischief, idleness, or disobedience. The managers of the society carefully noted in their weekly minutes that they did not desire to discipline the children simply for the sake of punishment, but wanted to ensure that lessons were learned of the wrongs done. One weekly entry noted the importance of creating a “the connection on the mind of the offender and those to whom it is intended to be a warning,” when disciplining orphans. Again we see a reflection of careful treatment and management of the orphans to steer, or control, their behavior to fit the moral and social norms that the OSP saw fit.<sup>41</sup>

The merit system used by the OSP illustrates the values held high by the societies managers, an indication of morals thought to be most important to pass on to the children living under their care. The matron and managers kept a “character traits book,” that used a column and tally system to quantify each orphans progress in the categories of piety, truth, honesty, industry, good temper, kindness, and skill. No information is available regarding any reward given to orphans who excelled in any or all of these traits; however, the very fact that positive traits were identified and noted indicates that the social control exerted by the OSP over the children also took the form of positive indicators of progress rather than strictly systems of discipline.<sup>42</sup>

This structure of daily life for orphans usually lasted from the age of admission until the children were bound out in indenture. Children reached the age of twelve and had to be proficient in reading, writing, and math, prior to being bound out. Indenture records for the OSP reflect the placement of orphans in occupations that reaffirm the

familial and gender roles common in the early republic. The orphans had been raised to fit these roles as the girls were instructed in sewing from the beginning of their time at the orphanage. The indenture records showing the children who were bound out from 1822-1832 show that of the 133 orphans bound out during this time, all but twenty-eight of these orphans were indentured into either housewifery or farming. This concentration of orphans indentured to farmers and housewives reflects not only the fact that the majority of men and women served in these roles, but also the desire for the OSP to place the orphans in households where they would grow up into the typical middle-class household. This system of indenture exhibits yet another form of social control over the future lives of the orphans.<sup>43</sup>

The managers, after addressing the progress made with the orphans, turned to their other measure of success and matter of business. The second report also commented that progress had been made on finding a more permanent home for the Orphan Asylum, and the managers established a building committee consisting of Samuel Wetherill, Samuel Richards, Samuel Archer, and Robert Ralston. The orphans moved into this new Asylum in April of 1817. This new asylum was located on Cherry Street and Schuylkill Fifth Street and remained the home of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia until January, 1822.<sup>44</sup>

The Orphan Society of Philadelphia saw great success in its early years. Its enrollment grew quickly from the humble beginnings of twenty-five orphans at the conclusion of the first year, in January, 1816, to fifty orphans by January of 1818. By the 1820s, the orphan society reached an enrollment that hovered between ninety and one hundred orphans. The OSP saw great monetary donations from the Philadelphia public in

its first year of operation, 1815, as its \$8,000 budget, over \$7,500 dollars of which was made up of donations and subscriptions from the public. This allowed the OSP to begin a capital investment campaign that formed a permanent source of income for the society. The following year the OSP saw a decrease in money moving through the institution, but was still able to invest nearly \$1,500 of the \$3,750 budget, the rest being used for salaries and goods in the asylum, and for the beginning of a fund to build a new asylum. The largest source of income in this extensive budget came from the subscriptions of individuals to the society; in these two years combined, 1048 benevolent Philadelphian women subscribed to the OSP.<sup>45</sup>

Blessed with an extensive membership and a large number of dedicated managers, the Orphan Society of Philadelphia continued to run smoothly despite changes in the group working as managers. Data suggests that most of the managers missed at least one monthly meeting each year, and many missed two or three. Also significant in analyzing the managers' commitment to the society are the resignation letters of Hitty Maroke, Rebecca Gratz, and Maria Dorsey. All of these letters cite the necessity to tend to their own families as reason for leaving the board of managers of the OSP. Mrs. Maroke's undated letter addressed to Maria Dorsey, who was then secretary of the OSP, reads: "I hope you will do me the justice to believe that nothing but the difficulty of continuing the duties of a Manager with those I owe to a large family could reconcile me to leaving you." This apology reflects the historical narrative of American family history that requires duty to be first centered in the household. Recall the notion that charity begins at home, rooted in Enlightenment philosophy and Christianity. This idea informs the familial centered society that prevailed in the early republic.<sup>46</sup>

Maria Dorsey's resignation letter is also undated; however, we see from annual reports that she ended her tenure as secretary of the society in 1819. Her Successor, Rebecca Gratz, resigned claiming similar circumstance to the other two women, stating that "having charge of a family of young children my time is no longer at my own disposal and believe me to say, my present situation disables me altogether from attending to [the OSP]." Gratz invoked a more direct appeal to the notion that charity begins at home, alluding to serious problems in her household that required her immediate attention. While responses to these letters were not found, we must assume, given the family centered society that prevailed throughout American history into the late twentieth century, that these reasons for leaving the governance of the society were acceptable and likely common. Additionally, this reflects the idea that despite women's ability to take a more public role in society during the early nineteenth century, a patriarchal society demanded that her primary duty be her family.<sup>47</sup>

The duties of OSP managers, particularly the position of secretary and treasurer, demanded a lot of these women. Beginning in January, 1818, the OSP treasurer began publishing in the annual report both the comprehensive budget for the society, as well as the accounts of the purchasing committee, giving us more detailed view of where the society's money was being spent. At this same time the fundraising efforts for a new, more permanent orphan asylum were on the rise and the society began keeping track of these accounts separately as well. The \$4,400 budget for 1817 allotted nearly \$3,000 dollars to the purchasing committee for items including: matron's salary, household repairs, groceries, clothing, and the printing of the annual report. The operating budget of the society remained similar for the following year. The construction of the new orphan

asylum on Cherry Street and Schuylkill Fifth Street created a new budget in excess of \$5,000 dollars dedicated solely to the construction of the new asylum. The budget of the purchasing committee began to steady at this time, and by 1822 nearly all debts for the construction of the new asylum had been paid off.<sup>48</sup>

Tragically, only months after the loans for construction had been paid off, a fire broke out in the boiler room in the basement of the asylum of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia in the early morning of January 24, 1822 and engulfed the building in flames. The fire resulted in the total destruction of the property on Cherry Street and Schuylkill Fifth Street and the death of twenty-three of the ninety orphans living at the home. Following the January 1822 fire at the Orphan Society of Philadelphia, the public quickly responded to aid the society's recovery. "A munificent grant of \$5,000 from the state legislature and the liberality of personal contributions amounting to \$27,978," enabled the OSP to immediately prepare for rebuilding an asylum for the children. This sum, valued at over \$500,000 of purchasing power when this essay was written, reflected an immediate outpouring of support from both private donors and the state legislature; the OSP had a strong public presence. The managers of the OSP described how "expressions of sympathy for this calamity [have] been uttered from all parts of our country and open-handed charity hastened to repair...their loss." The sympathy from a broad base indicates the attention that was drawn based upon the significant loss of life that occurred in this fire.<sup>49</sup>



**Figure 4 Burning of the Philadelphia Orphan Asylum<sup>50</sup>**

The managers, eager to prevent any such catastrophe from happening in the future, requested that an investigation into the causes of the fire be conducted. Satisfied that the fire occurred due to no fault on the part of the matron and that the boiler caught fire because of an error in the masonry work surrounding it, the managers focused their attention elsewhere. While the family was living in the temporary asylum on Market St., two children were caught bringing coals from the fire and placing them in a trunk of clothing. The small fire that resulted did not cause any harm; however, the enraged matron and managers enacted an extremely harsh punishment for both of the children:<sup>51</sup>

Both offenders were separated from the other children, bound with cords, and kept prisoners on bread and water for 12 days—at the expiration of which time a suitable employment was procured out of the city for the oldest, [the younger, age 9] is still a prisoner.<sup>52</sup>

The strong punishment of these delinquents certainly reflects a sincere desire of the OSP's managers to protect those under their care from another catastrophic fire.

However, the imprisonment of orphans as a means of achieving this control over their asylum oppressed the orphans and cannot be defended as a positive means of protection. The response clearly evidenced the absence of universal benevolence in the actions of the managers of the society; no one acting benevolently, or for the good of an individual orphan, would bind and imprison that orphan. More accurately the actions of OSP's managers indicated a policy of social control, if not over society, certainly over the group of children under their care.

### **Section 3: *The Most Worthy Cause: The Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans***

The Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans (ACCO), founded in 1822, provides another illustrative case of the scope of liberality in early America. With the institution of an organization dedicated to the care of black children, we see the difference between social control and acting with universal benevolence. The ACCO, whose orphanage was known as the Shelter for Coloured Orphans, proactively promoted equality and compensatory justice. Any who seek to promote the interests of the least fortunate and destitute deserve adequate recognition for acting in a manner outside the confines of typical charitable aid. This universal benevolence often required personal and familial sacrifice. Little visible credit or support from the public or state proved that the women who founded the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans were true philanthropists.

Established in 1822 and incorporated in 1829, the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans did not publish its First Report until 1836. In this report the managers of the ACCO explained and apologized for the lack of prior publication of a formal report. A close analysis of the history of this institution before and after this 1836 report illuminates numerous attempts to become visible and channel the liberality of the Philadelphia public; it does not, however, show a willingness to depart from their true mission of compensatory justice in order to become more visible or illicit more sympathy and generosity. The report indicates the effects of this commitment on the early progress of the institution as the women fought for black children invisibly and through adversity, outside the contemporary system of charitable aid.<sup>53</sup>

Either racism or an ambiguous stance on the rights of freed blacks narrowed the liberality of many Philadelphians, reducing donations to the ACCO. Additionally, a tenuous relationship defined the states interaction with the ACCO. The attitudes and actions of the city and state towards the ACCO reflected a reluctance to aid the society. A willingness to work outside traditional charitable means, operating a charity with a cause which remained invisible and beyond the limits of responsibility for the majority of Philadelphia's citizenry reveals these women as humanitarian pioneers. The first of these pioneers expressed her concern for black orphans in 1814. In that year, a Quaker woman by the name of Ann Yarnall, "who cheerfully devoted both time and attention to improve the condition of her fellow beings," met with a group of "respectable coloured citizens," in order to "stimulate the latter to set up an Orphan House, and conduct the establishment for the benefit of their own colour." Yarnall's vision illustrates the delayed public recognition of the abandoned class of black orphans. Despite the reality that the ACCO was not established until 1822, Yarnall's determination "gave rise to this boom of good will." Upon her death in 1820, Yarnall gave fifty dollars and her household furniture to the previously unrequited cause of aiding orphaned black children.<sup>54</sup>

When the first meeting of the ACCO was called, it was convened on the basis that "Ann Yarnall had bequeathed her concern for Coloured Orphans to Beulah Sansom." This preliminary meeting in January of 1822 was held at the home of Beulah's husband, Joseph Sansom. There were seventeen women in attendance, and the meeting resulted in a discussion of the feasibility of taking on such an endeavor, as well as the appropriate next steps to be taken. A second time in January of 1822, the same group of seventeen women who had previously met at the Sansom residence reconvened to discuss the cause

of aiding black orphans. They reported on ten orphans whom they thought fit and deserving of their care, and “it was resolved to do something toward mitigating the ills of helpless infancy.” The women moved forward with a plan to hire a black family with “unobjectionable character,” to put the orphans up in an adjoining home and care for their basic needs and well being. The arrangements with the matron and her family, who were to help care for the orphans, were to begin on March 1<sup>st</sup>.<sup>55</sup>

The ACCO, like the Orphan Society of Philadelphia, was founded only by women. The founders made arrangements for leasing a home, contracting the salary of a matron, and writing a constitution. The recognition by both of these societies by the state in the form of incorporation acknowledges an expanded role of women in the public sphere during the dawn of the nineteenth century. However, we must take a close look at the roles these women served in order to understand the narrowly expanded place for women in public positions. Recall that the OSP commissioned a group of men to make arrangements for the construction of a new asylum, and often turned to this group of gentleman, mostly comprised of spouses of the society’s managers, when legal assistance was necessary. Recall also the resignation letters of the OSP managers that reaffirmed the duty of women to their families first. The traditionally female private sphere remained the fundamental responsibility of women in the early nineteenth century.<sup>56</sup>

Despite conformity to these conventions, we credit the small opening in the public sphere for women largely to Enlightenment philosophy and a changing economic system in the new republic. Mary Ryan notes that the “Enlightenment notion of the public presumed some impartial, transcendent, aridly rational consensus, disconnected from the diverse interests and experiences of real men and women.” This departure from

traditional concepts of the public sphere and how men and women are to act in this sphere sparked controversy and progress concerning women's rights in the early nineteenth century. In some cases, women built off of the progress made by Mary Wollstonecraft and asserted their rights to take a more active public role; however, in other cases a backlash to this movement further repressed the transition of women into public positions. When looking to the ACCO, we witness a reflection of this narrow opening of public assertion for women. Remember that, in the case of the ACCO and the OSP, women were asserting themselves in the public sphere in the traditionally domestic role of caring for children. Despite the other public activities they conducted associated with caring for these children, these women continued their role as the caretaker of a household during this limited shift into the public sphere.<sup>57</sup>

The Quaker piety of the women who established the ACCO also places them in a unique position regarding their public position and their commitment to a public cause. The legacy of the Society of Friends linked them closely to many benevolent and humanitarian causes in America beginning in the mid-eighteenth century. Their piety embodied benevolent action as part of their duty to God and others. Quaker women began to form numerous humanitarian institutions on the basis of this religious benevolence beginning in the 1790s. The outpouring of institutions formed by Women Friends in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, largely concentrated in Philadelphia, set the stage for Ann Yarnall and the founders of the ACCO to establish an institution for black orphans. Many other institutions established by Quakers reflected a similar dedication to aid those whom no one else was concerned with helping: "Quakers chose Indians, prisoners, and slaves as the objects of their benevolence." Indeed aiding

these classes who no one else was concerned with removed the Quaker women from stepping into the public sphere too much; however, the controversial nature of aiding these classes indicated a push by Quaker women into public, political, issues that were previously left to men. Many difficulties arose for the women of the ACCO while attempting to aid the black orphans who remained largely outside American society.<sup>58</sup>

Two large obstacles defined these difficulties and stood in the way of the immediate opening of the Orphan Shelter: The matron hired to run the shelter tragically died of an apoplexy before the first children were taken in, and the women faced some difficulty finding desperate black orphans whose guardians were willing to give their children up to the care of this new orphan shelter. These difficulties resulted in a set back that forced the women to delay the opening of the shelter until after the summer of 1822. Before taking this summer reprieve, the women discussed the latter of these challenges.<sup>59</sup>

A sub-committee charged with admission of orphans for the ACCO described this difficulty in gaining applicants. Guardians came up with “various excuses” to relinquish their children. The committee understood that many “coloured people [were] against trusting [the ACCO] with their young dependents.” The ACCO deduced that this mistrust represented an inability for the black population to, “rely on the sincerity of [the ACCO’s] professions.” The association thus resolved that gaining the trust of the freed blacks “will require time and experience to remove those fears and apprehensions, which have originated in that system of cruelty and deception, to which the coloured people have been subject for so many generations.” The Friends who established the ACCO sought out children in need of help and convinced their guardians that the ACCO sincerely believed in promoting compensatory justice. This indicated a commitment to

orphans who needed their help and proved that the ACCO was not merely using the orphanage as a means of social control, but was truly dedicated to seeking out orphans, and earning the trust of freed blacks. Through time they proved that their intentions were truly to address the degradation suffered by blacks over previous generations.<sup>60</sup>

All of the rhetoric used by the ACCO from its founding through the middle of the nineteenth century reflects the sincerity of their mission. Beulah Sansom and the sixteen other women in attendance during the first meetings of the society represent the goals and actions of all of the women who dedicated themselves without recognition to the ACCO. The motivation for the association was summarized by these women with the following quotation:

“The association was formed for the purpose of relieving the necessities of the poorest of the poor; for where do we find, even in populous cities, a class of the human family more abject, or more deserving of the fostering hand of benevolence, than the parentless children of the African race in this country.”<sup>61</sup>

Quaker women had defined the “children of the African race” as a group in need of significant charitable aid. There were not desperate orphans sitting on the streets in front of the women’s homes; a committee was established to see “whether there [were] any children of this description to be found.” The motivation for aiding these orphans lies in a firm belief that a grave injustice had been done to them. Regardless of consequence and situation, the ACCO remained dedicated to the above principle aiding a class in need.<sup>62</sup>

The difficulty in finding suitable orphans whose guardians trusted the ACCO with the care of their children led the association to accept black children with one or two parents living “when the case seem[ed] to require it.” The association had been accepting

children in need from the Philadelphia Guardians of the Poor since 1822; however a larger expansion of their applicant base occurred. The association minutes for March of 1832 note this change in policy commenting that black guardians, “probably compare the idea of servitude [through a period of indenture] with that of slavery.” Expressing discouragement on the basis of this inability to gain the trust of guardians of black orphans, the women of the association decided to, “extend our views more generally to the suffering poor by taking some of their children to board.” This new policy still referred only to black children. It reflects a desire to broaden their scope to any needy black child whose situation is desperate enough and whose parents are willing to give the child to the care of the association. Many children were cared for under this new policy and it reflects the tenuous climate in which the women of the ACCO worked, as well as their willingness to remain dedicated to the cause of aiding black children regardless of the aversions of both the white and black communities of Philadelphia.<sup>63</sup>

No mention of “personal interest” existed in the motivation or in the call to action for this association; the opposite held true. The ACCO, from its early years, did not operate their shelter in fear of what might come from the “evils attendant on this state of things,” as Mathew Carey proposed, but rather felt that it was necessary to actively seek to right previous injustices. No text embodies this difference as well as the preamble to the constitution of the ACCO. The 1822 preamble addresses injustice and even mentions slavery within the first sentence:

If any apology be necessary for introducing to the notice of the humane this obscure class of dependants upon public bounty, we trust that apology may be founded on a sense of justice due to a people who have endured the oppressive burden of Slavery for many generations; and who are now suffering under consequent degradation, sustaining in the estimate of public opinion, the odium of a characteristic deficiency of mental

capacity, and practical default of moral principle; the unhappy result of long continued ignorance, poverty, neglect and evil example.<sup>64</sup>

The preamble directly acknowledges the close connection between the establishment of an orphanage for black children and abolition of slavery. The ACCO's founders departed from a "standoffish" attitude toward racial tension in this text. It takes a compensatory and proactive stand against the destitute situation of the black orphans in Philadelphia. The inclusion of this discussion in the preamble alienated the ACCO from many who might have otherwise extended their benevolent hand to the institution. Unlike Matthew Carey, these women were unwilling to sacrifice their principles and motivations, in order to garner the support of others whose interest may have been superficial or not in line with the commitment to correcting the injustice already done. The preamble reflects a notion that attention and aid is "due" to black orphans, indicating a shift in duty from a narrow frame that is focused on family or even a particular race; these women were prepared to make sacrifices based upon their broad view of universal benevolence. This promotion of compensatory justice resembles many of today's affirmative action arguments; the ACCO sought to promote the welfare of black orphans in order to compensate for the injustice previously served to them by slavery. The ACCO deemed any visibility and subsequent public liberality for the institution sacrificed by taking this firm stance against the injustices of slavery acceptable in order to fight this racial injustice. The ideology of the ACCO did not waver.

The ACCO founders' aversion to the superficial membership reflected the firm commitment to their ideology. This was expressed at their initial meeting in 1822 when they established that "those who would consent to become members might be expected not only to impart of their substance, but to apply both time and talent in favour of the

proposed institution.” Here the women of the Association make clear that despite their knowledge that they would “chiefly depend for support upon the liberality of their fellow citizens,” they would not allow the interests or goals of these citizens to impact the management of the association. The restoration of a class so oppressed by slavery remained the primary goal of the ACCO; this mission never gave way to lofty fundraising or publicity goals in order to extend the small circle of benefactors.<sup>65</sup>

The membership and subscriptions of the society remained small, reflecting the attitude that the ACCO desired only to work with those who were unquestionable dedicated to their cause. During the ACCO’s first year of operation in 1822 there were twenty-five members of the society, and only a small circle of donors, mostly anonymous, outside of this membership. The ACCO’s budget during the first three years of operation listed expenses ranging from \$250 in 1822 to \$815 in 1825; the surplus of money taken in through donations or interest collected never amounted to more than \$200 in excess of these expenditures. More anonymous and named donations, as well as gifts of goods may be credited for slight increases in the budget of the ACCO for particular years over the course of its first century of operation. However, many times the managers report that balancing the budget becomes a financial burden for the association, as they cannot rely on “the precarious product of spontaneous contributions.” A particularly difficult year in 1826 caused the managers to note that “a reduction in cash current, could only be imputed to an almost entire failure of donations.” The members of the ACCO realized that Philadelphians were not jumping at the opportunity to support the ACCO; however, it was not simply a lack of liberality in the form of donations that acted as an indicator that the ACCO fell outside the bounds of benevolence for many.<sup>66</sup>

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After the failed attempt to locate the Shelter for Coloured Orphans on Duke St, due to the untimely death of the planned matron, another suitable black matron was found and a home was leased on Noble Street. In September of 1822 the matron and three children, received from the Philadelphia Guardians of the Poor, moved into the house. The shelter remained on Noble Street until 1824, but the Association decided to abandon its policy of hiring a black matron and had elected an “elderly Quaker woman” to the position at the end of 1822. This decision came because the managers felt that “the domestic routine [of the shelter] did not proceed to satisfaction.” The employment of a white matron reflects the ACCO’s idea that schooling, religious, and moral instruction must be provided to black children, and that older freed blacks, who were likely also deprived of these benefits, were not fit to fill this maternal role. This certainly reflects Rockman’s concept of indoor relief, but must not be mistaken for a form of social control. More accurately the ACCO sought to promote the best situation possible for the children under their care.<sup>67</sup>

In 1824 the association moved to a larger rental on Cherry Street. The orphans lived comfortably in the Cherry Street location, where the ACCO paid a yearly rent of \$180, until the managers decided to purchase a home and lot on Sassafras Street for \$4,800. The move to the home on Sassafras Street was delayed due to numerous illnesses at the home; however, the move marked a major turning point in the Association’s progress and permanent establishment as they had finally, after nearly a decade, purchased a home for their shelter. This new home on Sassafras Street served the Association until 1838.<sup>68</sup>

Between 1822 and 1835, 118 children were admitted to the shelter. A look at the daily lives of these orphans uncovers a similar lifestyle to that of the children living at the asylum of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia. The orphans learned to read, write and perform basic arithmetic. Instruction in practical traits gave orphans the skills to make a living after they were bound out to a term of indenture, which was not to last past the age of eighteen for girls and twenty-one for boys. The matron, managers, and teacher emphasized religious and moral instruction and attended to the general health and wellbeing of the orphans. The rules for governance of the shelter laid out a specific bill of fare which included: bread and milk for breakfast, a larger dinner consisting of various meats, rice, or soup, specified for each day of the week, and a smaller supper consisting of bread, molasses, and stewed fruit. Very few orphans, unfortunately, experienced the privilege of this well organized and positive routine.<sup>69</sup>

In December of 1831, the chief concern of the ACCO remained increasing the size of their orphan family, indicating that many black guardians were still reluctant to give up their children to the association. In that month they reported that “we have but twelve children in family and it is very desirable that we should adopt some means of extending the benefit of our ample establishment past its present limits.” Recall that in 1832, the managers did extend their reach by adjusting the admissions policy to allow for the care of needy children whose parents were still living. This desire to expand remains in line with the dedicated mission of the ACCO and also takes on important implications for the Association. The growth of the institution led eventually to the construction of a shelter on Thirteenth Street and Callowhill Street. By the time the orphans moved into

this new shelter in 1838, the implications of the increasing public image of the ACCO would be realized.<sup>70</sup>

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When reflecting on the early years of the Association and the limited recognition of and support for the asylum, the ACCO noted the following:

However meritorious the motive to such an enterprise, the Association in their early or preparatory movements were scarcely cheered up with the hope of success...at the commencement, and even long after, incredible as the fact may appear, so strong was the aversion of some of their white neighbours to the scheme, that it was difficult in the first attempt to locate the Shelter within city bounds.<sup>71</sup>

This excerpt from an 1836 report published by the Association explained the adverse attitudes toward the ACCO by many Philadelphians. More than simply neglecting to donate to the society, many Philadelphians clearly expressed a more explicit aversion to the Association's mission of caring for black orphans.

The ACCO pinned itself between those whose prejudice limited their benevolence and thus curbed the growth of the orphanage, and the aversion of the African race to trust a group of white women with their children. No blame can be placed upon these women for not embracing a Machiavellian notion that "the ends justify the means." A greater effort to appeal to the masses by diluting their message from their true ideology would have allowed them to fundraise from a broader base. However, the result would only create an increased reluctance from the black community to trust these women with their youth. This reality of aversion from both black and white communities limited the women's ability to appeal to the public when soliciting funds. A more public appeal was also avoided because the members of the ACCO also, "feared to adopt any measure

which might bring ‘The Shelter for Coloured Orphans’ before the public, at the risk of attracting the depredations of lawless kidnappers.”<sup>72</sup>

The fears expressed by the ACCO did not reflect hallow rhetoric; the kidnapping of freed blacks reached its height in the beginning of the nineteenth century.

Philadelphia’s close proximity to southern states where slavery was still legal enabled kidnappers to claim that blacks, even those well known, were escaped slaves. The ability to sell blacks back into slavery fueled this kidnapping business and many freed Philadelphian’s were frequently forced onto boats waiting to whisk them down the Delaware and back into slavery. The heightening of racial tensions and the abolition debate that was ongoing outside of Pennsylvania necessitated that the ACCO, both for the integrity of their mission and for the safety of the children under their care, remain invisible during their early years of operation. These difficulties for the Association forced the managers to understand their position in Philadelphia in a unique light. This understanding shaped their attempts to become visible as well as the way they measured their success.<sup>73</sup>

The first attempt at making the ACCO visible to the general public came in the form of an 1824 press release. This public statement by the Association sheds light not only on the initial reception of the Association but also upon their goals and means of achieving these ends:

The destitute and exposed condition of Children of colour who are [deprived] of their family has induced some respectable women to form an Association for their relief which they denominate “The Association for the care of Coloured Orphans...The Establishment is called “The Shelter for Coloured Orphans.” This design has been so far carried into affect that they have of present a family of 12 under care, which is conducted by a judicious matron superintended by a Committee of the Association.<sup>74</sup>

The content of this press release is crucial; it is the first attempt of the Association, whose idea to aid black orphans had germinated ten years early with Ann Yarnell's compassion, to bring public attention to their cause. Understanding how the ACCO portrayed itself to the public, knowing that they feared the reaction of their "white neighbours," will allow us to speculate how these women viewed themselves in society and what they may have expected to come in response to their calls for liberality. In assessing this position, it is important to remember that the Association concerned itself with its image by way of its potential white benefactors, as well as the black families whose children are being given to the care of the society. Reading on, and understanding the historical context of to whom a message printed in local newspapers is likely directed, this press release clearly aims to spark the donations of those who might desire to aid in the ACCO. In order to sell this cause, the Association takes time to address the validity of their organization by discussing their pedagogy:

Attention is paid to instruct these Children in the rudiments of school learning to impress their minds with an early sense of moral rectitude, and with the necessity of conforming to habits of industry...it being [the objective of] the Association to bind them out in suitable situations in order that they may become acquainted with various kinds of useful employment and thereby enabled to obtain an honest living.<sup>75</sup>

The women of the Association pay due attention to notions of race which indicate that many who may be reading this press release desire to know what place these black orphans will hold in society. The emphasis on learning and a sense of "moral rectitude" likely reflects the desire to educate these children who have previously been deprived of such a luxury, but also to sell to the white population an institution that would help to take a class viewed as uneducated and unable to live an "honest life" and transform them. For some white benefactors, moral rectitude indicated the comfort of social obedience.

Moving on to emphasize the industrial instruction of these children as well, the public gains an understanding that these orphans will gain skills to serve a specific position in society that will not drain its resources but in fact enable them to make this “honest living” that is enjoyed by others brought up unexposed to such destitution and adversity. The press release asks that “if this concern should meet the approbation of the benevolent,” they may send goods or money to the contact information provided.<sup>76</sup>

It appears that no newspapers ran this press release, despite incentive given to editors in the way of the closing words of the release which read, “Such editors of news papers who [are] so obliging as to insert this communication may find their reward in having promoted a work of charity.” Returning to the 1836 “first report” we see why the publication of the Association’s history was so delayed. The public image of such an institution was unable to escape the social and political baggage that it carried; the liberality of the population had not caught up with benevolent intentions of the women who dedicated unrecognized time to the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans.<sup>77</sup>

It is important also to note that which was *not* included in this press release. The ACCO had not called upon any sense of social control as the motive for promoting such an institution, as Mathew Carey did in 1831. Additionally, the rhetoric providing a radical apology for the injustice done previously to the children of the African race is entirely omitted in this press release which, using modern terminology, may be viewed as “centrist.” In this press release, the women focus neither on social control or injustice, but on black obedience. Another omission in this press release comes when viewed in comparison to the calls for liberality by the Orphan Society of Philadelphia. The ACCO does not call upon God’s good will when soliciting money for their organization as the

OSP always did. Recall the concept discussed by historians of Christian benevolence that suggests religious beliefs and the benevolence that follows may instigate a move to humanitarian action, but that this humanitarian action is not always sustained by Christian benevolence alone. Here we see a commitment by the women of the ACCO to the benevolent mission of their society, which may illicit support from individuals independent of a call upon piety.<sup>78</sup>

The ACCO made an additional attempt to publicize their orphan shelter in 1824. The members of the Association, after moving the shelter to a larger and more visible home on Cherry Street, “apprehended that some advantage would ensue, from an attempt to attract the eye of observation.” This desire to catch the eye of the public reflects optimistically on the progress of racial tensions in Philadelphia; it indicated that the concern over kidnappers had faded and the women were more confident in their ability to safely locate the orphanage in a prominent location. In addition to optimism and faith in their cause, this step reflects the ACCO’s frustration with a lack of liberality from Philadelphians; serious racial tensions still existed in Philadelphia and would continue to haunt the ACCO. This does not represent a straying from the ideology that prioritizes compensatory justice for black orphans, nor does it indicate a strong desire for public assertion on the part of the ACCO. This move, and a decision by the managers to letter their dwelling with the words, “Shelter for Coloured Orphans,” for the first time in 1833, must also be analyzed based upon the Association’s desire to draw attention to the suffering of this class of black children in hopes that they may illicit further sympathy for this needy group.<sup>79</sup>

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A more optimistic view of the ACCO emerged by the time of publication of the First Report in 1836. The report included an apology for the delay of publication of the first report until 1836; it mentioned that the shelter's "executive committees had to encounter the opposing opinions of those [white neighbours] on one hand, while on the other, the coloured people in many instances rejected the offered kindness." It was said that "this train of difficulties has been gradually subsiding, and are now reviewed in retrospect, to vindicate that system of silence which has cast a veil of obscurity over years of patient perseverance in a good cause."<sup>80</sup>

Significant progress had been made by 1836; the ACCO had fully embraced benevolence through private charity as many others did in the early nineteenth century. However, the ACCO had continued this private charity *without* the liberality of a broad base subscription like that of the OSP, relying on the continuous contribution of its small but dedicated membership. This unique position of the ACCO forgoing public assertion and visibility must be viewed in the historical milieu that takes into account the racial tensions of the times. Recall Nash's concept that many, even Quakers, took an ambivalent, or "standoffish" approach to issue surrounding race. It therefore serves as no surprise that when these female Friends tackled the problem facing black orphans in Philadelphia, they saw a much less generous wave of liberality from Philadelphians than that given to the OSP. By the publication of their second annual report in 1837 they had an operating budget of \$1,800. Recall, however, that this second annual report came after fifteen years of operating under a system of silence, leaving much to be desired for the ACCO in terms of the benevolence of Philadelphians to their cause. It is clear that the

visibility of and charity towards the ACCO paled in comparison to the OSP, as even after fifteen years, the ACCO's subscriptions were only at 156 in 1837.<sup>81</sup>

The drive for this continued commitment by the women of the ACCO, despite working independently of extensive liberality, is understood by the following quotation from the association's preamble: "[we] are aware that the object of [their] engagement will have to encounter...deeply rooted prejudices [but] will find reward...in the advancement and preservations of some of the pupils of this humble household." The ACCO acknowledged the larger issue impeding their widespread success and set a realistic goal. They recognized the impossibility of eliminating the prejudices facing charity towards black orphans. Understanding this, they measured their progress by the humble indicator of the difference they were able to make in advancing the lives of individual orphans. This simple, humble, yet unequivocally noble goal illustrates a fundamental difference in the way the women of the ACCO measured their success; they defined success as small differences made in orphans lives, not extensive liberality.<sup>82</sup>

The preamble of the constitution spoke to the philosophy necessary to fulfill this humble goal: "Whatever the situation or character of the parents may have been, the Association will not bind itself by any rule that shall balance the children in the scale with their parents; or in effect punish the innocent with the guilty."<sup>83</sup> This brings to light the separation of the orphan from the parent and the ability to achieve positive ends for any orphan regardless of the status or race of their parents. The preamble of the constitution for the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans pledged that "the Association will not bind itself by any rule that shall balance the children in the scale

with their parents.” The founders repeat here a desire to remedy the injustices previously done, not simply to aid those in need.<sup>84</sup>

While the issues surrounding race and slavery were not approached in the same manner by many other charitable institutions of the era, the notion that children should be separated from their parents in order to reform their social being was a common trend in the humanitarian movement that swept the young republic. The practices and policies of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia also illustrated this trend. However, it proves crucial to understand that the reasons for separating orphans from their parents are drastically different. One must differentiate the desire for social control from the desire to strive for compensatory justice.

The ACCO included a similar statement in their 1822 constitution to that of the OSP which forced guardians to surrender rights to the orphans prior to giving the child to the care of the Orphanage. Guardians arranged for their child “to be provided for, instructed, and bound out...for a term of years, within lawful age, as may appear proper.” Further, the guardians agreed never to “demand or receive any compensation,” or “interfere with the views or directions of the said Association.” Strikingly similar in rhetoric to the agreement of the OSP, the ACCO also embraced the notion of indoor relief, seeking to alleviate the injustices of poverty through a certain level of control over the next generation. The implications of this similar position play out in the actions and daily operation of these two institutions, but the comparison is limited by both the goals and means of the institutions. The ACCO never used this type of indoor relief as a form of social control to prevent evil as Mathew Carey referred to it; however, the notion that those of the African race who were not properly educated, in both morality and industry,

were in fact, in many cases, unfit to raise their own children defined the social and moral obedience that came of the ACCO's actions.<sup>85</sup>

Another important distinction emerged in the ACCO's outlook on their control and rule over the children given to their care. A letter, documented in the Association's minute from July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1836, was received from Catherine Snowdon "requesting to have her daughter sent to her in Canada." The association decided that the girl, whose care had been given to the Association by a friend of Mrs. Snowdon's in her absence, was best kept at their institution for fear of the girls potential situation should her mother's situation in Canada turn for the worse. The Association expressed these views in a letter to Mrs. Snowdon stating that "the Friends present...thought it best to let her remain where she is knowing as we do that she is well provided for." The letter continued to defend the Association's decision to maintain custody of the child; they posited that "it is possible that though may yet meet with difficulties...if thou should be taken from her would not the little girl be left among strangers?" The letter continued with an attempt to comfort the mother and described instruction and schooling of the child, as well as providing an address where the mother could write to obtain more information about her child and the institution.<sup>86</sup>

The letter affirmed the willingness of the association to assert control over the care and well being of the child, promoting a notion that the ACCO is best fit to place this child on the proper track and right the injustices done to the child and the African race. However, upon further investigation into the issue of the Snowdon child, we find that Beulah Sansom held a more complex opinion about the idea of the Association's

control over those under its care. When she entered the letter sent to Catherine Snowdon into the Association minutes, Sansom included below the letter a note that stated:

Under the probability that I may not be present when this subject will come again before the board it cannot be improper for me here to express my sentiment. As the child was not signed over to the Association by her mother I do not think we have any right to hold her longer than the mother pleases much less have we a right to bound her out without first obtaining the consent of the Childs mother if she if living in a free country.<sup>87</sup>

Sansom included this opinion in the Association notes expressing her view regarding the necessity to limit of the Association's rights to extend their control over children who are not truly orphaned or whose parents have not directly signed the children over to the Association's control. The fact that Sansom felt it prudent to include this statement indicates that many others in the society may not have believed this limit on the control of the Association, or that there may have been controversy regarding the fact that the girl had been turned over to the society by an individual who did relinquish the rights to care for that child to the society.

Equally significant in this statement is Beulah Sansom's use of the expression "free country." The expression of the mother's place in Canada as being a distinguishing characteristic that plays at least a part in the decision over whether or not the child should be released from the care of the ACCO indicates the Beulah was very cognizant of the implications of the issue of racial prejudice and the rights of freed blacks not just in Philadelphia, but also further north. The skepticism that prevails in the letter regarding the safety of the girl outside the confines of the shelter is apparently set to rest for Beulah Sansom.

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The state's treatment of requests made by the ACCO reflected a willingness to remain neutral, or ambivalent, towards the Association. The state never proactively took steps to aid this struggling charity. Two significant issues defined the relationship between the state and the ACCO. The Association had a continuous struggle with the guardians of the poor and the state denied the ACCO's application for property tax exemption.

Recall that beginning in 1822, because of low admissions of orphaned children, the shelter would take in black children from the alms house of the Guardians of the Poor as boarders, with the stipulation that the Board of Guardians would pay board for the children at a rate of fifty cents per week. On numerous occasions, including one instance in 1838 and another in 1839, the Guardians submitted notice to the ACCO that they would no longer pay board for the children in the Association's care, offering to take the children back into custody at the alms house. The Association always sought to collect on bills due from the Guardians, but agreed to keep the children under the care of the Association. In both of these years, the Guardians then resumed the practice of sending children to the care of the ACCO, but only agreed to pay the board for the new children admitted at that time, rather than resuming payment for boarders who had previously been admitted.<sup>88</sup>

The Association's willingness to take in children from the Guardians of the poor indicates both their desire to help any in need, and also their struggle to find suitable orphaned black children to care for. Of the 128 children admitted into the shelter between 1822 and 1838, forty-one of them came either directly from the Guardians or from the Alms House. The ACCO served a public service at this time, relieving the

demands upon the Philadelphia Alms House. These forty-one children were only partial financial liabilities to the state, as the state often cut funding for them after a few years. Moreover, this explanation of the Association's public service neglects the burden placed on the family friends or other guardians who were charged with the care of orphaned black children prior to the founding of the ACCO.<sup>89</sup>

The ACCO submitted a request for an act of exemption on their property tax to the state legislature in October of 1832. The letter requesting the exemption begins by stressing the merits of the Association and its success in helping those orphans who it does take in. It goes on to state that in addition to serving the "obvious duties of humanity...[and] the comfort of those who have passed in succession under their care," the society feels that it serves a more public role as society has, "been thereby released from supporting many children to make an adequate return." Here the Association described its benefit to the public not in terms of a form of social control or means of preventing criminal actions, but rather in terms of the purpose that the ACCO serves society in aiding citizens who would otherwise be dependent on another organization, or on the state. Despite a compelling argument and a statement that the yearly taxes required for the land they had purchased were "estimate[d] as more or less oppressive upon their limited funds," the state legislature, after a long delay, denied the request for exemption. In response to the denial of this request, the managers of the ACCO wrote in an annual report: "we venture to express our disapprobation of that system of state policy which, to swell the public treasury, sanctions the reduction of Charitable Legacies, and does not scruple to draw pittance from the mansions of penury and pauperism, erected as they frequently are upon the proceeds of pure charity."<sup>90</sup>

This quotation embodies a frustration on the part of the ACCO that the state is unwilling to commit themselves to any sort of justice or equality that may require a transformation of the economic status quo. The managers of the ACCO portrayed the state as falling as far from compensatory justice as possible with this statement, accusing the legislature of allowing the building of mansions with charitable funds while bolstering the state budget with money that could be used to relieve needy private charitable institutions such as the ACCO. This reflects a sentiment shared by many charitable organizations of the early nineteenth century.

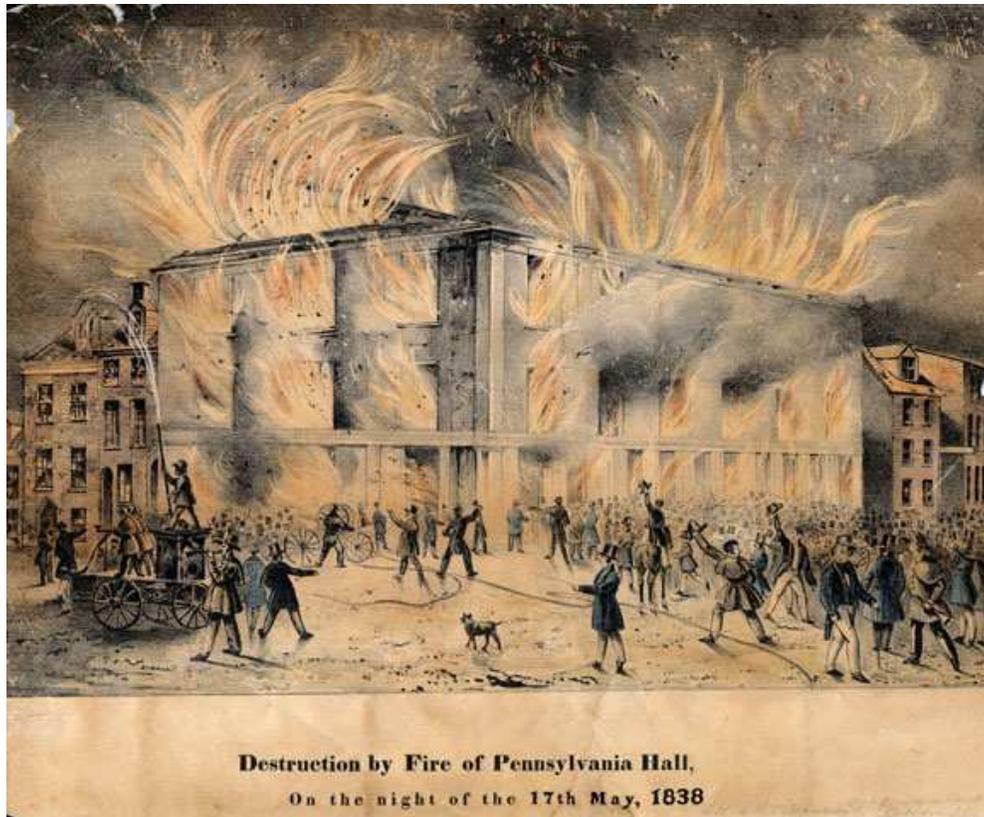
We see that private charity remains outside the realm of solutions relieving poverty and caring for the needy for much of the nineteenth century. The continuously tenuous relationship between the Guardians of the Poor and the ACCO and the denial of an exemption of property tax represents the complex relationship between state and private charitable aid of the early nineteenth century. While the public, or state, response to poverty became a major theme, the emergence of thirty-one private orphan asylums between the early eighteenth century and 1831 indicated that many believed the state did not do enough for the impoverished, vagrant, and orphaned, or that the private organizations were better suited to raise orphaned children. Rothman states that the private orphan asylums “were not part of a systematic program but were the work of dedicated yet idiosyncratic philanthropists,” continuing to argue that the preferred treatment of orphans in the early republic “remained noninstitutional.” While this does provide an excellent context for understanding the difficult relationship between the private orphan asylums and the state, as the latter saw the value of the former but still

failed to accept it as part of a “systemic approach,” it fails to address the anomaly of the ACCO.<sup>91</sup>

Rothman’s notion that noninstitutional treatment of Orphans in the early republic remained popular does not reconcile the outpouring of state aid and public liberality towards the OSP and not towards the ACCO. One must understand that the ACCO had committed itself to an unpopular goal of compensatory justice and benevolent action independent of the popularity, visibility, public assertion, and personal gains or losses inherent in this controversial endeavor.

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On May 17, 1838, Pennsylvania Hall was burnt down by a mob during a meeting of the *Anti-Slavery Society*. The following day, the same mob set fire to the newly constructed future home of the Shelter for Coloured Orphans, which was located “adjacent” to the hall. Numerous accounts described the location of the shelter relative to the hall using this term adjacent; however, we learn that the shelter was located at least ten blocks away from Pennsylvania Hall at the time of these riots. While the fire at Pennsylvania Hall on May 17<sup>th</sup> burnt the building to the ground, firefighters fortunately responded quickly and extinguished the fire set to the ACCO.<sup>92</sup>



**Figure 5: Fire Set to Penn Hall, May 17, 1838**<sup>93</sup>

The still uninhabited shelter only suffered minimal interior damage; however, the mob sent a clear message to the public and the managers of the ACCO regarding the anti-abolitionists' sentiment towards the Association. The deplorable act of setting fire to an orphan shelter fell into the mobs political agenda, indicating the severity of the racial tensions as they reached new heights with the burning of Pennsylvania Hall and the Shelter for Coloured Orphans. The reactions to these conflagrations by the managers of the organizations and Philadelphians ranged widely but overwhelmingly condemned the actions of the mob.<sup>94</sup>

The managers of the Pennsylvania Hall reported that “the police magistrate of the district in which the ‘Shelter’ is located, declared that...he did not recognise a single individual of [the inhabitants of the district] as engaged in the mob which attacked [the

shelter]. The mob was composed of *strangers*.” The mob had not been comprised of local citizens who were angered with the shelter’s relocation to a prominent position in downtown Philadelphia, indicating that the aversion of the society’s “white neighbours” that existed at their founding had dissipated. A more complex social and political situation concerning the issue of abolition and race relations now complicated the Association’s ability to carry out its business. Doubtless, the beliefs, if not the actions, of the mob described as being assembled of strangers were supported, at least in their anti-abolitionist cause, by many white neighbors of the ACCO, even if these neighbors may have condemned the fire set to the shelter.<sup>95</sup>

Regardless of the group involved with setting fire to the shelter; Philadelphia had witnessed a horrible act of violence and lawlessness. The map below marks the location of Pennsylvania Hall with the letter P and the orphan shelter with the letters S:

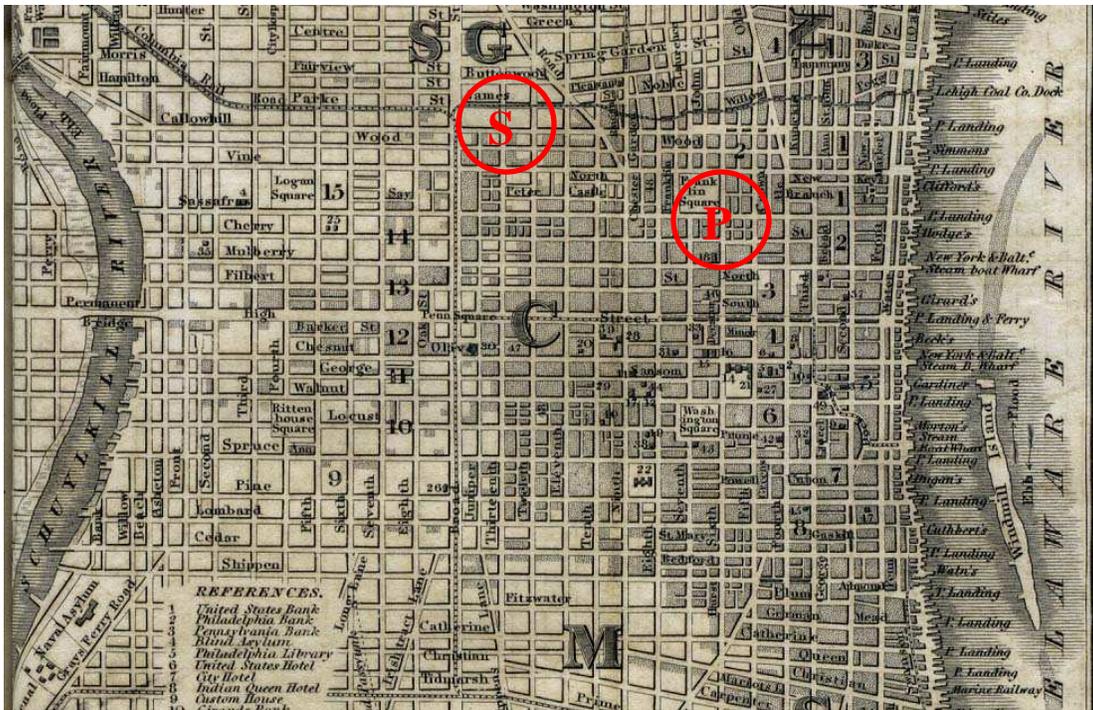


Figure 6 Map of Philadelphia in 1842: ACCO Shelter shown with letter S, Penn Hall with letter P.<sup>96</sup>

The mob did not burn the Shelter for Coloured Orphans because it happened to be located “adjacent” to their original target, Pennsylvania Hall; they moved their protest to a location over ten blocks away solely for the purpose of setting fire to a home dedicated to the most desperate class of society.

The fire set to the Shelter by an angry mob of strangers from outside of Philadelphia confirms the fears of the founders that were previously discussed. The care of black children by white women in Philadelphia during the nineteenth century proved controversial not only for those who neighbored the orphanage but also as a political issue entangled in the abolition debate. The managers of the Pennsylvania Hall also defended the liberality of Philadelphians in the history of the fire when they asserted “it is believed that the destruction of our Hall by a mob is not a true exponent of the sentiments of the citizens of Philadelphia.” This notion allowed many to move forward with their generous charity and favor the restoration of the benevolent institutions damaged. Following the fire, the managers reported that the Board of Guardians wrote “informing [the ACCO] of their willingness to furnish us with apartments in the alms house, for our family at the shelter, if considered necessary.” This gesture, while significant, must be viewed in context of the ACCO’s previously discussed relationship to the Guardians of the Poor and other state organizations. Certainly, the limited response of the state following the ACCO’s fire resembled a similarly ambiguous attitude that often defined the state’s stance toward the ACCO.<sup>97</sup>

The third annual report of the ACCO contained the minutes from the annual meeting of the Association held on December 7, 1838. There was a brief mention of the fire to the shelter, but the house had already been restored and orphans had inhabited the

shelter in “satisfactory” conditions since August 1, 1838. Thirty-six orphans resided at the shelter when the report was published. Despite recognition of numerous charitable donations used to build and subsequently restore the shelter, the treasurer reported that the Association’s “income is still insufficient for the expenditure of the family.” The continued financial difficulties of the ACCO reflected the limited, due largely to racial prejudice, benevolence of Philadelphians that prevailed.<sup>98</sup>

The attention drawn to the ACCO came predominantly with the association to the burning of Pennsylvania Hall. The ACCO managers met on the day after the fire to discuss the catastrophe and a course of action for their new shelter that the orphans were scheduled to move into shortly. It was first resolved to send a message of thanks to the fire fighters of Philadelphia. The ACCO thanked the firemen “for their energetic and benevolent exertions.” The Association “earnestly...request[ed the fire fighters] further protection on behalf of the innocent and helpless committed to [the Association’s] charge.” The inclusion of a request for future protection indicated that the women felt a continued threat with the shelter in a highly visible setting, next to the ruins of Pennsylvania Hall. In order to combat this threat the ACCO noted in their letter of thanks to fire companies the merits of their right to protection: “This being a charitable institution, having no connection with the anti-slavery society.” The ACCO distanced themselves from the anti-slavery society, while holding strong to their determined cause to fix injustice through a compensatory charity directed at the next generation.<sup>99</sup>

The managers of the ACCO received a response from one Philadelphia fire company that also reflected this increase in racial tension of the era. The May 22, 1838 correspondence indicated that the fire company also recognized the potential for a future

threat of mob violence against the ACCO's orphan shelter. After acknowledging receipt of the Association's correspondence, the Fame Fire Engine Company assured the ACCO's managers "that the protection of this [fire] company shall be given to all persons without discrimination of creed or colour who may be in danger from the ravages of fire or the violence of a lawless mob." The fire company's response reflected the fear of "lawless mob[s]" that prevailed among black Philadelphians or those caring for black Philadelphians. This support offered to by the fire company resembles a similar rhetoric to the fear of "lawless kidnappers" that had initially created a hesitation to locate the shelter of the ACCO downtown. The fears that were difficult to interpret from the initial discussion about establishing an orphanage for black children were later realized when the shelter was finally located in a more visible location.<sup>100</sup>

The show of support by the fire company indicated that some were willing to aid the ACCO if attacked by a lawless mob; however, it does not show charitable outreach towards the organization. Fears of slave rebellions and a general ambivalence towards freed blacks in need of aid heightened racial tensions in Philadelphia. This forced the fire company, and likely many other citizens, to take a side on the issue of racial discrimination. However, it did not require that the broader citizenry engage in the proactive compensatory justice that the ACCO embodied or even express an opinion regarding this practice. The Fame Fire Company, while they tackled the issue of racial discrimination, did not directly promote the cause of the ACCO. The ACCO's progress in making their cause public and visible in the 1830s, through the publication of their first report and the construction of a shelter in a prominent location downtown, faced adversity as racial tensions in Philadelphia escalated during this decade. Recall that, in

1824, when the ACCO first moved its shelter to a more central location within the city bounds they expressed confidence in a shifting opinion of their work among the public. They had hoped that from this increased visibility “some advantage would ensue.” In May of 1838 this confidence disappeared when a lawless mob went out of their way to set fire to an orphan shelter.<sup>101</sup>

#### **Section 4: One City, Two Missions: Public Assertion and Compensatory Justice**

A comparison of the Orphans Society of Philadelphia and the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans reveals an unidentified nuance, if not a flaw, in the historiography surrounding the approach to charitable work, and specifically, orphan care, in the early republic. The notion that all private orphanages existed outside of the state's "systemic approach" in the first half of the nineteenth century places the ACCO not only outside of the system but renders it nearly invisible. The ACCO fell outside of nearly everyone's "approach" to the care for orphans except those who were involved with the Association. Its lack of visibility placed it so far beneath the radar that even those well associated with charity were unaware of its existence; this is illustrated most fundamentally by Mathew Carey's 1831 letter. The lack of visibility of the ACCO is undeniable when we learn that Robert Ralston, husband of an OSP founder and heavily involved in that society himself, signed Carey's letter. Ralston and Carey, along with the other twenty-two signatories of that 1831 letter practiced liberality and cared for orphans in a way beyond the typical "systemic" approach; yet, they remained unaware of the ACCO for at least nine years. We must therefore classify the ACCO as not just another private orphan asylum outside of the system; the Friends who founded it embraced a broader understanding of "universal benevolence" and the proper care of those in need.<sup>102</sup>

The Orphan Society of Philadelphia contrasted the invisibility associated with private orphanages that are said by historians to operate outside of the system. Recall the \$5,000 grant given to the society, by the state, after their tragic fire in 1822. This seems to place the society within reasonable reach of the state of Philadelphia's approach to the care of orphans, and more broadly, the needy. The extensive liberality expressed by

Philadelphian's also indicates that even if this society fell outside of the "systemic approach," it certainly stood far from invisible and drew great attention from numerous corners of society. A history written about this orphanage and published in 1831 boasts that "The city of Philadelphia is distinguished for its liberality towards benevolent institutions: among these none seem to be in higher esteem than such as are designed to relieve poverty and distress." Indeed Philadelphians concerned themselves with the social issues of poverty and distress, and the Orphan Society of Philadelphia had seen liberal donations and a large number of subscriptions since its founding in 1816. The climate of benevolence in Philadelphia allowed the OSP to stand out as one of these many "benevolent institutions." The Orphan Society of Philadelphia never fell out of the public eye, and grew to become part of the systemic approach to orphan care.<sup>103</sup>

Word of the OSP's success traveled as an undated letter, likely from the mid nineteenth century, written by the manager of the Female Orphan Charity School of Baltimore requested the constitution and the rules and regulations of the OSP. The Baltimore charity also asked specific questions regarding the daily life and meals at the orphanage; they attributed their curiosity to "visitors [who comment on] the correct discipline with which [the OSP] is conducted." The spreading reputation of the ACCO indicates that its pedagogy regarding care of orphans grew in popularity not only in Philadelphia, but in surrounding areas in the new republic as well. The female orphanage in Baltimore also asked of the OSP managers "what punishment [the OSP] inflict[s] in [the orphans] for improper conduct." Recall the horrific discipline inflicted on two boys by the Orphan Society of Philadelphia. One wonders if the managers of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia passed the account of this discipline on to the women in

Baltimore who desired to learn from the well “disciplined” OSP. The result of spreading this disciplinary policy ought to frighten a true humanitarian.<sup>104</sup>

The spread of charitable institutions concerned solely with social control emerged as societies like the OSP grew increasingly popular during the first half of the nineteenth century. This did not discourage many in the early republic as they continued to support these institutions tasked with curing the social ills of society, while neglecting to support true universal benevolence or compensatory justice, as exemplified by the struggling finances and visibility of the ACCO. Even the small group of individuals who did support the Association often donated anonymously or did not express their concern for orphans in the same public manner that those donating to the OSP did. The managers of the ACCO reported that the “favours derived from the beneficence of individuals,” frequently denied the Association, “the satisfaction of knowing where the obligation [to the ACCO] centres.” An inconsistent pool of donors, unwilling to express their reason for donating to the benevolent institution, provided the inconsistent income for the ACCO. In contrast, recall the extensive number of regular yearly subscribers to the OSP eager to sign their name in the subscription book; this manifest had reached over one thousand subscribers, nearly one tenth of Philadelphia’s population, after the OSP had been in operation for only two years.<sup>105</sup>

Both the limited generosity of the public and the stiff position of the state particularly when compared to the extensive liberality expressed towards a similar institution for white children, the OSP, indicate that the promotion of universal benevolence and compensatory justice, as defined by the actions of the ACCO, did not represent the important aspects of humanitarian work for the majority of the population in

the early nineteenth century. The dedication to equality and benevolent actions on the part of the women in the ACCO proved encouraging; however, their difficulties indicated a vital shift away from universal benevolence in the early republic as racial tensions split the young nation and sped it towards civil war.

Differing definitions of success drove the two orphanages discussed in this essay. The lack of success of the ACCO in terms of exciting extensive liberality from Philadelphians rested in the founders' failure to invoke notions of personal interest as part of their marketing scheme for a benevolent and humanitarian cause. However, all of the success associated with the women's "humble" mission to make a difference in the lives of orphans must be credited to their steadfast commitment to an ideology unpopular among the majority of white Philadelphians. The ACCO went beyond Haskell's argument that some may work for known consequences of personal self-interest while keeping these consequences separate from their intention. They accepted known consequences that had negative implications for themselves and even for their families in order to promote compensatory justice, the true motive for their humanitarian efforts.

During the course of James Lawrence's time as a boarder at the ACCO, which began in 1827, his family and friends were unable to pay for the full cost of his board. The board, which was billed quarterly, was left to the charge of the Association when the family came up short. In July of 1834 the Association raised \$4.50 for the board of James Lawrence, and on numerous other occasions we see Beulah Sansom covering the unpaid portion of this board on her own. The association never considered James Lawrence as an orphan, as his mother's status as a freed woman manumitted to Virginia did not grant James orphan status on the basis of the Association's by laws. Despite this,

the women opted to take the child in, taking it upon themselves as benevolent individuals to cover all of the costs necessary to put James up as a boarder in the Shelter for Coloured Orphans. James Lawrence remained in the orphanage for almost eight years, until he was sent to live with a Mr. Wistar on the 29<sup>th</sup> of April 1835.<sup>106</sup>

The women of the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans dedicated themselves to providing James Lawrence with a safe and comfortable place to live despite the fact that he was not an orphan for eight years. Some measure of personal and familial sacrifice likely occurred when the women of the ACCO dedicated themselves to individuals like James Lawrence. One wonders if Rebecca Gratz, Maria Dorsey and Hitty Mroke contemplated engaging in similar familial sacrifice prior to resigning from the Orphan Society of Philadelphia's board of managers. These women wrestled with the same questions as many early Americans and Philadelphian's wrestled with. The limits of benevolence and distinction of those who deserve aid and those who do not are defined by a range of prejudice and custom. The foundation of benevolence and charity in early America rested on priorities ranging from the customary duty to one's family, to racial and national prejudice.

### Conclusion: “Rescued from the Veil of Obscurity”

By 1838 racial prejudice dominated the minds of Philadelphians; the mob fires at Pennsylvania Hall and the Shelter for Coloured Orphans highlighted the gravity of this issue. When the mayor of Philadelphia commissioned a police committee to investigate the causes of these violent fires, the investigators found the following:

However deeply the Committee may deprecate and censure the existence of that feeling [of the anti-abolitionists]; however impossible it may be for them in any manner to justify or excuse it; they owe it to the cause of truth, to declare that this excitement, (heretofore unparalleled in our city,) *was occasioned* by the determination of the owners of that building and their friends, to persevere in openly promulgating and advocating in it *doctrines repulsive to the moral sense* of a large majority of our community.<sup>107</sup>

This deplorable quotation ignites more anger than the flames that tore down Pennsylvania Hall and damaged the Shelter for Coloured Orphans. The reaction of the ACCO and of the managers of Pennsylvania Hall to this ignorant finding of a committee clearly in defense of their friend, the mayor, eludes this historian. However, a note in the *History of Pennsylvania Hall*, from which this text was excerpted, indicates that a reaction among at least some Philadelphians recognized the bias and bigotry associated with the commission’s findings. The editor of the *Pennsylvania Freeman* commented on this report and attacked the mayor stating that “It is a mean and base and most wicked endeavor to screen from censure men who have culpably neglected their sworn duty.” The editor went on to comment that in order to mask of the mayor’s failure to protect the city from this lawlessness, the investigating committee “found themselves under the necessity of palliating and excusing the atrocities of the mob.”<sup>108</sup>

In 1838 order and protection of the integrity of those who manage the City of Philadelphia took precedence over the freedom to assemble and speak on issues

concerning the abolition of slavery and the rights of freed blacks. As the apex of racial tension in this decade, the reaction to the Penn Hall fire serves as a perfect example of the desire to promote social control and order over the values of compensatory justice and universal benevolence. The ACCO recognized this, and adapted their measure of success, and their reliance on public liberality, focusing their membership and audience on a concentrated group dedicated to the benevolent ideology that they embraced beginning in 1814 when Ann Yarnall first sought to promote the cause of a destitute and unrecognized class.

The “veil of obscurity” that prevailed over the ACCO during the nineteenth century encapsulates the legacy of the Association and its founders who dedicated time throughout their lives to this cause. The Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans did not concern itself with public assertion or recognition. Beulah Sansom died on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, 1837; she had remained active in the Association until her health forced her to take leave just months before her death. After paying tribute to her tenure at the ACCO since its founding and making due note of her “public usefulness,” the Association minutes noting Beulah’s death, read “[the managers] cannot consign to these pages, the work of her hand to another without this yet affectionate tribute to her worth.” Just as the ACCO minute book necessitated a tribute to Beulah Sansom’s fifteen years of service to the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans, so does this essay. The work of Mrs. Sansom and the others at the ACCO remains hidden beneath a veil of obscurity. The dedication to broadening universal benevolence by these women as the prejudice of early American society only narrowed the scope of benevolence for the majority of citizens must be rescued from this “system of silence.”<sup>109</sup>

Pulling the lessons learned, and taught, by the women of the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans out from the depths of history forces one to look at the reasons for initiating charitable work and humanitarian reform. It forces us to think long and hard about to whom we are compelled to aid, and perhaps more importantly why we feel compelled to aid them. The widening of universal benevolence must not be restricted based upon racial stereotypes, or any other custom or prejudice. The story of race and charity in Philadelphia from the 1780s through the 1830s encapsulates the danger of allowing specific prejudices and customs to dominate society. The women of the Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans recognized this danger and concerned themselves with small, humble goals rather than bold, public assertions; their humble successes should be remembered and admired.

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<sup>1</sup> For information about Carey's reputation writing on behalf of the impoverished see Gary B. Nash, *First City: Philadelphia and the Forging of Historical Memory* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2002), 146-147.

<sup>2</sup> Mathew Carey, *Sir, The Situation...*, (Philadelphia, 1831) in Mathew Carey Miscellaneous Essays held at the Library Company of Philadelphia (hereafter referred to as LCP).

<sup>3</sup> Mathew Carey, *Sir, The Situation...*

<sup>4</sup> Evan Radcliffe, "Revolutionary Writing, Moral Philosophy, and Universal Benevolence in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Apr., 1993), pp. 221-240, p. 221-222.

<sup>5</sup> Radcliffe, "Revolutionary Writing," 222, 223; Radcliffe outlines and selectively quotes the arguments of both Edwards and Hume.

<sup>6</sup> Radcliffe describes arguments surrounding extent of benevolence in "Revolutionary Writing," p. 224-228 and the argument concerning prejudice on p. 230-234

<sup>7</sup> Radcliffe, "Revolutionary Writing," 222; Discussion of Hitchcock and National Prejudice in J. M. Opal, "The Labors of Liberality: Christian Benevolence and National Prejudice in the American Founding," *The Journal of American History*, (March 2008), pp. 1082-1136.

<sup>8</sup> Lois W. Banner, "Religions Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," *Journal of American History* (Jun. 1973), pp. 23-41, 32, information denominational difference found 29-31; additional information on Quaker humanitarian institutions found in Bruce Dorsey, "Friends Becoming Enemies: Philadelphia Benevolence and the Neglected Era of American Quaker History," *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 18 No. 3, (Autumn, 1998), pp. 395-428, 399-401.

<sup>9</sup> Banner, "Religious Benevolence," 36; For a discussion of societies desire to eradicate poverty in the early republic see Seth Rockman, *Welfare Reform in the Early Republic*, (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Banner, "Religions Benevolence," 38-39.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Haskell, "Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility, part 1," *The American Historical Review*, (Apr. 1985), pp. 339-361.; I owe credit to my understanding of Haskell's argument in part to Brett Wagenheim after discussing a response she wrote to this article.

<sup>12</sup> Haskell, "Capitalism," 342

<sup>13</sup> Mathew Carey, "Sir the situation,..."

<sup>14</sup> Haskell, "Capitalism," 356, 358.

<sup>15</sup> Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, "Constitution of...", (Joseph James: Philadelphia, 1787).

<sup>16</sup> Gary B. Nash, *Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1988), 4, 5, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 3, 10.

<sup>18</sup> Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 28-29, 6.

<sup>19</sup> Rockman, *Welfare Reform*, 15; for information concerning rules for admission, see Constitution of the Society (Box 1 Folder 11), Orphan Society of Philadelphia (hereafter OSP), Records (Collection 1913), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (hereafter HSP), and Rules of Admission (Box 1 Folder 18), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; Rockman, *Welfare Reform*, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Rockman, *Welfare Reform*, 15.

<sup>21</sup> David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic* (Little, Brown and Co.: Boston, 1971), xiii-xx.

<sup>22</sup> Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, xiii-xx.

<sup>23</sup> Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 6, 7.

<sup>24</sup> Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 206. Homer Folks, *The Care of Destitute, Neglected, and Delinquent Children* (Macmillan: London, 1902), 52-55

<sup>25</sup> Folks, *Care of Destitute*, 52-55, 3-7.

<sup>26</sup> Folks, *Care of Destitute*, 5.

<sup>27</sup> Brief history of orphanage in Annual Musical Benefit Program, (Box 1 Folder 3), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; OSP, *First Annual Report*, (Philadelphia: Fry, 1816), 20.

<sup>28</sup> OSP, *Constitution and By-laws*, (Philadelphia: Fry, 1815), 8.

<sup>29</sup> OSP, *Constitution and By-laws*, 8-9; See Rockman, *Welfare Reform*, 15 for discussion of indoor relief.

- <sup>30</sup> Admissions Policy (Box 1 Folder 6), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; 1845 Publication of Constitution (Box 1 Folder 11), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP. The lack of an explicit reference does not serve as surprising; however, no examples of black children being admitted exist and the historiography and finding aid covering the OSP's history all discuss that all orphans admitted were white.
- <sup>31</sup> OSP, *First Report*, 4.
- <sup>32</sup> OSP, *First Report*, 6.
- <sup>33</sup> OSP, *Second Annual Report*, (Philadelphia: Fry, 1817), 5; Dell Upton, "Lancasterian Schools, Republican Citizenship, and the Spatial Imagination in Early Nineteenth-Century America," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 55, No. 3, (Sep., 1996), pp. 238-253, 239; Further information on Lancasterian education and its role in charitable institutions during the early republic see, William Buckner McGroarty, "Alexandria's Lancasterian Schools," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Second Series, Vol. 21 No. 2, (Apr., 1941), pp. 111-118, and Peter E. Kurtze, "'A School House Well Arranged': Baltimore Public School Buildings on the Lancasterian Plan, 1829-1839," *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Vol. 5, (1995), pp. 70-77.
- <sup>34</sup> *History of the Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1831).
- <sup>35</sup> From American Sunday School Union, *History of the Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia*, (1832) accessed via <http://jwa.org/archive/gratz/gorph3a.jpg>.
- <sup>36</sup> Publication of Constitution (Box 1 Folder 11), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; *History of the Orphan Asylum*; Visiting Committee Reports 1819-1823 (Vol. 12), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP.
- <sup>37</sup> From American Sunday School Union, *History of the Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia*, (1832) accessed via <http://jwa.org/archive/gratz/gorph4a.jpg>.
- <sup>38</sup> Publication of Constitution (Box 1 Folder 11), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; *History of the Orphan Asylum*.
- <sup>39</sup> From American Sunday School Union, *History of the Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia*, (1832) accessed via <http://jwa.org/archive/gratz/gorph1a.jpg>.
- <sup>40</sup> Publication of Constitution (Box 1 Folder 11) OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; *History of the Orphan Asylum*.
- <sup>41</sup> Publication of Constitution (Box 1 Folder 11), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; Visiting Committee Reports 1819-1823 (Vol. 12), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP.
- <sup>42</sup> Character Trait Book (Box 9, Folder 9), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP.
- <sup>43</sup> Indenture Records 1819-1832 (Box 5, Folder 32), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP. General information about the practice of indenture found in OSP, *Constitution*. For information on family life in the early republic see Carol Shammass, "Anglo-American Household Government in Comparative Perspective," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ser., VOL. 52 No. 1, (Jan. , 1995), 104-144.
- <sup>44</sup> Information on the move into the new Orphan Asylum is found in OSP, *Third Annual Report*, (Philadelphia: Fry, 1818); location of new asylum found in OSP, *Second Report*.
- <sup>45</sup> OSP, *First Report*, 4; OSP, *Third Report*, 3; OSP, *Sixth Annual Report*, (Philadelphia, 1821); OSP, *Seventh Annual Report*, (Philadelphia, 1822); OSP, *Eighth Annual Report*, (Philadelphia, 1823); *First Annual Report* cites the budget as \$8,014.20; *Second Annual Report* cites budget at \$3,756.18; Information regarding number of subscriptions was compiled from both the First and Second Annual Reports for the OSP.
- <sup>46</sup> Resignation Letter of H. Maroke, (Box 1 Folder 14), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; Data on managers absence from monthly meetings found through records kept in the front of minute books, Minutes 1814-1823 (Vol. 2), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; For information household in early republic see Shammass, "Anglo-American Household".
- <sup>47</sup> Resignation Letter of Rebecca Gratz, (Box 1 Folder 27), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; Dorsey's resignation is found in Box 1 Folder 14), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP; For information household in early republic see Shammass, "Anglo-American Household".
- <sup>48</sup> OSP, *Third Report*, 6-7, actual comprehensive budget was \$4366.70, \$2910 of which was allotted to the purchasing committee; OSP, *Fourth Report*, 8; OSP, *Seventh Report*.
- <sup>49</sup> Brief history of the Orphan Society of Philadelphia including the fire found in, Benefit Programs (Box 1 Folder 3), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP. A more detailed history of this Orphanage is found in *History of the Orphan Asylum*; Managers Report on Fire (Box 3 Folder 20), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP.

- <sup>50</sup> From American Sunday School Union, *History of the Orphan Asylum in Philadelphia*, (1832) accessed via <http://jwa.org/archive/gratz/gorph2a.jpg>.
- <sup>51</sup> Managers Report on Fire (Box 3 Folder 20), OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP.
- <sup>52</sup> OSP, *Eighth Report*.
- <sup>53</sup> Association for the Care of Coloured Orphans (hereafter ACCO), *First Report: Embracing an Account of "The Shelter for Coloured Orphans,"* (Philadelphia, Brown, 1836), v-vi.
- <sup>54</sup> ACCP, *First Report*, vii, ix.
- <sup>55</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, ix, 12; General information about first meetings of the ACCO found in, ACCO, *First Report*, 11-15.
- <sup>56</sup> An excellent summation of the role of women in the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century found in the introduction of, Mary P. Ryan, *Women in Public: Between Banners and Ballots, 1825-1880*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 3-18.
- <sup>57</sup> Ryan, *Women in Public*, 12.
- <sup>58</sup> Dorsey, "Friends Becoming Enemies", 401, Dorsey discusses general information on Quakers and benevolence on 399-402; for information on Female Friends, see Margaret Morris Haviland, "Beyond Women's Sphere: Young Quaker Women and the Veil of Charity in Philadelphia, 1790-1910," *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series. Vol. 51 No. 3, (Jul. 1994), pp. 419-446.
- <sup>59</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 12.
- <sup>60</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 14.
- <sup>61</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, v.
- <sup>62</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 12.
- <sup>63</sup> History, (Box 1 Series 1), ACCO, Records, Friends Historical Library of Swarthmore College (hereafter, FHL); Entry for March 1832, Association Minutes 1831-1837, (Box 1 Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.; Information about introduction of children from Guardians of Poor found in Blanshard Associates, "Friends Shelter History, 1822-1972," 1973 (Box 1 Series 1) , ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>64</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 15.
- <sup>65</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 12.
- <sup>66</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 21, 23; Data for number of members and budgets found in ACCO, *First Annual Report* and ACCO, *Second Report*, actual budgets for years listed were: for 1822, \$253.84; for 1823, \$540.35; for 1825, \$815.93; for 1837, \$1808.89.
- <sup>67</sup> Blanshard Associates, "Friends Shelter History".
- <sup>68</sup> For History overview of the history of the ACCO see, Blanshard Associates, "Friends Shelter History".
- <sup>69</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 25-26; Rules for Association (Box 2 Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>70</sup> Minute for December 1831, Minutes of the Association, (Box 2 Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>71</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, v-vi.
- <sup>72</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, vi.
- <sup>73</sup> For discussion of kidnapping in early 19<sup>th</sup> century see Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 242-243.
- <sup>74</sup> *Coloured Orphan*, October 1824 (Box 1 Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL; dated based on Blanshard Associates "Friends Shelter History".
- <sup>75</sup> *Coloured Orphan*, (October 1824).
- <sup>76</sup> *Coloured Orphan*, (October 1824); I was unable to locate a published version of the press release in any of the major weeklies, bi-weeklies, or journals published at the time, indicating that the publication of this press release, if any, was very limited.
- <sup>77</sup> *Coloured Orphan*.
- <sup>78</sup> Banner, "Religious Benevolence," 32
- <sup>79</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 21; information about first lettering on building in Managers Minutes entry for 7 June, 1833, (Box 1 Series 2) ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL..
- <sup>80</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, vi.
- <sup>81</sup> Data for number of subscriptions and budget found in ACCO, *Second Report*, actual budgets for 1837 was \$1808.89.
- <sup>82</sup> ACCO, *Second Report*, vi, 16.
- <sup>83</sup> ACCO, *Second Report*, 16.
- <sup>84</sup> ACCO, *Second Report*, 16.

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- <sup>85</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 18.
- <sup>86</sup> Notes from Association entry for July 1, 1836, (Box 1 Series 1) ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL..
- <sup>87</sup> Notes from Association entry for July 1, 1836.
- <sup>88</sup> It is difficult to decipher exactly how many times, and when, the Guardians reneged on their agreement with the ACCO, but information regarding at least two occurrences of this can be found in the following sources: Guardians of the Poor to the ACCO June 18, 1839 (Box 8 Series 6), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.; Account books 1822-39, (Box 7 Series 4), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>89</sup> Register of Children v.1 1822-1849 (Box 4b), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>90</sup> Proposal to legislature October 6, 1832 (Box 2 Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL; ACCO, *First Report*, 34-35; denial of request found in Managers' Minutes June 7, 1833 (Box 2 Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>91</sup> Folks, *Care of Destitute*, 55; Rothman, *Discovery of the Asylum*, 207.
- <sup>92</sup> *History of Pennsylvania Hall* (1838; New York, 1969), 136-143; information about location of orphanage found in Managers' Minute for 6 July 1838, (Box 1 Series 2 Vol. 3), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>93</sup> Destruction by fire of Pennsylvania Hall, the new building of the Abolition Society, on the night of 17th May. [J. C. Wild] (Philadelphia: [J. T. Bowen], 1838) accessed via Library Company of Philadelphia via <http://www.lcpgraphics.org/wainwright/W094.htm>.
- <sup>94</sup> *History of Pennsylvania Hall*, 136-143.
- <sup>95</sup> *History of Pennsylvania Hall*, 140.
- <sup>96</sup> Map adapted from, "Philadelphia" from Tanner, H.S. *The American Traveler; or Guide Through the United States*. Eighth Edition. New York, 1842, accessed via [http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/philadelphia\\_1842.jpg](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/historical/philadelphia_1842.jpg).
- <sup>97</sup> *History of Pennsylvania Hall*, 136; Managers Minutes (May 19, 1838) (Box 1 Series 2 Volume 3), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>98</sup> ACCO, *Third Report*.
- <sup>99</sup> Managers Minutes (May 19, 1838) (Box 1 Series 2 Volume 3) ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>100</sup> Fame Fire Company to ACCO May 22, 1838 (Box 8 Series 6), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>101</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 21.
- <sup>102</sup> Ralston's signature appears on letter, Mathew Carey, *Sir, The Situation....*
- <sup>103</sup> *History of the Orphan Asylum*.
- <sup>104</sup> Letter from "Female Orphan Charity School of Baltimore," (Box 4 Folder 11) OSP, Records (Collection 1913), HSP.
- <sup>105</sup> ACCO, *First Report*, 24; OSP, *Second Report*; Population data found in Nash, *Forging Freedom*, 143.
- <sup>106</sup> Association minutes 2 February 1833 (Box 2 Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL; Minutes 7 July 1834, (Box 2, Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL; Minutes, 1 May, 1835 (Box 2, Series 1), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL.
- <sup>107</sup> *History of Pennsylvania Hall*, 180.
- <sup>108</sup> *History of Pennsylvania Hall*, 180.
- <sup>109</sup> Managers' minutes 6 October 1837 (Box 1 Series 2 Volume 2), ACCO, Records, RG4/008, FHL