

The Last Flight of an Angel: A Historical Ethnography of The Salvation Army's Home for Unwed Mothers

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Abstract

At the turn of the twentieth century The Salvation Army looked upon unwed pregnant women as sisters in need of a helping hand. These fallen females needed rescuing. The first maternity homes were therefore called Rescue Homes. The Salvation Army Rescue Home for Women in Birmingham, Alabama, established during the first decade of the twentieth century, was the first and last rescue home in the Southeast. Although there were several changes in address, changes in name, changes in clientele, and changes in service delivery, there was never a change in the mission. The length of stay and the criteria for admission changed to accommodate the public's needs. The facility and staff were adjusted as social attitudes changed. However, the mission to assist females in need, and thereby help the community as a whole, never changed. This paper is a historical ethnography of the sole Salvation Army Maternity Home and the changes in society's perception of unwed pregnant girls and the opportunities afforded them.

Introduction

In 1944, Maud Morlock, United States Children's Bureau, consultant on services, was gathering information to create pamphlets describing The Salvation Army Homes and Hospitals. Brigadier Ruth Pagen sent to her the following story, written by William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army:

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"There is a story told likely enough to be true about a young girl who applied one evening for admission to some home established for the purpose of rescuing fallen women. The matron naturally inquired whether she had forfeited her virtue; the girl replied in the negative.

She had been kept from that infamy, but she was poor and friendless, and wanted somewhere to lay her head until she could secure work, and obtain a home. The matron must have pitied her, but she could not help her as she did not belong to the class for whose benefit the Institution was intended. The girl pleaded, but the matron could not alter the rule, and dare not break it, they were so pressed to find room for their own poor unfortunates, and she could not receive her. The poor girl left the door reluctantly but returned in a very short time, and said, "I am fallen now, will you take me in?"

This story sets the stage for understanding the era when the first maternity home was established. This paper discusses The Salvation Army Maternity Home of Birmingham, Alabama, (The Home) as an example of the history of maternity homes in general. Maternity homes reflected the changes in society's perception of unwed pregnant girls and the opportunities afforded them.

The Early Years

The first Salvation Army Rescue Home in the United States was opened in 1887, when The Salvation Army movement was only four years old. Brigadier Pagan reported:

"In seven years [1887-1894] we opened fifteen Homes in the country, at the request, largely, of citizens who knew and approved of our work. There has always been a fraction of people who believed in our philosophy and work, if not in our religion, and whenever a community has presented a request we have tried to meet the need. Because society cannot accept a girl pregnant out of wedlock they have often found it hard to accept our interest."

Brigadier Pagan compared The Salvation Army to other organizations that supplied social services, including maternity homes. She indicated that The Salvation Army was not the only institution that included religious beliefs in its philosophy. However, the difference, according to the Brigadier, was that in The Army's Homes, religion was a type of therapy. She stated, "the Paramount religious emphasis in our Homes is focused on the staff, believing that a sermon is better lived than preached."

This emphasis was clearly reflected in the following advertisement, which appeared in *The War Cry*, The Army's periodical, on February 15, 1889:

“Wanted-Rescue Workers:Self-sacrificing women, whose hearts are Full of the love of Christ, and who will toil for the rescue of poor, lost, fallen girls, are wanted immediately. Christian workers, who are seeking a humble, blessed field of labor, such as this brand of Army work offers them, will apply at once...”

Like the home described by Regina Kunzel (1990) in Fallen Women, Problem Girls: Unmarried Mothers and the Professionalization of Social Work 1890-1945, the first homes were for delinquent women, such as prostitutes, and only later became open to unwed mothers. By the time The Salvation Army Rescue Home was opened in Birmingham, the intended clientele was unwed mothers.

An undated newspaper article, possibly published in the *Birmingham Age-Herald* noted that the lands for The Birmingham Salvation Army Rescue Home were purchased on November 1, 1904. In this same newspaper article, entitled “Smoothing the Way for the Prodigal Daughter”, an unnamed author states:

“The Prodigal Son has returned to his home many times during the past century. The way unfortunately has been more difficult for the Prodigal Daughter. Providing proper care for the Alabama expectant unmarried girl mothers, who are temporarily helpless is one of our greatest opportunities for Christian philanthropy.”

The actual date of the founding of the Home is obscure. The trail from the past to the present is not always smooth. The records at The Salvation Army Archives (Atlanta, Georgia) note no opening date. A letter written to Colonel Florence Wykes, Women's Social Secretary, on June 10, 1940 from Brigadier Frances Bean, the Superintendent of the Home in 1940, indicated that the Home opened in 1903. In June of 1956 Brigadier Mrs. Margaret Wilkins wrote to Dr. Miles A. Copeland, the Home's first physician, requesting information on the Home's formative years. Dr. Copeland stated that he was the Home's first physician at the address on Avenue E and he began work in 1904. Major Gloria Turner did the microfilming of the records for the Birmingham Home in the 1980. She stated that there were no records anywhere, of which she was aware, that stated the date of the opening was prior to 1905.

An article in *The War Cry* in March, 1905, heralded Birmingham as the 22nd Salvation Army Rescue Home in the United States. It was christened The Rescue Home for Fallen Women for the Southern Division of The Salvation Army. This was the first home in the South. When it opened, the Home had the capacity for fifteen girls, but by December of that year, another room had been added to raise the occupancy to eighteen.

The War Cry reported on December 30, 1905 that sixty-seven girls had already been admitted to the home and thirty-one babies born.

The statement reflects the view of the unwed pregnancy during the period. In addition, the article also mentions Dr. Copeland and ends with the following statement:

“A prominent feature of the work is the looking after “first offense” cases—poor girls who give too great confidence to the ones who professed a lasting affection for them, until at last they find themselves obliged to seek shelter where they may hide their shame and disgrace and where they may find someone who will help them in their efforts to do better.”

According to various newspaper articles written in Birmingham between 1905 and 1907, support from officials and the public was abundant. Throughout the existence of the Home, officials made public speeches about the Home and its participants. However, none were as moving as the statement recorded in the March 1915 *Social News*. It was made by the Honorable N. B. Feagan, judge of the police court of Birmingham, at the Home's opening ceremony. He stated:

“I learned from Salvation Army officers stationed in Birmingham that during the past few years they have buried fourteen young women, twelve of these having taken their own lives. Of the twelve, I understand that four had begged to be carried to a Rescue Home, but there was no place for them.” (p. 10)

Later this same year, the *Social News* published an article “In the Interest of the South's Fallen Womanhood”. In this article Adjutant Emma Walgren, indicates a cottage next to the Home had also been acquired to house the babies. Adjutant Walgren also allows us to glimpse into the characteristics of the girls. She describes them as follows:

"These unfortunate girls come to us usually between the ages of 13 and 21 years of age, and it would seem that weakness and downfall are no respecter of persons, because they come from the homes of the rich, the poor and the middle classes, as well as from the genteel and grinding poverty, street and brothel." (p. 14)

According to The Salvation Army Women's Secretary in 1919 (as cited in Kunzel, 1990) anyone was accepted at the Army's maternity homes, "independent of creed or color, except where the national prejudice prevents...the South, we have had to confine our work entirely to the white girls". Kunzel also indicates that the secretary was only "rationalizing the discriminatory policies of most Salvation Army homes" (p. 71).

The roaring twenties and the days of the flapper followed World War I. Kunzel indicates that times were changing within the maternity homes due in part to the attempts of social workers to latch on to a cause which would further themselves as a profession. Social workers, according to Kunzel, were the key agents for turning unwed mothers from fallen women in need of rescue to problem girls in need of treatment.

In Birmingham the Home was growing. An auxiliary was formed in 1924 and a new building was purchased in 1926. On December 22nd, seventy-five mothers and babies moved to 915 Montevallo Road, which was now called The Salvation Army Home and Hospital for Women. Commandant Mary Bebout became the Superintendent in 1923 after Adjutant Fannie Hesse had served for only one year. Commandant Bebout, during the Home's opening ceremonies, was quoted in *The Southern War Cry* (1927) as referring to her work as the "rescue of His erring children". The unnamed author of this article indicated that 'rescuing' was still the mission of the Birmingham home:

"In telling word pictures of rescue work by life boat and by fireman's ladders, the Commander depicted the need and the urgency of action in regard to saving from utter wreck those who had taken a false step on life's way."

By 1927 four hundred members belonged to the Auxiliary. With the help of other civic clubs they had decorated the Home for Christmas. The Junior League had helped to equip the Home and a public plea made prior to Christmas had succeeded in furnishing the Home prior to the holidays. Mr. Mitchell, the Vice President of Alabama Power Company, led the campaign for funds that helped to erect the new Home (Dalrymple, 1927).

Scandal in Birmingham, Alabama

The Headlines in the *Birmingham News* (May 14-15, 1928) cried: "Future Mothers Attack Rule at Rescue Mission" and "Girls Alleging Overwork, Flee Salvation Army Home". Nine women (called 'inmates' in the news stories) left the Home and went to the Volunteers of America Home, another home run by Captain and Mrs. N. O. Long. Captain Long was quoted in the first article as stating that "during the last year approximately 25 girls had come to the Volunteers of America Home from the Salvation Army home, all declaring that they were forced to do work that was too heavy for them."

In answer to the accusations of the press, Commissioner McIntyre replied that he believed Captain Long to be behind the 'escape'. He disclosed in his letter that Captain Long was married to a girl who "came from our institution...he [Captain Long] made his boasts, so they tell me, that he will get the Salvation Army someday". At the Salvation Army Home, according to Commissioner McIntyre, doctors determined if a girl was able to work, and what type of work she could do. Commissioner McIntyre affirmed the restrictions mentioned in the newspaper articles saying:

"There are certain restrictions put upon them; their letters are censored; they are not allowed to chew tobacco or use liquor in the institution; and they are not allowed to give their babies away. They can go into a hospital and come out free, having given away their babies, but our people insist upon their keeping them."

In response to the charges of hard work demanded by Major Bebout, McIntyre indicated it was "the viewpoint of our social officers...the type of woman that gives way on this line is usually the undisciplined, the woman of uncontrolled passions...and in order to affect any reformation they have got to build from the bottom up, and the only way to build is by the exercise of discipline—teach them to be absolutely under control".

In this same letter, dated June 1, 1928, Commissioner McIntyre likened the Home to the assistance the Salvation Army had given to the soldiers in France. However, the soldiers were earning their assistance, and Commissioner McIntyre believed the girls in the Homes "come to us, have no work to do and simply idle their time away and pay no money to cover their expenses".

As to their complaints, the Commissioner stated that was just an attribute of the maternity home “where people are not normal and where many of them are illiterate and have not high standards of life or even well balanced judgments—you would expect them to complain at nearly everything”. There are no further indications as to the outcomes of this “Birmingham Scandal” as an archivist titled this incident.

The Thirties and Forties

The Salvation Army promoted Major Bebout to the rank of Commandant. She remained as the superintendent until 1934, when she was replaced by Major Frances Bean. In 1936, a speech delivered to the Ladies’ Auxiliary was the only documentation found for this era of the Birmingham Home.

The speech was delivered by Dr. J. E. Garrison, the Home’s doctor from 1911 to 1941. In a hand-written comment in the corner of his speech Dr. Garrison noted that he had delivered 2,067 babies. For the first 11 years of the Home he was the only doctor.

In his speech, Dr. Garrison described the characteristics of the girls whom the Home served. The majority appeared to be first-time unwed expectant mothers between the ages of 17 and 35 years of age. The girl usually appeared to be blameless. “Many of these girls were doped under the promise of marriage, innocently trusting some deceitful man or else lost their reason or self-control in an unguarded moment”, stated Dr. Garrison in his opening remarks.

He hypothesized that one of the reasons for increased maternity admissions was the increased number of women in the workforce. Due to the influx of females, however temporary, into the workforce, was to have made the women “freer” and thus some of the reasoning behind women smoking more, stepping out, and being less restrictive with their sexual morals. There were readmissions to the Home, but Dr. Garrison suggested that the number was small, and the number who came back more than twice was even smaller.

Incest was reported to the officers of the Home, usually with the girl’s brother or father as the perpetrator. There were reports of three mulatto babies. This puzzled Dr. Garrison because one of the girls was known to have had a long-standing affair with her father’s chauffeur and “she was well educated, and seemed mentally normal”, and thus thought unlikely to have an affair with an African American. The last case example Dr. Garrison gave was of a 41-year old teacher who professed to be a man hater, but wanted to be a mother.

She came to the Home from a northern state and gave birth to her child. She returned to teaching in the fall and four years later adopted her own child from a boarding home.

Referring to the quality of care given in the Home, Dr. Garrison believed the girls received better care other than in some outside situations. At the Home, one knew she would receive good prenatal care and nutrition. Also, the team of doctors was growing to encompass numerous specialties.

The Home's purpose, according to the doctor, was to help the girls "protect their characters and family reputation" until they could "return to their friends, repentant of their mistakes, ... [as] more useful members of society".

He likened sexuality to any other physical appetite which "cannot be eradicated by prophylactic measures alone", therefore the Home's teaching of womanly skills and salvation were her ways to a new life.

Some of Dr. Garrison's remarks indicated there were a distinction between those girls who came to the Home and those who did not. He stated:

"Bad girls don't come out here. They don't care, you know. The girls who come here are the first time in trouble. They are not used to being in trouble and they are heart-broken, crushed beyond expression."

The home was to help these girls and women so that they could return to their homes 'saved from disgrace' and be able to use better judgment in the future and be better able to make a positive contribution to society.

By 1940 the age span of girls was beginning to change. Per the 1940 Annual Report, the youngest girl was thirteen and the oldest 'girl' was thirty-seven years of age. Of the 126 women cared for, twenty-seven (27%) were eighteen years of age or younger. Ninety-five babies were cared for during this year, and the Ladies' Auxiliary was 563 members strong.

Possibly due to the Auxiliary's support, the expenses for the year exactly matched the Home's income of \$19,550.98. Bessie A. Brooks (1936) described the history of family welfare services in Jefferson County and pleaded with the citizens of the county to "lend their moral and financial aid to support of the Salvation Army Rescue Home in order that one well equipped maternity hospital, capable of meeting the actual needs of the city, may develop instead of several inferior ones...".

The Community Chest, which had been organized in 1923, was by now one of the most important financiers of the Home, which by the time was called The Salvation Army Maternity Home and Hospital of the Dixie Division (Earle, 1955).

In 1944 Commissioner William C. Arnold of the Salvation Army Home wrote of his concern about the numerous girls of the home ages fifteen and younger. This began a myriad of changes in the maternity home structure. In the 1944 Yearbook, Brigadier Pagan reported, "We see unwed mothers as individuals and as a result are gaining objectivity in our overall program". Social services and casework were needed. Another new trend in the Home was that mothers who were giving their babies up for adoption were not forced to take care of their babies until they left the Home.

The national policies were still open for interpretation by the Territories. But overall, Brigadier Pagan advocated:

"Our policies are continually becoming more flexible as the needs of the individual change with changing times. The girls may now go on shopping trips or to movies or the beauty parlor, if they so desire, while they are in residence in our Homes."

The Birmingham Home seemed to lag a little behind other Salvation Army Homes. The Home remained open only to white girls. Ensnared as they were in the Bible Belt, religion was paramount and conformity was required. While trying to compile a history of the Southern territory, the Women's Social Secretary (Brigadier May Wilmer) wrote to Brigadier Bean on June 22, 1945, and reminded her that "If their souls are saved, other blessings are sure to follow."

Conformity in the guise of religion, rather than the flexibility of which Brigadier Pagan spoke, appeared to have been the norm in Birmingham.

Fabulous Fifties

The War Cry dated April 22, 1950 deemed The Birmingham Home and Hospital as one of the largest in the Southern Territory. It also commended the services of the Home and noted the Home had "unqualified approval and support of the citizens of Birmingham" (p. 2). This was confirmed in the 1955 Territorial Statement of Facts-Social Service Program. In an attempt to justify why the Home did not employ a social worker, the statement noted that "cooperating agencies in local areas...are sold on total program of our Home and Hospital, not just casework services" (p.27).

This document was produced after the February 1955 Annual Convention of the American Protestant Hospital Association in defense of the Home's response to the Territorial questions.

During this time frame casework was provided by outside agencies. The Home was unable to hire caseworkers because there was no graduate school of social work in Alabama. Casework was also provided by outside agencies through referrals so that the girl would not be linked to the Home after discharge. The report also suggested that "in the South it is very evident that different geographical areas present different problems in casework services" (p. 32). While girls in other areas might need social work services, in the South they could be provided by the Superintendent, who could determine the girl's needs and make the appropriate referral.

As for the rest of the nation, World War II was over and the baby boom had begun. Therapeutic abortions were largely unavailable without a psychiatric diagnosis. The maternity home boon had started. According to Solinger (1992), "Maternity-home care was the option of choice and was widely promoted for all unwed mothers by the United States Children's Bureau, many social service agencies, the National Association on Services to Unmarried Parents, and its local affiliates all over the county in the postwar era" (p. 104). *True Confessions*, a magazine read by many young women, often had advertisements for homes, along with case examples.

Many descriptions of unwed mothers at the time depicted the young mother-to-be as terrified to tell her parents of her pregnancy. Once she told her parents, the response was often to hide the pregnancy and a story would be constructed for her school, friends, neighbors, etc. Sometimes the parents would take the girl to a maternity home, or she might be brought by a social worker, priest, friend, etc. The home chosen was usually out of town. Regardless, this 'soiled being' would arrive at the home and be welcomed by a compassionate staff who would help her through this trying time. Once she had her baby she could return to her hometown a new woman and continue her life, forever grateful that she had seen the advertisement in a magazine (or Ann Landers) and found a way to take care of her problem without being unduly tarnished.

Maude Morlock was still the Consultant on Services to Unmarried Parents at the United States Children's Bureau in 1955 and she paid a visit to Birmingham. She urged practitioners to "move beyond the old concept of [the] maternity home as [an] isolated shelter" (Solinger, 106). Old racial practices were also being challenged. Child welfare expert, Wrieden wrote in a 1951 issue of *The Child* that:

“...flexibility must fit into the framework of reality—the reality of resident’s rights, the group’s rights, the home’s limitations, and the community’s limitations. However, let us be careful not to use these realities and limitations as conflicts, such as whether or not to give service to Negro girls who would benefit from maternity care.” (p. 2)

However, annual reports throughout the 1950s indicated the Birmingham Home remained all-white, and for the most part all-Protestant in its clientele.

Brigadier Irene McCann had taken over the reins at the Birmingham Home in 1947. She continued to supervise the Home until 1956 when Major Catherine Stimler took over. The average length of stay, which was 125 days in 1952, decreased to 88 days in 1960. The Home continued to operate without a social worker.

The number of girls served increased from 125 girls and 84 infants in 1952 to 156 girls and 115 infants in 1960.

The Sixties

The Salvation Army published Services to Unmarried Parents and Their Children in 1961 to describe maternity services, which by now were not limited to maternity-home only services.

Although in-residence services accounted for 8,227 of the cases, an additional 13,052 girls were provided ‘counseling and other services’ in the community. This new facet of maternity care was because “The Salvation Army [was] concerned with helping to prevent social ills by improving standards of conduct and living for all persons in the community” (p. 2). This change was not quite as evident in the Southern Territory where 1,210 (53%) of its 2,291 cases were in residence.

The South continued to have a longer length of stay than the rest of the country and blacks were still not served. The Southern Territory was highest in “not reported” data on education and occupation. Other imbalances were noted in cost. The South had the lowest average cost at \$440.51 per case, but the highest number of cases of no payment.

Adoptions were rising nationally, but remained fairly low in the Southern Territory. However, data are skewed. One quarter of the babies were discharged from the hospital, not the Home; the status of the discharge for these babies was not noted.

The median age nation-wide in the Army's Homes was 19 years old. In the South, those 15 years old and younger were increasing faster than the national average. Major Tidman hypothesized that this increasing number of younger girls in the Home was one of the catalysts for change which gave the Home access to accredited educational programs provided by the Birmingham Board of Education in 1961.

In 1959, Captain William K. Matthews became Superintendent of the Home. His wife, Alfreda, a registered nurse, supervised the Hospital portion of the Home. They were to lead the Home through the 1960s. An evaluation of the Home in 1963 noted poor conditions in the furnishings and structure of the Home. This Annual Evaluation Report also reported the number of first pregnancies out-of-wedlock, second pregnancies out-of-wedlock and so on. Captain Matthews (1963) stated in a *Birmingham News* article that:

"Spiritual counseling and rehabilitation is our most important function. Every girl gets a caseworker, and a certified teacher comes each day to help the girls keep up with their schooling."

But according to the 1963 Annual Report, the Home still did not employ a social worker. By 1963, the number of adoptions was increasing in the Southern Territory. In the interview with the *Birmingham News* Matthews indicated that only twenty percent of the Home's residents chose to keep their baby and "of that number, one-half see their mistake and place the infants up for adoption before six months".

Major Tidman worked in the Birmingham Home in 1949. She left the Home in 1950 and did not return until 1975. During this interval she was at other Army homes in the Southern Territory. When talking about the 1960s, Major Tidman stated it was "a family's personal disgrace for a girl to keep a baby". Some attempted to obtain a therapeutic abortion, or even a "backstreet abortion". The list was two months long. If none of these options were available, many girls attempted suicide. Regardless, they did not stay home. As Solinger (1992) stated, "If the girl disappeared, the problem disappeared with her" (p. 110).

Some girls ran away to the Home without telling their families. However, family members were welcome to take part in counseling. Fathers of the babies, when known, were also invited to participate. The resident's family, who has not been mentioned much previously, was becoming involved. Major Tidman stated this was sometimes a problem because often a young girl would want to place her baby up for adoption and her parents did not "want to give up their first grandchild".

While officers tried to encourage the resident to look into the future and realistically weigh their options, the “grandparents could not see five or ten years down the road, when they would be raising a child at their age”.

During this period, as in the 1920s, constraints were placed on the residents, specifically addressing telephone calls, restricted visitation and intrusion of personal mail. Mail was given out daily after the girls’ nap (about 4:00 p.m.). They would mark out the last name on any incoming mail to assist with privacy. When asked if the mail was read during these transactions, Major Tidman replied that it was not read. She stated that it was not a common practice to read a girl’s mail, even in 1949. However, until the mid-sixties when the “old-school matrons” retired, if the Superintendent was suspicious of a resident “trying to get something through the mail”, she would open and read the resident’s mail. Residents did have daily work details, similar to household chores and daily meal preparations.

Major Turner explained:

“The home officer, they called it, she would check their details to make sure it was done properly, and if it was not, then they were shown or told how to do it properly. And they were expected to do it right, so you’d bring them back to do it right.”

On October 20, 1968, the new Birmingham Salvation Army Home and Hospital for Unwed Mothers was opened. Per the Dedication Ceremony Program, most of the one million dollar cost of the new Home at 60991 Crestwood Boulevard was raised largely from donations. The program indicated the campaign for the new Home was over two years long and the officers were proud that no activities or classes were disrupted during the transition. Major Tidman, who was at the Birmingham Home during this time stated, “We delivered at the old Home one night and at the new Home the next day.”

The program of the opening ceremonies indicated that sixty-eight doctors were on the staff. However, notably missing was Dr. Cecil Dean Gaines, who had been the Home’s Chief of Medical Staff for thirty-three years. Although he had assisted with the campaign and recruited numerous new physicians, he was forced to retire in 1967 due to health reasons. The facilities were state-of-the-art and contained 48 maternity beds, 12 bassinets and a ten bed hospital section. Casework services were at last listed as an in-house service, the first bachelor level social worker having been hired in 1964.

The Seventies

The 1970s continued to see changes in the Home. In 1972, amendments to Title IV made it illegal to expel a girl from school on the sole basis of pregnancy. Pamphlets distributed by the Birmingham Home noted an educational curriculum that was accredited, therefore, transferable upon conclusion of a girl's confinement. The 1973 Annual Report added education to its list of services. And of the 221 residents in 1972, 56 were African American, showing that the Home had been integrated.

By now, the Home had a pay telephone and the girls were not restricted in their use of the telephone. Major Turner explained that the girls had not really been restricted in earlier days, but staff would place the calls.

This was to ensure that the calls were collect and the Home would not incur a long-distance bill. The length of stay continued to decrease. But even with these changes, the numbers began to decline.

On April 7, 1972, Mr. Gordon Bingham noted the decline in a letter to Brigadier Luther Smith, Commissioner of The Salvation Army in Birmingham:

"Like other maternity homes across the country, the Birmingham Home and Hospital has been experiencing a diminution of demand for this traditional kind of service. In Birmingham the occupancy rate has been affected only in the last twelve to thirteen months. The 1970 occupancy rate of 106% will contrast dramatically with the 1971 rate which should fall somewhere between sixty and seventy percent."

The Salvation Army Homes tried to modify the Home's appearance, rules and expectations to attract more girls. It was proposed to update the handbook and have two sections, one for the school-aged girls and one for those that were older. This was to allow the older residents more flexibility. They would be encouraged to have outside employment and different schedules than their younger counterparts.

Major Turner alluded to this differentiation when she described the daily schedule, which was modified, but which remained in effect until the Home's closing. An officer would be responsible for waking the girls. Those that were on kitchen duty helped the officer to prepare breakfast. The officer ate breakfast with the girls and had a short devotion. On Mondays medical information, i.e., weight, blood pressure, and other vital signs were taken. Following this the younger girls had lessons and the older residents had to do their chores. Following lunch, the girls had a nap and then mail-call. The younger girls could then complete their details and have a study period. The older residents had free time. Prenatal classes, which were open to all, were often held at night.

Admission requirements were relaxed and almost non-existent. In earlier admission criteria, girls were denied admission if they were experiencing behavior problems or were believed to be developmentally challenged.

The provision of additional services was looked to as a way of funding the maternity homes. Major Tidman told of a program at the Lexington Home that allowed federal and state prisoners to come to the Home as a transitional phase between prison and returning to their homes. This apparently lasted only a couple of years and per Major Tidman, the Home was converted to a rehabilitation program for alcohol and drug abusers.

Mr. Bingham suggested that the Home develop services for unwed expectant mothers who do not want to be in a residential setting. The Girl's Lodge Program began in February of 1972, possibly influenced by Brigadier Smith, but it was not housed in the Home. Other Army homes were closing and being remodeled as youth centers or centers for the aged.

Regardless of the efforts, the status enjoyed previously by the maternity homes was declining. McKinley (1995), in his book entitled Marching to Glory, wrote that "unmarried mothers mirror faithfully the degree of social disapproval existing within the overall cultural setting--a truism with disturbing implications for the Army's maternity homes that the officers overlooked at the time" (p. 248). Not only society's increased acceptance of unwed pregnancy, but also the increased numbers of abortions following *Roe v. Wade* made an impact.

Major Tidman, who returned to Birmingham on August 27, 1975, as an administrator, suggests other events which this author had not related to the decline of the maternity home era. Women were becoming professionals with income, therefore, credit cards were now available to women. Abortions and plane tickets to other cities or states could be paid for with a small monthly payment. Also, Mia Farrow, an unmarried mother, appeared on the front cover of *Life Magazine*. She was holding her twins, their father standing behind her; the perfect family without the benefit of marriage. Major Tidman stated this made young girls think if the celebrities can do it, then so could they and "that's when the pendulum really swung."

In 1977, The Salvation Army Women's and Children's Social Service Department was dissolved. The records were moved from Birmingham to Jackson, Mississippi, the new Divisional Headquarters for Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. McKinley states, "The closing of this chapter in Salvation Army history is still regretted by Army Leaders"(p. 248).

The Eighties-The End of an Era

Major Tidman compared this time frame to someone "sitting in the bathtub and watching the water go out...you couldn't stop it." The Home and Hospital for Pregnant Girls, as it was now termed, was one of only a handful of maternity homes left in the nation. In 1982 the hospital section was closed and girls were transferred to MontclairMedicalCenter to deliver their babies. One wing was leased to Youth Emergency Shelter (YES), another service for females.

Major Tidman told of the renovations to the structure and the phasing out of the maternity aspect of the Home. The Hospital became a gymnasium. The two sets of girls ate at different times. The maternity residents moved into the staff section and a partition was made in preparation for the male youths to move into the dormitory. The building which had housed the YES program, which is also a Salvation Army program, was in disrepair and the Home became their new haven. Major Tidman retired in 1986.

Major Turner left shortly thereafter. She could not go to another maternity home, as there were no others left in existence. By 1988 the Home could no longer operate. The populations were too different and the YES program was expanding.

Conclusion

It was almost as if the maternity home had come full-circle. In the late nineteenth century prostitutes, or at least those with suspicious behavior, were encouraged to come to the Army's homes. Then children, many of whom had emotional or behavior problems found refuge in the homes. In the first quarter of the twentieth century the homes catered almost exclusively to the unwed expectant mother. For fifty years they were called maternity homes. Then in the last quarter of the twentieth century they began to accept those who were not pregnant for the first time. Those with emotional and behavioral problems once again were admitted in the homes, until finally there were no "maternity homes" left at all. Once again the south lagged behind, and the Salvation Army Home for Pregnant Girls was the last to close its doors.

Authors Note

Personal interviews with Major Minnie Tidman and Major Gloria Turner took place in Snellville, Georgia, on November 9, 1998. The assortment of personal letters quoted throughout the paper can be found either at The Salvation Army National Archives, Alexandria, Virginia, located within Boxes 85/1 and 85/2 and entitled Birmingham Home and Hospital or in Atlanta, Georgia at The Salvation Army Southern Historical Center in folders entitled Birmingham Records and Home and Hospital Records.

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