IN THE CAUSE OF WOMEN

Young Women’s Christian Association
Binghamton, New York

BY
SUZANNE MEREDITH
The future belongs to all of us

THE YWCA-USA IS 150 YEARS OLD
COPYRIGHT
2009

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system without written permission from the author. An exception is made for the inclusion of brief quotations for review purposes.


The color persimmon used on the cover of this volume is part of the flagship design for the new revitalized YWCA.

PERSIMMON equals BRAVE

— 2 —
FOREWORD

YWCA BINGHAMTON & BROOME COUNTY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CAROLE COPPENS

I could not imagine the building dark and empty, and so began a journey in June, 2000. Accepting the job as Executive Director of the YWCA of Binghamton and Broome County, I walked through the building on June 5th of that year. As I realized just how bleak things looked, my first thought was “run away.” Yet there was something there, something that moved me to stay and not turn my back.

It got worse. I spent days thinking that we couldn’t make it, that we could not overcome the years of wear and tear. Yet, here we are, stronger than ever!

There are so many people who refused to give up: the women on the Board of Directors; an underpaid and overworked staff; boards of local foundations and funding agencies who saw the lily in the mud and all the citizens of this community who wrote checks and offered words of encouragement.

The YWCA will be here, in this beautifully restored historic building, for years to come. We will continue to serve those who need us. I am honored to be a part of this journey.

A word of thanks goes to Suzanne Meredith who donated not only her talents as a researcher and writer, but also her house to store the precious historic documents and pictures we found while we were under construction. Finally, to my husband, family and friends who give me so much strength and support to meet life’s challenges every day. I could not have done it without that.
YWCA of Binghamton/Broome County

2008 – 2009
Board of Directors

Rebecca Saunders – President
Karima Legette – Vice President
Tiffany G. Loughren – Treasurer
Janet Lee Abel – Secretary
Lori Hayes
Jessica F. Surdey
Blondyne Mukoko
Shannon Barbuto-Lewis
Joanna Rose Parry
Junietta W. Brooks
Anndrea Starzak
JoAnn Kunkle
Gale Spencer
Sharon A. Bryant
Lauren A. Kiley
Jacqueline Storey

Picture published for the first time in 1925 for Mothers’ Day and for the development of the renewed YWCA in the Czech Republic.
Faith with Action...Fairness for all...Joy in Diversity = YWCA

An 1860’s promotional book stated: “The social advantages of Binghamton are numerous, the tone of society healthy and the morals of the community beyond dispute.”

Into this arena of prosperity marched an army...of women. From every small borough, farm and village, females came to the city to find employment. Factories, offices and small shops provided paying jobs to these new entrants into the labor market.

Many women believed new opportunities to earn a living could be found in the cities, in bastions previously dominated by men. However, the positions usually turned out to be dismal shadows of the expected prosperity...but it was the beginning of one of the greatest revolutions in history. Females would never again be content with being overlooked in ability, education or human rights.

The changes were dramatic and the family home was no longer the only place for respectable females to work. Cottage industries were becoming obsolete...as the industrial revolution spread across the world...women had a yearning for more from life...for rights and freedoms men had always enjoyed. The good life often did not arrive with a job. Wages were minimal, working conditions poor and dangerous, housing was scarce and virtue was at risk. The women who flooded the industrial centers were not prepared for soot, poverty and disrespect.

During this time there was also a significant revival movement in churches throughout the nation...bringing religion into the forefront of relevance in life situations.

In 1855, two groups formed in England to address women’s concerns. One organization prayed for answers...the other devised practical methods of assistance. Eventually the groups merged, offering faith with action. The combined group became The Young Women’s Christian Association. PRAYER and EARTHLY ASSISTANCE were combined and now the YW has been offering services to women and their communities for more than a century.

The new association brought together a solid religious foundation with the determination to provide solutions for the needs of modern women. One of the first projects was to provide safe housing for any woman requiring assistance. Eventually programs expanded to include children and all people of any faith, nationality or race.

Recognized as an organization with worthy goals, satellite branches soon developed all over the world. In 1858, two years before Abraham Lincoln was elected President, the United States established a YWCA. Large population and industrial cities such as Boston and New York attracted young women by the thousands, and by 1860 both of these cities had established residences to welcome and protect the newest members of the workforce. The first organization in the US “The Ladies Christian Association” of NYS was also the first to offer women training in an innovative office device...the typewriter...that year was 1870.

The YWCA has been a venture of faith for nearly a century and a half. Championing controversial topics in every era, the YW initiated action in any venue they believed would morally strengthen women and improve society in general...an end to slavery, suffrage for all people, complete eradication of racism by promoting racial justice...social, legal and personal rights for women, including education...opportunities for growth, leadership and dignity,... fair wages, an end to child labor, and the right of choice due each woman. The YWCA works for universal justice, peace and freedom...and it is still just the beginning....
Courthouse Square, Binghamton, New York, in the 1890’s – at which time the local chamber of commerce reported: “Binghamton is the seat of Broome County government…a great industrial location…a hub of rail transportation…magnificent waterways…and a political and social climate conducive to commercial progress.”
With the arrival of the industrial revolution, many thousands of women moved from farms and rural settings to the new industrial cities looking for a different way of life...hoping to better their existence by escaping the drudgery of farms and rural poverty. Often what they found were poor-paying jobs with long hours and nearly nonexistent safety conditions. The people shown above were employed in a Binghamton silk mill. Small children were allowed to accompany a woman to the factory floor...proving their usefulness when thread clogged the gears. A tiny hand could reach into tight places to remove knots...a great risk existed for crushing hands and arms when the gear was abruptly freed.
Women who had time, dedication and often the means, advocated for change...for social justice...equality for women in the workplace and home...property rights...voting rights...education...and safe working conditions. The women above believed forming a local branch of the Young Women’s Christian Association would give women a safe place and the guidance to achieve their rightful place in America.
Dr. Alice Mills was the first president of the Board of Directors of the YWCA in Binghamton, from 1892 through 1897. Her influence as a physician was responsible for the emphasis the YWCA placed on health and physical education.

The photo below is of Mrs. Elizabeth Weeks Dickinson who served two terms as president in 1908 and in 1922. These were two of the women responsible for the early success of the local YWCA.
In 1892, the First Presbyterian Church was the site of the first organizational meeting for a YWCA in Binghamton. Nearly all the churches in the area participated. Although the organization formed was to be based on Christian beliefs, it was agreed it would not be part of any denomination...every member of the original board was a member of various churches.

The times were right for establishing a safety zone for women...where they could be protected and educated to deal with their new social conditions.

The First Presbyterian Church remains standing in downtown Binghamton and is a historic landmark.
The second YWCA organizational meeting was held in the home of Mrs. A. B. Corby on Henry Street. The third and largest meeting was held at the First Baptist church…it attracted 800 people in support of the plan. Binghamton was a growing industrial center that was attracting large numbers of the new immigrants being admitted on Ellis Island in New York. One of the first projects of the YW was to offer the new immigrants courses in learning English.

This magnificent building, constructed in 1871, was demolished in 1970 and a multi-story cement housing block arose in its place…now known as 100 Chenango Street Apartments.
The first location of the YWCA was in rented rooms on the top floor of the Strong Block. A small flag flying from a window can be seen with a sign above, announcing the presence of the new organization. At first they only occupied three rooms and were allowed occasional use of a large hall. Rent was set at $350 per year. The landlord, Cyrus Strong, owned and managed a successful bank on the first floor. Obtaining continuing funds was a struggle so the community was asked for help in furnishing the space. The local Stickley Brothers & Brandt Company donated two new rocking chairs.

By 1896, the electric lighting bill became overwhelming and the YWCA board requested that Mr. Strong convert some of the light fixtures to gas to cut down on expenses...request denied. By the end of the year, the YWCA’s insurance coverage expired as there was not enough cash to pay the bill. After ten days, rescue came from Mr. Hoag, who volunteered to pay the premium.

The thoroughly modern city of Binghamton was covered with a thick net of wires to facilitate the street railway system but as seen in the above photo, taken in 1894, horses and buggies were still a main method of transportation.
The reading room of the YWCA, pictured above, served many functions. A crepe paper class and other crafts were managed around the large table, meetings were held...and of course reading was an approved pastime. A large cabinet was filled with appropriate reading material and Fowler's Department Store donated 500 protective covers to help preserve the book collection.

The invention of the typewriter in 1873 was hailed as the greatest office tool yet created. One of the first classes offered by the YWCA was instruction in the operation of the typing machine...giving women the opportunity to obtain better positions in the world of business.

Although the ladies had to walk up several flights of stairs, other organizations also made use of the YW facilities. In 1895 the WCTU requested assistance in securing the well-known speaker Miss Lottie Cheeney to give a “parliamentary drill.” The cost of attending the course of three lessons was 50 cents.
The YWCA reception room, pictured above, was furnished through the charity of the people of Binghamton...although one newspaper article of the times admitted that “…a lot of junk was contributed that had to be removed to the dump.” Eventually the ladies decided to use old gym mats, cut and recovered, to make window cushions and pillows.

By 1893, the YW board of directors voted to form a “Carriage Circle” for transporting sick girls and others in need “…who have no privileges to ride in such conveyances.”

In 1901, a gentleman was hired as physical education director with a salary of $5 per week as long as there were sufficient funds in the treasury.
The music room was very simply decorated…but contained numerous song books. The framed collage on the table contained dozens of “cabinet cards” of prominent orchestra members and conductors of the era.

In 1893, a boarding establishment was being sought to house some of the women in the most need. It wasn’t until 1902 that a suitable location was found. A portion of the Herald Building on State and Henry Street offered small but comfortable rooms. The facility also served lunches for the women.

A newspaper headline in 1904 announced: “The New YWCA Building Movement is making progress! Two very large gifts were announced by the business men committee. The goal of the association is to be as financially self-supporting as possible. This was accomplished last year to within ten per cent. $6,497 was used last year and only $1,131 was received in subscriptions.”

Although the YWCA had limited resources, they soon opened a boarding house and an employment bureau, a continuing education program, and formed a “Housekeepers’ League” to help with obtaining better working conditions and better pay.
In 1893 there was a great religious revival sweeping the entire country. S. Mills Ely was a successful local businessman who built a temporary wooden meeting hall to host traveling evangelistic services. He also believed in helping to establish the YWCA and donated $322 from the collections of the October revival meetings. When the meetings ended, the tabernacle was dismantled and used to construct a huge tower on the top of Mount Prospect in Binghamton. Construction was completed in 1907, but several years later a huge windstorm destroyed the structure.
The first YWCA boarding hall was located in the Herald Building on State and Henry Streets in 1904.

In 1911, a need became evident for a noon resting place and rooms were offered by Mrs. G. Dickinson in a section of the Republican Building. A cafeteria was opened there for a year before being moved to the Henry Street location.
In the year 1905, the YWCA needed a larger and more permanent location. A mansion at number one Lewis Street was purchased. In 1906, Miss Mary Lockwood, who had been president of the association for several years, donated funds to construct a gymnasium attached to the left of the house.

Women joined the YWCA “willingly crossing the lines of class and ethnic identity. Diverse ethnic, racial and cultural backgrounds were combined to create a richer quality of life through good health, security and friendship.”
Pictured are the ladies who lived and worked at the YWCA on Lewis Street. The single portrait above is of the physical education director for the year.

Rules stated that any woman out later that 10:00 PM should have written permission from the house matron.
A YWCA vacation cottage was established on Hiawatha Island in the Susquehanna River near Owego. Railroad fare to the dock was 90 cents from Binghamton. Room and board for a week cost $3.50...but each girl had to bring her own pillowcase, sheet and towels. The attractions included boating, bathing, fishing, campfires and bacon bats and tramping through woods and fields.
NEWS of 1914

**Great Variety of work is undertaken at the YWCA**

“Girls receive instruction in many branches – physical training is accompanied by doing much good. The Young Women’s Christian Association is one of the great movements of the day...not only nationally but in the world. At Lewis Street, one of the special features of the YW work is the department of physical education which provides wholesome exercise and relaxation for any girl or woman. From basketball to domestic sciences offer incalculable service to countless scores of young women.”

NEWS of 1913

**AREA harbors suffragist who writes timely epistle on militant suffragism!**

“She scores good point on playing the game in the open. Who is this fearless feminine character? Hot for the cause! All right!

“There is at least one vocal ‘suffie’ we have discovered. She fosters the cause of the suffragists and puts fourth some telling arguments. She says: ‘John Bull’ (most men) think women should take a back seat and stay there and should be satisfied. Some persons hold that the suffragists’ methods are too rough, smashing windows and pouring ink into mail boxes...but the most humiliating and degrading thing any person can do is to plead, beg or cajole for that which belongs to him (or her). The ballot is as rightfully the woman’s as it is the man’s...the men strive to regulate the lives of women while they continue to make a mess of their own. The subjection of women will never work to the advancement of the race. Women should receive every advantage, political, social, industrial and educational. The world cannot cripple the ambitions and retard the progress of and break the spirit of one half of the human race and then look for great advancement on the part of the other half.”

NEWS of 1913

**MANY SUFFRAGISTS IN AREA! Make good wives say devoted husbands –**

“Women of good sense they declare.

It is surprising the number of women here who are interested in the suffrage movement and strange to say most of them are married, which gives evidence that hubby has not heard or did not heed the little rhyme: Never worry, never fret, never marry a suffragette. The shoe villages are harboring many suffragettes and we are not losing any sleep over the news that the numbers are constantly growing. While we feel sure that only a small percentage of women would vote even if given the right, yet we see no real harm in giving the franchise to women.”
Many women from the Binghamton YWCA were among the first to travel to the Seneca Falls Conventions to sign the documents demanding equality for women...rights they had been denied in the mistaken idea that every woman was feeble-minded and needed protection from politics and world realities. Suffragettes worked for the right to vote, hold office and be treated fairly everywhere in the United States.

Mrs. Laidlaw was one of the main speakers at the Suffragist Convention in Binghamton in 1913...to the dismay of some “gentlemen” who objected to their wives and daughters attending such a radical meeting.
1917 – The United States Government requested the YWCA to provide recreational programs for military personal both within the America’s boarders and internationally. The YWCA was the first women’s organization allowed in US army camps. The women provided administrative support for the military in Europe. The YW helped more than a million women working in war factories, and in the post war era assisted war brides in relocating. The national organization of “Traveler’s Aid” societies was instituted and bloomed into a force without equal in service to strangers. Eventually this group became the USO.
Locally, the YWCA also supported the troops. A temporary camp for soldiers was set up on a vacant lot next to the YW on Lewis Street. Meals were served to the military men from the YW dining room. The photos show the adjacent camp and soldiers in front of the Lewis Street residence.
Back our girls over there
United War Work Campaign
The cigar industry was one of the largest businesses in Broome County in 1890. There were fifty cigar factories and many related industries such as the cigar box concern shown above. Many of the 6,000 employees were naive women. The top photo shows women making cigars and finishing the product by rolling each cigar in their mouths. The YWCA made a point of letting these women know what services were available for them at the YWCA.
Isaac V. Fowler erected the “Fowler Hotel” in 1908 on the corner of Hawley and Exchange Street. The architect of the six-story edifice was T. I. Lacey & Son.

It was later sold to George Glazier and renamed the Georgiana Hotel. In 1919, Mr. Glazier made a deal for the hotel with the YWCA taking the Lewis Street property in trade. For the first time, residences, cafeteria, gymnasium, offices and meeting rooms could all be in the same building. It wasn’t until 1926 that funds were raised to complete the addition of a swimming pool.

In 1977, more work was needed and over one million dollars was raised for renovations. and by 1979 the project was completed.
Classes offered in the new building included hat making, typewriting, china painting, vocal, cooking, embroidery, dress making, reed basketry, and French as well as gym and bible instructions.

Fowler’s Department Store donated many of the books used in the YW classes.
In the year 1919, prominent businessman Willis Sharp Kilmer caused a huge commotion among the YWCA board members. He offered to erect and equip a new gymnasium annex...as a memorial to his mother Mrs. Jonas Kilmer. It was considered the greatest gift that had ever been made to any institution in the city...worth $50,000. The donation created wild enthusiasm among workers and volunteers at the YWCA. The ladies were so overcome with excitement that many could “not settle” themselves down to lesser matters for the rest of the day. Perhaps he needed some good publicity... Kilmer, the owner of Swamp Root production, had recently been in the news for clobbering his wife with a beer bottle during a spirited discussion.
Photos show ladies of the YWCA at the new building on Exchange Street enjoying the views and creating a float for a community parade. From the very beginning, the YW has striven to create opportunities for women’s growth and leadership.
The YWCA opened THE GIRL RESERVES to all teenaged girls to promote moral and progressive principles, teaching them to strive to face life squarely and to find and give the best in each girl to the community and the world in which she served. Their symbol was a triangle inside a circle. Each girl wore a uniform dress of tailored white pique worn with the official blue tie. Wholesome activities encouraged an appreciation of people of all races and nationalities...learning skills and hobbies and building a healthy balanced life. Leaders strove to give the girls insights and leadership responsibilities to build self-esteem and prepare them for the work place to help make America the best its hopes and traditions could produce.

The group began in 1918 to foster patriotic war work.

---

**GIRL RESERVE**

**Slogan**
To face life squarely

**Purpose**
To find and give the best

**Code**
Gracious in manner
Impartial in judgment
Ready for service
Loyal to friends
Reaching toward the best
Earnest in purpose
Seeing the beautiful
Eager for knowledge
Reverent to God
Victorious over self
Ever dependable
Sincere at all times

**Quest**
"Everywhere, always, in sunshine, in shadow, in joy, in disappointment, in success, in defeat—we, the Girl Reserves of America, follow the Glad. If once we fall, we rise to face the light; if once we fail, we fight again to win; we cannot be lonely—we stand together. From North to farthest South, from East to distant West, ours is the finest Quest. We know the One we follow."

—Inscribed to the Girl Reserves by Emily T. Goding, formerly of the National Board staff.
The YWCA cafeteria was a popular eating place for residents and members of the community. Funds for the cafeteria were donated by Louise Brintnell Crary. A patron of those in need, her obituary in 1924 claimed that she also followed up her cash gifts with personal service. The cafeteria closed in 1942.

A lobster plate cost 35 cents in 1940.
The picture above is a group of the YWCA Industrial Girls visiting the Binghamton Press to become familiar with the printing industry. The accompanying program is from 1927.
By 1930 the YWCA Women’s Business & Professional Club was holding their annual meetings at lovely locations throughout the county, including the building pictured above. The Kalura Country Club was once the mansion of a prominent businessman and eventually became the IBM Country Club. The invitation to the 1930 meeting was printed on delicate pink doilies.
End of the year banquets were usually held in the decorated gymnasium. These ladies were enjoying evenings in 1920 and 1925. The YWCA was often said to be… "one of the most powerful forces that served to emancipate women."
The women in the photo above worked in a Binghamton laundry (circa 1912)…the hours were long and the overseers demanded perfect attendance even when an employee was ill. The top photo is of women working in the shoe industry where “piece work” was the rule.

It is for women such as these that the YWCA has served as advocate…guardian and teacher.
The YWCA Camp Y-De-Lite was located on the banks of the beautiful Chenango River in Chenango Bridge, New York. Girls from 7 to 14 years were encouraged to spend part of their summer days in bloomers or bathing wear enjoying companionship, crafts, sports and nature with professional guidance.
Both Junior camps and Senior camps were available at Camp Y-De-Lite for a cost of $7 per week. The pictures were taken from 1927 through 1934. Sports and handicrafts kept minds and bodies busy and healthful during the sessions.
Music has always been a large part of the relaxation and entertainment for ladies of the YWCA. These photos were taken approximately 1920 & 1930.
TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY
A CHAIN OF SERVICE

The idea of an organization to assist travelers in need probably began in the 1850’s. Thousands of people were traversing the continent toward the west...looking for a better life in unsettled regions. Although travelers were hardy, trouble occurred due to illness, disease and unreliable methods of transportation. Often the basic necessities of food and medical care were not available. The Mayor of St. Louis, Bryan Mullanphy, worked to provide travelers and immigrants in trouble with protection and assistance. Mayor Mullanphy believed that the phrase “No one is a stranger here,” was a model for life. When he died in 1851, he bequeathed $500,000 dollars to “aid travelers going west”... but this was just the beginning. Grace Hoadley Dodge is credited with founding the New York Travelers Aid Program in 1914 and turning the organization into a cohesive national association. Her goal was to make traveler assistance available to everyone “without regard to age, race, creed, class or sex...and totally free.”

It was in 1984 that the YWCA adopted the Travelers Aid Program (TAS) with a plan to protect persons traveling in “steerage” on ships to America.

The national agency was put to the test with the outbreak of World War I. Military personnel, defense workers, immigrants and war brides all needed help. Girls across the US moved in great numbers to the cities to take the jobs vacated by the men called into military service.

In 1929, the world suffered a disastrous economic downturn and the assistance of TAS met even greater demands for assisting throngs of destitute and homeless citizens. The Great Depression caused the stock market to crash, banks to close and massive unemployment. People wandered the land looking for work or a place to be safe... anywhere a meager existence could be found. The following letters are just a small sample of the needs and solutions provided through the YWCA and Travelers Aid.
To The Migration Service Worker at

The bearer of this card is Maria [Name]
Who is by nationality a Slovak
and speaks also
He is going to Johanna [Name] Binghamton, N.Y.
Will you kindly assist him/her

Thanking you for your cooperation
RJ Hochman
Expositura Soc, odboru Čs. Červeného Kríža
Migration Service Worker at VE Svatobořicích.
Date 1-13-22

Typical document requesting travelers assistance in 1922.
FROM: THE TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY  
Oct. 2, 1929  
TO: YWCA of Binghamton  
Re: 17 year old colored girl

Supplementing our telegram we are sending you a report about our contact with the above named girl.

Minnie was brought to our desk in the Grand Central Station by an employee of the Seymour stores whose employer had picked her up and took her to the Chief of Police. After she was questioned it was learned that her home was in Binghamton. They decided to send her back and would furnish transportation. The employer became interested in Minnie when she stopped him on the street inquiring her way to New York. She was delivered to us for traveler assistance.

Minnie told our worker that her parents were dead. Her mother died in an insane asylum and her father died a year previous to that. She was the oldest of four children all living with various relatives. She has lived most of her life with her maternal aunt who has a husband and three children. She is not happy in her home as nobody cares for her. She left school in the sixth grade a year ago and came to New York by hitchhiking with a girl friend who soon left her alone to be with a boy. Minnie walked the streets in New York all night until she was picked up by a man in a machine (auto) on his way to New Rochelle. There she met a man who took her to his room where she spent the night with him. She told our worker that it was not her first experience and she had been having immoral relations with a 19 year old boy in her home town. She said she had never been told about sex and did not know it was wrong. After the man left her she began asking how to get back to New York. We feel that Minnie represents a problem. We wish, therefore, to refer it to you for going into the situation further and would appreciate a report of your investigation.

Sincerely,
Secretary – Grand Central Station

FROM: SYRACUSE TRAVELERS AID, INC.  
December 4, 1930  
TO: Travelers Aid Representatives – YWCA Binghamton  
Re: 86 year old man

The above man, 86 years old, stooped a trifle, white moustache, dark blue cap, black overcoat, overshoes, carrying a cane, will arrive in Binghamton at 2:10 PM Monday, December 8. He is enroute to the Soldier’s Home at Bath, N.Y. and will leave Binghamton at 3:15 PM. I am making arrangements to have him met on his arrival in Bath. He will be riding in a chair car. Will you kindly make an appointment to meet this man upon his arrival in Binghamton and see that he gets the right connection to his destination?

Thank you for this service, I am  
Very Truly Yours, Executive Secretary
TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY
January 23, 1931
TO: Travelers Aid Services – YWCA Binghamton
Subject: Male American 18 years old

The above named young man was referred to us by the Committee for
Unemployment Relief asking that we assist Robert to return to his home in Binghamton,
NY. He told our worker that since his mother’s death he has been living with his sister
and her husband in Binghamton. He was a shoe worker and had steady work until laid
off three months ago. He left home to find work and has been as far south as Atlanta,
Georgia, but as he could not get work decided to return home. He is quite anxious to
return but seemed doubtful if his sister could send transportation money.

As there is little chance of him securing work here, we would appreciate it if you
would visit his sister and learn if Robert could again make his home with her and if she is
able to send transportation, full fare or for a charity rate ticket if you authorize it.

We would appreciate hearing from you by return mail.

Very truly yours,

Executive Secretary
FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY OF BALTIMORE
September 19, 1930
TO: Travelers Aid Service – YWCA Binghamton
Re: 18 year old girl

(Rose told the workers that her mother died when she was six and her father remarried. His present wife had produced four children and the father was only earning $27 a week. Rose admitted that her father often drank. About two years previous to this the stepmother convinced the father that they would live more comfortably if the older three children from his first marriage were placed elsewhere. Rose’s sister was put into the Guardian Angel School in Troy, NY, and her brother was sent to St. Mary’s Home in Binghamton as the family was Catholic. Rose was then told to get a job and leave. She held positions successfully in several homes as a domestic and signed up for correspondence courses in aviation office work. She contacted the Society for assistance because she continued to worry about her brother and sister and wished to find some way they could be together again. The Binghamton agency conducted an investigation and found Rose’s story true and that she was a good student and good worker.)

From the Baltimore agency:

We are indeed very grateful for your letter regarding Rose. We were thoroughly convinced that her story about family was true and were so glad that our faith in her was justified. You will be interested to know that we succeeded in placing Rose with a socially prominent family and she is to be paid $60 per month and room and board to care for a two month old baby and do upstairs work. The Aviation Institute where she enrolled rates excellent and her instructor considers her record good for her youth and says she has a good understanding of the subject.

We feel that Rose deserves a tremendous amount of credit for having kept herself as straight as she has and maintained her ideals with absolutely no outside help or encouragement. It is rather rare nowadays to find a girl as pretty as Rose who has not succumbed to the temptations laid in the way of her good looks. Thanks for your splendid help.

Very truly yours,
Assistant in Charge of Case Work
FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY OF ROCHESTER, NEW YORK
June 25, 1929
TO: Travelers Aid Society YWCA – Binghamton
Subject: Mother and daughter

On June 12th Mrs. C and her daughter came to us for transportation to their home in Binghamton. According to her story, she and her husband came here about two weeks before to get work. Their money soon gave out and she wrote such a desperate letter to her daughter by a former marriage that the girl gathered together what money she could, about three dollars, and hitch-hiked her way here. The daughter felt this was just another example of Mr. C’s abuse and said she had not lived at home since her mother had married again.

Mr. C was to take a farm job on the following day but had not selected one which would enable Mrs. C to accompany him. Her one idea was to return to Binghamton and so we referred her to the County Supt. of the Poor for an investigation of her legal residence and return. They applied but refused to remain in the Alms House until the investigation could be made.

We have since learned that Mrs. C and her daughter set out the next morning to walk to Binghamton. We are extremely sorry that they did this as they could have been cared for here and as, according to the daughter, Mrs. C appeared to have changed greatly because of the deprivations she was forced to submit to.

We have attempted to secure Mr. C’s address thru the employment bureau but have been unsuccessful. We understand Mrs. C’s trunk is still here and if he does not help her send it on as he agreed, we shall be glad to do whatever we can to help her secure it.

We should appreciate it if you would call on Mrs. C to ascertain her present condition.
Very Sincerely
Executive Secretary

FROM: The First National Bank of South Charleston, South Charleston, West Virginia
November 17, 1930
TO: Miss E.T. – YWCA, Hawley Street, Binghamton
Dear Madam:

I am very grateful for the help that you rendered to my son and feel that the advice that you gave him will help him.

I was not able to send him the money to come home and am not now able to do so but was willing to give him a home if he got here. I am positive that his company that he left would not employ him again as they are turning off men and do not take kindly to one of their employees walking off like my son did. It is a puzzle to me how a boy can live an existence like that and prefer it to a nice home and good surroundings. If we had been disagreeable to him I could understand it, but as it is I am at a loss to understand this.

I am frank to tell you that your letter did me good and I have studied much about it. If I can get in touch with him again, perhaps I can persuade him to lay down his false pride and come home to his mother and we will try to start him on the right road. I think one of his troubles has been that he has been too easily persuaded to take steps like he did.

Very truly yours,
FROM: THE TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY – 144 East 44th St. New York
TO: YWCA Hawley Street Binghamton, NY
June 2, 1931

We are referring for your attention the traveler named below who was discharged in our care by the immigration officials in order that she might be assisted in reaching her destination safely and helped through the difficult period of adjustment in a new community. May we ask that you visit her and assist her in making connections with a church or, if necessary, with a social agency interested in people of foreign extraction?

NAME: VC    AGE 18       Social Status – single
Religion – Catholic
Nationality – Czechoslovak – no English speaking – but US Citizen
Steamer – Europa Line NGL
Arrival date 4-30-31
Destination – godmother – Mrs. J. of Binghamton

Traveler was born in Binghamton and taken to Europe when a small child. Her parents are still living in Czechoslovakia and her father paid her fare. Her godmother is married but traveler did not know what Mrs. J’s husband’s occupation is.

As the steamer docked, too late at night to make train connections, the girl remained overnight in our Guest House. The following day she was placed on the 9:10 AM train and we wired you to meet her and notify Mrs. J. We are also referring her to the National Catholic Welfare Conference to make church connections.

Supervisor – Department of Port Work

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
MAY 1, 1931
JERSEY CITY, NJ
YWCA TRAVELERS AID SERVICE BINGHAMTON, NY
GIRL EIGHTEEN SLOVAK TAN COAT BLUE HAT NOTIFY GODMOTHER MRS. J ARRIVES FRIDAY AFTERNOON TWO TWENTY EIGHT
ERIE TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
JULY 20, 1930
YWCA
TRAVELERS AID SERVICE BINGHAMTON NY
BOY ELEVEN YEARS LONG TROUSERS CARRYING PILLOW AFTERSNOON TRAIN NO. SEVEN LAKAWANA ENROUTE TO FATHER AT BENNETT HOTEL
WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
JULY 28, 1939
TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY YWCA  BINGHAMTON, NY
REGARDING YOUNG WOMAN CASE KNOWN TO ROCHESTER SOCIETY
PREVENTION CRUELTY TO CHILDREN WHO INSTRUCT YOU HOLD HER
IN POLICE CUSTODY UNTIL SOCIAL WORKER ARRIVES BINGHAMTON
TUESDAY TO ACCOMPANY HER BACK TO ROCHESTER ONLY FIFTEEN
YEARS OLD
TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
ALBANY NY
SEPTEMBER 26, 1931
TO: TRAVELERS AID REPRESENTATIVE YWCA
 GIRL 22 TALL ITALIAN BLACK COAT RED FLOWERS BLACK TURBAN
WHITE DOTS ARRIVING BINGHAMTON SATURDAY NIGHT EIGHT FORTY
ENROUTE HUSBAND JOSEPH NOTIFY
FROM: YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION, Erie, Penna.
TO: Travelers Aid Services YWCA Binghamton
April 23, 1931
RE: Our wire of 4/23/1931 about Alice

The above named woman was sent to my office today by the policewoman. She had come to Erie by bus and had applied for aid and food at Mulligan Hall where our unemployed are fed daily.

Alice claims she started to California with her grand-daughter and a stranger (a female spiritualist) who had promised them both work on her farm there. When they reached Conneaut, Pa., Alice got into an argument with this woman and she was bodily thrown out of the car and told to get back to Binghamton the best way she could. The county welfare worker sent her to Erie saying, “There you can find plenty of work.” But alas that is not true. Alice is anxious to get back to your city. She says she is a practical nurse and has been employed by an attorney whose name I gave you in the wire. She willed in a rooming house. She claims too that she has been given aid by the Poor Directors and spoke particularly of Mrs. S. who is connected with that organization who knows her rather well. Will you please interview these parties and attempt to get the Society for the Poor to provide charity rate transportation for her?

Truly yours,
Travelers Aid Secretary

FROM: CHENANGO COUNTY BOARD OF CHILD WELFARE – Norwich, NY
Feb. 5, 1932
TO: Binghamton YWCA – Travelers’ Aid

Dear Madam,

We have in our county a little girl not quite six years old whose father has recently died and whose mother is in the Binghamton State Hospital, and whom we are anxious to send to her aunt and uncle in Chicago. The older sister has recently gone and at that time we were not at all sure that we could send this younger girl there. Can you help us make plans for a child as young as this to go so far without an older person, and advise us the easiest way to send her to Chicago?

Sincerely yours,
County Children’s Agent

FROM: YWCA – Travelers Aid – Binghamton, NY
TO: Chenango County Board of Child Welfare, Norwich, NY
Feb. 8, 1932

In reply to your Feb. 5 letter, relative to a six year old girl whom you are anxious to send to her aunt and uncle in Chicago.

I think it quite possible to send a child six years of age by Traveler’s Aid. However I believe the advisability of it would depend somewhat upon the child’s development. Should she be a timid child I am inclined to think such a trip might be very bad on her nerves.

Should you decide to send the child by Travelers Aid, you would do well to get in touch with the Traveler’s Aid agent personally so the agent might have firsthand information as to the name, age, nationality and destination of the child and know who should be informed to meet her and other necessary information.
I would advise sending her by railroad as the bus transportation for Traveler’s Aid cases does not seem to be very satisfactory. At present our regular Traveler’s Aid person is away and will not be back before the 19th or 26th of this month. However, should you wish this case taken care of sooner than that and wish to send the child by way of Binghamton, we can arrange to take care of her while in this city and see that she makes proper connections. It does seem it might be better for the trip to be made by way of Syracuse. There is a regular Traveler’s Aid agency there in the station and I am of the opinion the New York Central would be a better railroad to send the child over on account of more trains, etc.

Cordially,
Young Women’s Christian Association

FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY OF CHICAGO
June 13, 1931
YWCA – Binghamton, NY
RE: Brother Bill

In reference to Mr. Bill…we are sorry to tell you that his sister is unable to forward transportation or any financial assistance to him at this time. She told us yesterday that she fully intended to, as we telegraphed you she was doing, but upon going to her bank she found that the doors were closed. We know that this is true as this has been verified. The South Side Savings Bank, where she had her money is only one of many which has closed its doors during the past ten days. She understood that perhaps the company for whom her brother was formerly employed would pay his return transportation, as they had done on a previous occasion.

She has absolutely no suggestions to make at this time. She has tried to borrow the money but everyone seems to be in the same predicament and no one knows when the bank will reopen. If there is anything further that you think we can do, do not hesitate to call upon us.
Sincerely yours,
TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY
Service Department

FROM: English Neighborhood Teacher
TO: YWCA

I was sent the names of two women. In October and November Mrs. G came to Evening School, she is working now and is very tired, her husband is able to help her learn our language and says for a time he will be teacher. Mrs. S. (a Travelers Aid Case) has been sick – I have called three times but can’t get in. Her two kiddies are in school. I have talked once with the husband. He “helps” in a pool room and you know what that usually means. The home is one of our poorest and in a building not fit to be occupied. Mrs. F. of the RC has called but I don’t think she saw Mrs. S. I shall be pleased to look up any new people you report and will try to do so promptly.
Cordially,
FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY of PHILADELPHIA, Pa.
December 11, 1931
TO: Travelers Aid Services YWCA – Binghamton, NY
Subject: Young woman age 23

Miss G was referred to by the North Philadelphia Ticket Agent to whom she had appealed for train fare home. She gave our worker the following story.

Miss G stated that six weeks ago she was persuaded by her girlfriend in Binghamton, where Miss G had been working in a 5 & 10 Cent store, to find work in another town. G left home with her mother’s knowledge but not with her approval. Upon reaching Newark, Delaware, the girls found work there during the xmas rush at another 5 & 10 Cent store making $8.00 per week and living in a room for which they paid $7.00 per week. G wrote to her mother and received a reply urging her to return home immediately. The girlfriend, however, persuaded G to stay longer but finally they set out to hitch hike with $7.00 a boyfriend gave them. Arriving in Philadelphia by truck, whose driver by the way told them that Philadelphia was in a direct route to Binghamton, the girls spent the night in a rooming house. In the morning the girlfriend decided to return to Newark to her boyfriend and left G stranded and penniless.

We wired you and placed G at the Young Women’s Christian Association for the night.

The next morning we received your reply but due to a misunderstanding failed to place G enroute until the evening train, due to arrive in Binghamton at 2:54 am. We telephoned the Trenton Travelers Aid Society to notify the Strousburg ticket agent to look after G during the wait over and send a wire collect to G’s mother giving the time of arrival.

Our expenses were as follows:
Wires – 84 cents
Charity rate ticket – $4.00
Lodging at the Y – 75 cents
Food – 75 cents
TOTAL – $6.34

This morning we received your check for $6.00.

It might be advisable for you to visit the other girls home and explain the circumstances to her parents and offer any advice or assistance which you feel they may require regarding their daughter’s return to Binghamton.

Thank you for your assistance.
Executive Secretary

PS: We feel that G is in definite need of any supervision and follow-up care which you may be able to give her. If you are not equipped to handle the case, may we ask that you refer it to a suitable agency.
(1) FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY – UNION STATION – SCHENECTADY, NY
September 17, 1930
TO: Travelers Aid Representative YWCA – Binghamton, NY
Re: Anna M. and an alias Miss Manley – age 17

Anna, age 17, ran away from her home in Schenectady about three weeks ago. Yesterday her mother received a letter from her stating that she was in Binghamton at a rooming house and asked her mother to send her money for fare home. The mother did not wish to do so as she thought the girl would use the money and not come home. So she deposited a ticket from Binghamton to Schenectady at our local ticket office. The Binghamton ticket office is supposed to notify her that the ticket is available.

The girl asked her mother to address letters to the alias, so undoubtedly she is using that name. Will you please call and tell the girl that if she will call the D & H ticket office, her ticket to Schenectady will be waiting for her? Also, will you try and persuade her to leave Binghamton tomorrow at 2:12 PM as that is the only train which makes connection at Delanson for Schenectady daily? We will greatly appreciate your cooperation in this case.

Sincerely yours,
Executive Secretary

(2) FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY – Union Station – Schenectady, NY
September 19, 1930
TO: Binghamton Travelers Representatives YWCA
Re: Anna

Thank you so much for your letter and the clipping you sent regarding Anna’s arrest for forging checks. It was the first word anyone in Schenectady had received. Anna is the oldest of ten children, four of whom are under seven years. Therefore, the mother cannot come to Binghamton. She speaks very little English and would be of doubtful assistance in any case. The mother begged us to write you and ask if you could find out when the trial is to be and if the girl has an attorney or anyone to help her. Also, please give something of the general situation – Was she in a sporting house? Was she “with” the Italian restaurant proprietor?

Very truly yours,
Executive Secretary

PS: The mother has agreed to come to Binghamton. She works in the General Electric Company and does not work on Saturday. She will go on the train. As she speaks English very poorly, we told her that you would come to the station for her and she must wait until you come. She is a small dark Italian woman and will be wearing a light brown coat and probably a black hat.
FROM: THE TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY – 144 E. 44th St. – New York
January 9, 1931
TO: Young Women’s Christian Association – Binghamton, NY
Subject – Girl, American, Seven years old – Protestant

The above named traveler was brought to our attention by the Station Master at Newark, NJ, when she and her sister missed the connection on the #5 train for Binghamton. The station master sent her through to the Lakawana Station to wait for #7 train as the Newark Station did not offer as pleasant a surrounding.

In conversation with our case worker, we learned that the child had been visiting her sister since September. The father of these girls owns his own home in your area but has been out of work for many months. The older sister thought she could relieve the situation somewhat by having the child stay with her. The older sister has been married a year and is four months pregnant. Her husband, a mechanic, has been out of work for three months and only just this past week secured work on the subways in New York City. She stated that her husband is anxious to have her move to New York City and under the circumstances she did not feel that she could continue to give her sister the care and attention a child of her years would need so she arranged with her father for the girl's return.

This morning she decided to accompany her sister home and then she would be free to go to New York to her husband. However, the husband would not give his consent for his wife to accompany the child as he felt she was in no condition to travel. So she borrowed the money for the fares to Binghamton and her return ticket, hoping her husband, who is living with a brother in New York, would not know about the trip. But her conscience bothered her to such an extent that our worker advised her to let her sister go on alone in our care. We assisted the sister in obtaining a refund on her ticket and she left for her home. She stated that her parents were having a hard time in getting along and that there are two other children in the family besides this young child. We are referring this family to you for further assistance and we would appreciate a report of the seven year old's safe arrival.

Sincerely,

FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY – Union Station – Utica, NY
August 24, 1932
TO: Residence Secretary YWCA – Binghamton, New York
Subject: Amelia

I called at the subject’s home last evening. Her story is true. The older sister was there. Amelia’s father does own the house. He has been out of work for nearly two years. He can get no help from the city because he owns a home. His tenants who live upstairs have not paid their rent for three months because the man is also out of work.

Amelia could not get work here and was discouraged. As we understand it her friend urged her to come to Binghamton and said she could live with her and look for work. Amelia’s father can not help her. He has eight younger children. The sister’s husband is an iceman. They have one child and she says she can’t help her sister. I can’t tell about the inside of the house as the interview took place on the porch. The windows were not screened. Looking into the hall it seemed like a very, very poor home. The attitude of the father and the sister seemed to be that if Amelia had any work at all, she had better stay in Binghamton. If there is anything more we can do let us know.

Sincerely,
Travelers Aid Worker
WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
JAN 7, 1931
TO: YWCA TRAVELERS AID DEPT. BINGHAMTON
CHILD SEVEN CARRIES DOLL – FATHER NOTIFIED TO MEET ELEVEN FORTY FIVE TRAIN TONIGHT LACKAWANNA

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM
AUGUST 7, 1931
TO: Travelers Aid Society YWCA – Binghamton, NY
MEET DOROTHY, AGE 13 COLORED TALL GREEN HAT WHITE DRESS PURPLE DOTS WHITE GOLD RIM GLASSES TAN COAT ENROUTE TO MRS. P. MOTHER ELMIRA – MRS P WILL MEET AT BINGHAMTON EIGHT FORTY TONIGHT ALBANY TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY

FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY – Union Station Schenectady, NY
January 2, 1932
TO: Travelers Aid Society YWCA Binghamton, NY
Re: Leo age 24
Otto age 58

The above named men have been in Schenectady for two days enroute from Kingston to somewhere in Wyoming. Leo says he is to marry a woman who is very rich and has a ranch in Wyoming. He wanted us to wire her for money for them both to go there. They could give no other address than Wyoming, thinking there might be a town named the same as the state we inquired but find there is not. I have tried to get in touch with Kingston but will now have to wait for a letter and they may get in touch with you first. This is just to let you know that we have begun an inquiry and will let you know if we hear from Kingston. In the meantime there would be no point in your also going to that expense and trouble. **We think them fakes with a new racket.**

Otto sometimes limps with a sprained ankle but forgets about it and has no difficulty. He is light in coloring, wears glasses and a gold cross, stick pin, light tan coat and gray cap. He has a high light voice and is quarrelsome.

Leo is short and stocky, protruding lower jaw, dark and wears a brown coat and a cap with earlaps. **ALSO wears a woman’s ring with topaz-colored setting.** If they come your way I hope this letter will save you unnecessary trouble.

Yours sincerely,
Executive Secretary
FROM: YOUNG WOMEN’S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION – Erie, Penna.
Jan. 6, 1931
TO: Travelers Aid Service YWCA Binghamton, NY
Subject: Mike – 16 years
       Tony – 17 years
       Runaways

The above boys were picked up by NYC Police when attempting to steal a ride. I
persuaded the police captain to release them to me instead of placing them under arrest
as is the usual procedure. They were trying to get back home. I then wired you with
result that you were able to get transportation only for one boy, Tony. He refused to go
without Mike so I made a desperate effort to get charity rate tickets, making it possible
for both to go for the price of one fare. I succeeded. Your letter containing money order
for $22. is at YW. I will send detailed accounting.

I am sending you eleven dollars – the amount sent by Tony’s parents as I was
successful in getting charity rate tickets – each facility is out $5.25 for tickets and 25
cents each given to boys making eleven dollars so Mike’s parents owe the other $5.50. If
possible will you attempt to collect $2.00 spent on this matter for telegrams.

Thanking you again.

Very truly,
Travelers Aid Secretary

FROM: TRAVELERS AID SOCIETY – Scranton, Pennsylvania
January 7, 1938
TO: YWCA Binghamton, NY

We met small boy, Stephen, upon arrival at 11:30 this morning in accordance with
your phone request. Mr. Z and his daughter of eight years were also here and were
delighted to greet the little boy and also equally grateful for Travelers Aid services along
the way. Child arrived in time for Russian Christmas today. He has been living with
relatives but will now remain with his father.

Very sincerely yours,
Executive Secretary
July 22, 1931
TO: Travelers Aid Service – YWCA Binghamton, NY
Subject: 17 year old girl, Ruth

May we ask you to make a very urgent investigation for us at your very earliest convenience? Ruth, 17 years old, left her boarding place here in town two weeks ago and only today did her family learn regarding her whereabouts. The enclosed copy of the letter she wrote to her sister [on the next page] will give you the necessary information.

Ruth has had a very unhappy life. Her father, a rather good-for-nothing person, married for a second time. The stepmother has been very disagreeable to Ruth and she has lived around a good part of the time. She has been attending High School and her ambition is to become a trained nurse after she graduates. On May 6, she came to our office and we helped her to locate in a home where she was to do housework. She had to leave school temporarily as she could not afford to keep it up but we were making arrangements for her to enter again in the Fall. Unfortunately we were too busy to keep in contact with her and only last week learned that she left a few days after she began work and since then had been earning a good salary at the Rubber company here in town. As none of her relatives could keep her, she was living in a boarding house which was not at all of the best kind. The factory laid off for two weeks and Ruth left town with a man to go to Lock Haven. The day she left she had driven up with a man much older than herself who went into the rooming house and asked for her clothing saying that he was getting a divorce and was planning to marry Ruth and that they were on their way to Johnson City. The letter from Ruth to her sister sounds quite desperate and secretive. She is a girl hard to deal with, reserved and not honest in her statements according to her relatives. We are wondering if her statements are really true, whether she is living with this man believing his word that he is going to marry her soon, or whether he has left her high and dry. In either case the girl no doubt needs a friend right now. Her statements will no doubt need a good deal of checking up. Probably you will be able to check with the cigar factory as to her work situation. We hope that you will be able to make some sort of arrangements with Ruth that will safeguard the girl. If it seems wise to keep her at the YWCA for a few days until someone can come for her, we hereby authorize you in the name of the family to advance her the necessary money, but we ask you to make the charges as low as possible as her sister would be responsible and she is not well and is earning a small salary. If it seems best, we hope you will go ahead and have the man arrested, possibly on a rape charge or would this case come under the Inter-State White Slave Law?

We better warn you not to give Ruth the cash in hand as she has threatened suicide before and her relatives fear that she might buy poison to kill herself. No doubt you can make other arrangements regarding food. Kindly let us know by telegram at our expense as soon as you have any definite news as we are all greatly worried about this girl.

Sincerely yours,
General Secretary
FROM: YWCA Binghamton  
JULY 1931  
TO: Mrs. B. – City Hall – Williamsport Pa.  
Re: Our letter of 7/24/31  

My dear Mrs. B.,

Sunday morning the Chief of Police in Johnson City called and asked that I come down as he had Ruth there. The following is the story:

First: we both found it was almost impossible to believe any story she has told us  
Second: she did admit under questioning that she came to Binghamton with a married man. She was to drink beer in his “bootlegging place” with the men who came. This she refused to do and left with said man’s sister-in-law to live in the city and work in the General Cigar Factory.  
Third: she promised the Chief she would be ready at 4 PM to come to the YWCA to live.  
Fourth: We were there to get her at 3:45 PM and were told she had left with some married man and his wife for Lock Haven, Pa., from which place she was brought.  
Fifth: the detectives in Binghamton promised to report said man to the Federal men who are to find out whether he is bringing girls in here for immoral purposes.  

I personally am afraid nothing will come of this.

Sincerely,  
General Secretary  
YWCA

COPY

(3) FROM RUTH TO HER SISTER  
July 1931  

Dearest Sister, I suppose you wonder who is writing to you and why. Well I am living and working in Johnson City at the cigar factory. But I don’t get paid for two weeks. Could you send me a couple of dollars. I haven’t ate for three days and am quite hungry. I had to borrow this paper from my landlady.  
Don’t tell anyone you have heard from me. I can’t tell you how I come to get out here but some day I hope I can. I am going to be married soon but I am not happy. Don’t think that I have to because I am not going to have a kid but I can’t explain that either. With all my love, I hope you will answer this letter before I starve to death.  
I don’t know when I ever will see you again but please just let them think I disappeared.  
Love,
FROM: CATHOLIC CHARITIES – Binghamton, New York  
June 27, 1938  
Subject: Woman 28  
TO: YWCA – Binghamton, New York  

This is to introduce you to Miss Hattie, about whom I spoke with you on the telephone. Catholic Charities will be responsible for her account.  
Sincerely yours,  
Social worker  

FROM: YWCA Binghamton, New York  
JULY 25, 1938  
TO: Catholic Charities – Capitol Theatre Building – Binghamton, NY  
Subject: Miss Hattie  

In compliance with our telephone conversation, we attach herewith an itemized statement of the services rendered to Hattie, one of your clients, which you will notice totaled sixteen dollars and seventeen cents for the period of June 27 to July 18, 1938.  

SERVICES RENDERED:  
Meals in cafeteria:  
6/27 – Dinner – 40 cents  
6/28 – Breakfast – 15 cents  
6/28 – Luncheon – 25 cents  
6/29 – Breakfast – 15 cents  
       Luncheon – 25 cents  
6/30 – Luncheon – 35 cents  
       Dinner – 37 cents  
7/1 – Breakfast – 10 cents  
7/2 – Dinner – 35 cents  
7/5 – Luncheon – 25 cents  
Etc. –  
TOTALS FOR MEALS $7.67  
Room Rent June 27 to July 18, 1938 – $7.50  
YWCA Membership – $1.00
The general mood of the staff and volunteers was one of cooperation and assistance, but as with any organization there were some disruptions that had to be confronted...neat doilies and late room rent seemed to top the list of aggravations.

1938 – TYPICAL PROBLEMS OF THE BINGHAMTON YWCA

1. Young lady Doris...waitress at the Hollywood Tea Room...late, VERY late in sign-in book – only earning $2.00 per week and behind in room rent

2. Phyllis – teacher – very careless with her expensive jewelry – left a 50 dollar watch in bathroom – was very unpleasant when watch disappeared and not returned – insisted police be called – Phyllis overbearing to all – finally watch returned – Phyllis should learn patience is a virtue

3. Helen and her young man have been behaving in an embarrassing manner in the 2nd floor living room – she is a Catholic Charities ward and it was reported to them

4. Ruth – room rent is nine weeks in arrears = 36 dollars

5. Minnie moved into an expensive room stating that her salary was 17 dollars per week – however she is paid for piece work at the Cardova Cigar factory and usually makes only 9 dollars and should move to a cheaper room

6. The living room furniture – davenport scarves are so wrinkled each morning that they must be pressed each day – perhaps it is just the Holiday season manifesting itself
Fun and clever fund raising ideas continued whenever possible. In 1940, the girls of the YWCA made posters to advertise a minstrel show to be held in the gymnasium.
1940 – National Travelers Aid society combined with several other welfare and service organizations to form the UNITED SERVICES ORGANIZATION (USO) for National Defense.

WWII – USO once again comes to the aid of traveling military personnel – in 1942 the largest Service Men’s Lounge in the country opened in Grand Central Station in NYC – open until 1946 (Troops in Transit Lounges all over the country)

WWII – raised funds to assist men and women in service – arranged emergency housing for women in military and industrial areas – helped provide recreational programs for armed forces

This Travelers Aid uniform was worn by a Broome County woman volunteer during World War II. It includes two head coverings, one with a veil.
The 1954 Centennial Commission devised many ideas to interest the public in participating and donating to the YWCA. The Y’s-O-Vac, a mock robot, was equipped with a buzzer to mechanically answer questions. On the right is Mrs. Edwin A. Link, the Chairman of the Centennial Committee...wife of the famous inventor of Link flight training devises.
Sports and physical fitness have always been a major focus of the YWCA. While maintaining good health, the women of the YW worked on “eliminating racism and obtaining peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people.”
Sports through the years…The pool built in 1923 and areas on the same level could be the focus of the next renovation.
The Binghamton YWCA modernizing during the 1970’s.
The Binghamton YWCA residence in the 1950's
During the 1970’s and 1980’s, programs for women and the whole community increased. Pictured are the nursery and a young man in the babysitting course.
African-American reception – 1982 – attracted people from the entire county. Mayor of Binghamton Juanita Crabb is speaking with a YWCA board member in the photo above, and the lower picture is of Barbara Oldwine who also served on many local and national YW committees.

Special programs and exhibits are available for the National YWCA Week Without Violence in October, Black History Month, and Women’s History Month.

The YWCA is an integral part of the community…serving the needs of today and tomorrow.
A PARTIAL TIMELINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE YWCA

1858 – A movement begun in England to assist women through faith and religion spreads to the United States of America
1860 – Abraham Lincoln elected President of the United States
1864 – YWCA opens the first US day care nursery in Philadelphia
1869 – YWCA opens the first unwed mothers’ residence
1870 – The YWCA offers women the most modern instruction in use of the typewriter
1890 – By this time, the YWCA was present in cities and college campuses all over the USA
1890 – The YW opens its first Native American branch – Oklahoma
1892 – The first organizational meeting for the YWCA is held in Binghamton
1893 – A Housekeeper’s League formed at the Binghamton YWCA to press for better working conditions and higher pay
1894 – The YWCA established the Travelers Aid to assist women traveling in the USA and throughout the world and help immigrants
1901 – The average budget from 1901 to 1910 at the Binghamton YW was about $6,000.
1907 – The National Board of the YWCA of the USA was incorporated under NYS Law
1908 – The YWCA offered its first all-year training school at the estate of Grace Dodge
1914 – During World War I, the US government requested that the YW provide recreational programs for service people within the US and overseas – the YW also assisted the women who joined the workforce replacing men in service
1915 – YWCA organized the first interracial conference held in the USA
1919 – The Binghamton/Broome County YWCA initiates conversion of the Victorian Hotel into facilities for the organization
1920 – YWCA promotes the introduction of the 8-hour day
1929 – YW and Travelers Aid meet exceptional challenges of the Great Depression
1946 – YWCA adopted its Interracial Charter
1940’s – WWII – Job training vital importance to US during war – women trained by YWCA to be bus drivers, Rosie the Riveteers, and other factory positions
1945 – YWCA Binghamton has a total budget of $55,496.24
1946 – YWCA worked with Japanese Americans confined to internment camps in WWII
1946 – The National YWCA was the first national organization to adopt an interracial charter
1948 – An addition was begun for the Binghamton/Broome County YWCA
1954 – YWCA Binghamton became a member of the United Way
1966 – The Binghamton YWCA changed its name to the YWCA of Binghamton and Broome County
1970 – National YWCA Adopted the organization’s one Imperative – to eliminate racial injustice
1970’s – Working with the new Federal Training Program called the Job Corps, the Binghamton/Broome County YWCA assisted more than 150 young women entering the workforce
1973 – Binghamton/Broome County YWCA opens the Interfaith Shelter
1975 – The Binghamton/Broome County Child Care Center
Emergency shelter for women and children
The SOS shelter for emergency housing for domestic violence victims grew from the YWCA program
1975 – The National YWCA started the ENCORE program as support for women with breast cancer
1976 – Major renovation of the Hawley Street YWCA
1981 – YWCA gives support to abortion clinic planned to open in Binghamton
1982 – The Binghamton YWCA celebrated its 90th Anniversary
1984 – The 125th Anniversary of the National YWCA celebrated
1983 – Labor commissioner speaks at YWCA meeting – Lillian Roberts – first black and the third woman to head the department
1983 – YWCA – runs jobs programs for women – pilot program to help place disadvantaged women in non-traditional jobs such as plumbing and painting
1983 – Opened the Center for Women Alcoholics in Binghamton YWCA – halfway house for recovering alcoholic women called Clear Vision – this program was expanded to include women recovering from any substance abuse
1987 – YWCA Binghamton opens meeting room for families of mentally ill – once-a-week members of the group get together to ask questions of a rep from the BC Mental Health Assoc. and to discuss experiences with the mentally ill with each other – WE ARE NOT ALONE
1988 – The National YWCA is the first women’s organization invited to join the US Olympic Committee Division
1990 – YWCA ENCOREplus Program educates women on the importance of early detection of breast and cervical cancers
1992 – YWCA of Binghamton/Broome County celebrates its CENTENNIAL – One hundred years dedicated to service and responsible social change

YWCA – A democratic method of life combined with the worth of the individual.
From the 1960's hayride through the 1980's exercise program, indoors and outdoors, the YWCA has offered wholesome beneficial programs to promote health and social welfare. Every day the YWCA creates miracles…offering hope, inspiration and opportunity.
Major renovations in 2008
Renovated child care center – 2008 – Young Wonders Early Childhood Center
Quality early education and care is provided year round. Care is centered around each child and their individuality. The renovation has increased the capacity from 23 to 63 children.
The entire renovation project included a total of 54 apartments located between the second and sixth floors, the lobby, the second floor gym, public restroom, kitchen, two meeting rooms, a new roof and the plumbing and electric wiring as well as windows.

The YWCA provides food and shelter for emergency situations as well as counseling, case management, job skills training, educational opportunities and referrals to other community resources.

The cornice around the top of the building, shown with one section missing, was decaying and had to be completely removed for safety purposes. An exact replica can be produced in a modern material if funds can be raised to restore the historic visage.
MISSION
The Young Women’s Christian Association of the United States of America is a women’s membership movement nourished by its roots in the Christian faith and sustained by the richness of many beliefs and values. Strengthened by diversity, the Association draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women’s growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision: Peace, justice and dignity for all people. The Association will thrust its collective power toward the elimination of racism wherever it exists and by any means necessary.

VISION STATEMENT
The women of the National Coordinating Board (NCB) of the WYCA of the USA are viewed as inspired servant leaders.

The YWCA is known as the premier women’s organization through its
• commitment to its mission and imperative
• efficient and effective relationships
• respectful, honest and ethical conduct
• attraction and support of young women to all levels of membership and leadership

GUIDING PRINCIPLES
The National Coordinating Board (NCB) of the YWCA of the USA is guided by the following principles.

The NCB
• is committed to the mission and national movement
• is ethical, inclusive and accommodating of all values and perspectives
• advocates for and continually seeks wisdom, clarity and understanding from those not at the table
• values and supports the rise of local associations and regional councils
• fosters decision-making authority at the community level
• is open and honest in its internal and external communications
• is responsive and accountable
• is fiscally responsible
• embraces a mentality of plenty and growth in managing corporation assets
• efficient and representative governance
• affirms its connection to and support of the World YWCA
• above all, is focused on the needs of the women it serves

THE WAY WE WORK TOGETHER
• Help each other give our (her) best
  • Speak and listen respectfully
  • Be on time; stay to the end
    • Listen deeply
    • Ask questions

NEW and dramatic changes were made in the YWCA in 2001, resulting in the above direction of the revitalized YWCA.
Location of the YWCA in the Binghamton Historic District
ANNUAL REPORTS • BINDERS • BOOKLETS • BOOKS • BROCHURES • BUSINESS CARDS • BUSINESS FORMS • CALENDARS • CATALOGS • CD / DVD PRINTING • CD / DVD DUPLICATION • CHECKS • COIL & WIRE BINDING • COLLATERAL MATERIAL • COMB BINDING • COMPUTER FORMS • CONTINUOUS FORMS • COPIES • CORPORATE IDENTITY PACKAGES • COUPONS • CREATIVE WRITING • CUTTING • DATA MANAGEMENT • DESIGN SERVICES • DIE CUTTING • DIGITAL COLOR PRINTING • DIRECT MAIL PRINTING • EMBOSsing • EMPLOYEE HANDBOOKS • ENLARGEMENTS & REDUCTIONS • ENVELOPES • FINANCIAL STATEMENTS • FLYERS • FOAMCORE MOUNTING • FOIL STAMPING • FOLDING • FULFILLMENT SERVICES • FULL-COLOR PRINTING • INDEX TABS • LABELS • LARGE FORMAT PRINTING • LETTERHEAD • LOGO DESIGN • MAGAZINES • MAILING LISTS • MAILING SERVICES • MANUALS • MEMBERSHIP BOOKLETS • MEMO PADS • NEWSLETTERS • NOTEBOOKS • NOTEPADS • NUMBERING • OFFSET PRINTING • ON-DEMAND PRINTING • ONLINE ORDERING • PACKAGING • PERFECT BINDING • PERFORATION • POINT-OF-PURCHASE MATERIALS • POLITICAL CAMPAIGN MATERIAL • POSTCARDS • POSTERS • PROCEDURE MANUALS • REPLY CARDS • REPORT COVERS • RUBBER STAMPS • SADDLE STITCHING • SALES KITS • SCORING • SELF INKING STAMPS • TICKETS • TRADE SHOW GRAPHICS • TRAINING MATERIALS • TRIMMING AND GROMMETING • UNIT SETS • VARIABLE DATA PRINTING...

607-729-2477 513 Prentice Road
Vestal, NY 13850
YWCA of BINGHAMTON and BROOME COUNTY
1892 – 2009

Five score and sixteen years ago, the women of Binghamton and Broome County joined thousands of other women in declaring their independence from oppression...to assist in this great endeavor, the YWCA was formed...to advocate for fairness in the human condition. All women and men are created equal...it is their unalienable right to be free from discrimination...free to pursue opportunities and education. This is the YWCA’s declaration of empowerment.

The Binghamton/Broome County YWCA is still in the forefront of beneficial change in the status of women...their history is part of world stage in the fight for the betterment of women and mankind. This volume documents the founding...the issues...the drama...the programs and the faces of people from the pages of time...all illustrated in photos with detailed information about the Binghamton - Broome County YWCA.