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## On the “Border Line of Tragedy”: White Slavery, Moral Protection, and the Travelers’ Aid Society of New York, 1885-1917

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**On the “Border Line of Tragedy”: White Slavery, Moral Protection, and the  
Travelers’ Aid Society of New York, 1885-1917**

**A Dissertation Presented**

by

**Eric Carmin Cimino**

to

The Graduate School

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements

for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

**History**

Stony Brook University

**August 2012**

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**Stony Brook University**  
The Graduate School

**Eric Carmin Cimino**

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Abstract of the Dissertation

**On the “Border Line of Tragedy”: White Slavery, Moral Protection, and the  
Travelers’ Aid Society of New York, 1885-1917**

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**Doctor of Philosophy**

in

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**2012**

This dissertation examines the travelers’ aid movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through a case study of the Travelers’ Aid Society of New York. Travelers’ aid was part of a larger movement for moral reform that arose as a response to social problems unleashed by industrialization, urban growth, and mass immigration. Moral reformers believed that vices such as prostitution were wreaking havoc on individuals, communities, and, consequently, on the national fabric. To combat prostitution, reformers launched a variety of campaigns in both the United States and Europe, one of which targeted a practice known as “white slavery,” i.e. the coercion of European and Euro-American (“white”) women into prostitution. The Travelers’ Aid Society of New York (TAS) was founded in 1907 as an anti-white slavery organization. Its mission was to prevent female travelers from falling victim to white slavery by providing social work to them at train stations and piers. Female agents of the TAS searched for disoriented travelers (immigrant and native-born, working- and middle-class) in the hopes of reaching them before they were in any immediate danger. Agents escorted

travelers to a variety of locations, including affordable lodging facilities; provided them with resources such as food; and gave assistance in finding employment. Agents also helped travelers navigate through New York's complex transportation system.

This study of the TAS supports an interpretation of social welfare that integrates two fundamental, often competing, concepts: discipline and empowerment. I argue that the TAS's disciplinary elements were moderate, which allowed it to frequently act as a productive mediator between travelers and their new environment. This was especially true during the TAS's period as a women's organization, 1906-1910. We see more evidence of discipline in the ensuing period when the TAS transitioned to a mixed-sex organization led by men and its anti-white slavery activism became more pronounced. The TAS, like most of its contemporaries, exaggerated the threat of white slavery, which led to instances where agents were overaggressive in their handling of cases involving female travelers and unknown men. However, its emphasis on white slavery should not obscure the prevalence of crime at the city's transportation hubs. Subsequently, TAS vigilance also thwarted criminal attempts on women's bodies and property.

I dedicate this dissertation to:

My late grandparents Frank and Josephine Cimino,  
Percy and Marion Farr

Suzanne and Anya

and to Oliver, my little historian

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## List of Abbreviations

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| BII             | New York State Bureau of Industries and Immigration                 |
| <i>Bulletin</i> | <i>National Travelers Aid Society Bulletin</i>                      |
| Committee       | Travelers' Aid Committee (New York)                                 |
| COS             | Charity Organization Society  |
| IB              | International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic |
| JAPGW           | Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women            |
| London TAS      | London Travelers' Aid Society                                       |
| NCJW            | National Council of Jewish Women                                    |
| New York CJW    | New York Council of Jewish Women                                    |
| NTAS            | National Travelers' Aid Society                                     |
| NYATN           | New York Anti-Trafficking Network                                   |
| PPIE            | Panama-Pacific International Exhibition                             |
| SSC             | Southern Sociological Congress                                      |
| TA              | travelers' aid  |
| TAS-California  | Travelers' Aid Society of California                                |
| TAS-NY or TAS   | Travelers' Aid Society of New York                                  |
| TVPA            | Trafficking Victims Protection Act                                  |
| WRC             | Women's Relief Committee  |
| YMCA            | Young Men's Christian Association                                   |
| YWCA or YW      | Young Women's Christian Association                                 |

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My education as an historian began at the University of Massachusetts-Boston in September, 2001. I wish to thank Paul Bookbinder for guiding me through my M.A. Thesis on the Bauhaus, which was my first piece of serious scholarship. Spencer Di Scalla taught me a great deal about how to read and write history, and his interest in my work instilled confidence that I could continue on for a Ph.D.

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It was a great learning experience to be a teaching assistant for Susan Hinely, who shared with me her immense knowledge of women's history. Alice Ritscherle provided a kind shoulder to lean on during a period of doubt that crept up on me after my oral exams. I never had a chance to take a class with April Masten, but her encouraging comments at a conference signaled that I was going in the right direction with my dissertation.

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The research for this dissertation was conducted primarily at the New-York Historical Society. I wish to thank the archivists and librarians there for their help with obtaining material. I also want to acknowledge Susan Kriete's excellent Finding Aid that first led me to the Travelers' Aid Society of New York.

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My neighborhood coffee shop Espresso 77 and the Edna Barnes Salomon Room at the New York Public Library were inspiring places to write. The Salomon Room is a grand space decorated with art from the library's collection. I enjoyed sitting beneath the painting of Milton Dictating Paradise Lost and the portrait of the British feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, who I hope was watching in approval. Espresso 77 is an intimate space where you sit within inches of the other patrons/writers/artists. Its walls too are filled with paintings, which my eyes would find whenever they looked up from the laptop screen or a student exam.

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E.C.C.  
Jackson Heights (Queens), NY  
July 2012

## Introduction

On March 7, 1907, a young Irish woman arrived at New York City's Grand Central Station. She had come to the city with the hopes of finding work as a domestic servant. Being unfamiliar with the city, she asked a man inside the station where she could find "the ladies who helped." The man then escorted her to the desk of the Travelers' Aid Society. The on-duty agent assessed the situation and decided to take the Irish woman out of the train station and to the Sisters of Mercy Home at 106<sup>th</sup> Street, where she could spend the night and later receive assistance in locating work. When the agent and her client arrived, they found that the Sisters of Mercy were full and were told to try the nearby Roman Catholic Sisters. The Catholic Sisters had a vacancy and the traveler spent the night. At this point, the work of the Travelers' Aid Society was done. It had safely delivered a traveler to a respectable lodging place from which she could begin her new life in New York.<sup>1</sup>

Not all of the Travelers' Aid Society's cases were so routine. A young girl named Lucy was met at a train station in 1913. Her "brother" was arriving the next day and she needed a place to stay in the meantime. The agent of the Travelers' Aid Society quickly deduced from Lucy's appearance that she was a runaway who had filled her head with "unhealthily suggestive and adventurous novels." Instead of taking Lucy to a boarding house, which she had requested, the agent took her to Travelers' Aid Society headquarters. There, the agent learned that the girl had been persuaded to travel "hundreds of miles" from home to rendezvous with a young man (the aforementioned "brother"). The man had sent Lucy ahead of him to avoid the Mann Act, a

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<sup>1</sup> Case 8 in Travelers' Aid Society of New York, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 19. The next morning, the traveler planned to head back to the Sisters of Mercy to receive assistance in locating a job.

law that prohibited the transportation of women across state lines for commercial purposes that were considered “immoral.” To teach her a lesson, the agent took the girl back to the station the next day and allowed her to meet her suitor. Under the agent’s watchful eye, Lucy spoke with the man and “discovered his evil motive and fled from him in fear and disgust.”<sup>2</sup> From the standpoint of the Travelers’ Aid Society, it had just prevented a young girl from falling victim to a strange man’s scheme.

Both of the above cases are classic examples from the records of the Travelers’ Aid Society of New York (TAS-NY or TAS), an organization that formed in 1907 to provide social work to female travelers at the city’s stations and piers in order to protect them from moral and sexual danger. Much of its work involved escorting women to various locations in the city or to other transportation lines. Occasionally its encounters were more dramatic and entailed directly confronting women and men about their travel plans.

The Travelers’ Aid Society envisioned its work as taking place on the “border line of tragedy,”<sup>3</sup> where the slightest misstep by an inexperienced traveler could result in a downward spiral that culminated in prostitution. The worst case scenario involved coerced prostitution, or “white slavery” as it was commonly known in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A young foreign woman fresh off a transatlantic ocean liner and confused about her new surroundings might unwisely ask a stranger for assistance in locating a city address, thus opening herself up to potential victimization. Routine travelers’ aid (TA) work required vigilant agents to search for disoriented travelers and reach them before they were in any immediate danger. When a strange man was already involved, TA agents had to judge what kind of potential threat, if any, the man posed. More often than not, unless the man was clearly related to the traveler or planned

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<sup>2</sup> “Oh! I Want my Father!,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 5.



to marry her, agents preferred to separate the pair. If the traveler clearly wished to be left alone and the man willingly retreated, separation was easily accomplished. Other times a great deal of persuasion and posturing was necessary to convince them to decouple.

Travelers' aid was part of a larger movement for moral reform that arose during the mid-late nineteenth century as a response to social problems unleashed by industrialization, urban growth, and mass immigration. In major American cities, moral reformers believed that vices such as prostitution and alcoholism were wreaking havoc on individuals, communities, and, consequently, on the national fabric. Eliminating vice was thus a pressing local and national issue that energized large swaths of the upper- and middle-class public.<sup>4</sup> To combat prostitution, moral reformers launched campaigns in both the United States and Europe to end state regulated prostitution, to "rescue" prostitutes from their profession, and to eliminate "white slavery." Travelers' aid was most closely associated with the latter campaign.

The term "white slavery" had multiple interpretations. The most common definition referred to women who were coerced into prostitution and subsequently imprisoned.<sup>5</sup> Author and reformer Edward O. Janney defined it in 1911 as "the procuring, selling or buying of women with the intention of holding or forcing them into a life of prostitution."<sup>6</sup> As the term indicates, the typical victim was "white," which at the turn of the century might be defined narrowly to

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<sup>4</sup> On moral reform, also known as social purity, see David Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973); Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene: Women, Prostitution, and the 'American Plan,' 1900-1930* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002); Barbara Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1987); and Marion Horan, "Trafficking in Danger: Working-Class Women and Narratives of Sexual Danger in English and United States Anti-Prostitution Campaigns, 1875-1914" (Ph.D. diss., Binghamton University, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender, and Anti-Vice Activism, 1887-1917* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p. 20. David Langum, *Crossing over the Line: Legislating Morality and the Mann Act* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), p. 34.

<sup>6</sup> Janney quoted in Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, p. 20. See also Janney, *White Slave Traffic in America* (New York: National Vigilance Committee, 1911).

mean only native-born Anglo-Saxons or more broadly to include Jews and other Eastern Europeans, as well as southern Europeans like Italians. But as black-led reform organizations, as well as some white-led societies, portrayed the problem, it also included African-American women as victims.

White slavery could also refer to the coercion that resulted from the psychological and physical control that pimps exerted over prostitutes. In this case, women were not necessarily coerced *into* prostitution; rather, it was their inability to ever leave prostitution that was the issue.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, some anti-prostitution campaigners saw prostitution in general as coercive, making all prostitutes white slaves and their male clients white slavers.<sup>8</sup> The Travelers' Aid Society's vision of white slavery most closely corresponded to the first definition: the abduction and selling of women into prostitution. However, there were elements of the last meaning in its understanding as well. At times, the TAS made no distinction between coercive and voluntary prostitution; both had the same effect of ruining a woman's morality and, thus, her future.

In addition to having roots in the anti-prostitution campaigns of the moral reform movement, the Travelers' Aid Society was on the frontlines of the professionalization of social work. Beginning with the charity organization movement of the mid-late nineteenth century, American social welfare policy began to shift away from personal charitable donations and public outdoor relief and toward professional and private institutional relief. Operating under the charity organization principles of scientific investigation and the rationalization of services, the

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<sup>7</sup> Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, pp. 20-1. Langum, *Crossing over the Line*, p. 34. Theodore Bingham describes the physical and psychological hold that pimps ("protectors") held over their prostitutes in "The Girl that Disappears," *Hampton's Magazine* 25:5 (Nov. 1910), pp. 568-9.

<sup>8</sup> Langum, *Crossing over the Line*, p. 34.

TAS and its paid force of female “social workers” exemplified this transition.<sup>9</sup> The Travelers’ Aid Society’s emphasis on private relief, coupled with its neutral stance toward state activism, placed it on the periphery of the Progressive reform movement, where organizations typically promoted legislative action and public programs to complement their local work.<sup>10</sup>

Nevertheless, its anti-prostitution and urban reform agendas overlapped with similar Progressive campaigns, especially those associated with the Protestant-based Social Gospel movement (the “praying wing of Progressivism”).<sup>11</sup>

\*\*\*\*

To evaluate social reform and social welfare projects,<sup>12</sup> such as travelers’ aid, scholars have often invoked theories of social control and social discipline. Social control theory is strongly associated with the work of Piven and Cloward on welfare in the United States, while the concept of social discipline stems from the philosophy of Michel Foucault, usually applied in

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<sup>9</sup> On charity organization, also known as scientific charity, see Dawn Greeley, “Beyond Benevolence: Gender, Class, and the Development of Scientific Charity in New York City, 1882-1935” (Ph.D. diss., Stony Brook University, 1995) and Walter Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> On progressives’ rejection of limited government in favor of activist local, state, and national governments, see Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 27-31, 35, 42, 46-8, 71, and Ch. 5.

<sup>11</sup> The quote is from Sidney Ahlstrom in Nancy Marie Robertson, *Christian Sisterhood, Race Relations, and the YWCA, 1906-46* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007), p. 19. According to Robertson, social gospelers “infused” secular social science with morality and religion in order to save the community, state, and nation. Also see Ralph Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885-1912* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991) and Flanagan, *America Reformed*, pp. 34-5.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Trattner defines social welfare as “those social security, social service, and health programs, activities, and organizations, public and private, intended primarily to promote the well-being of individuals who society felt needed and deserved help.” Relatedly, social welfare can be applied to prevent “destitution and other social ills,” as well as to solve social problems. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, p. xxxviii.

a European context.<sup>13</sup> The former is more of a Marxist, class-based critique of social welfare, while the latter is rooted in post-structuralism. However, both positions, more or less, share the same basic critique of charity, social work, and social reform which is that they are coercive and intrusive projects of the business and professional classes (the bourgeoisie) that are used to impose their values on the working-classes, as well as racial minorities, in order to preserve the industrial order and the state.<sup>14</sup>

While discipline and control are still prominent in much contemporary scholarship on social welfare, most recently in the works of Anna Igra and Jennifer Fronc,<sup>15</sup> a competing interpretation exists that presents welfare as a dynamic field that incorporates a variety of actors with competing, as well as overlapping, ideas about how best to interact with clients and to address social problems.<sup>16</sup> This literature maintains that in addition to having a history of control and discipline, social work also has a tradition of “empowerment.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, scholars have

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<sup>13</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971). Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: Vol. 1, An Introduction* (London: Penguin, 1978) and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Random House, 1995).

<sup>14</sup> Examples of scholarship that employs social control theory include Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poor House: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986) and John Ehrenreich, *The Altruistic Imagination: A History of Social Work and Social Policy in the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

<sup>15</sup> Anna Igra, *Wives without Husbands: Marriage, Desertion, and Welfare in New York, 1900-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Jennifer Fronc, *New York Undercover: Private Surveillance in the Progressive Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State*, especially pp. xxvi-xxviii. Gary Lowe and Nelson Reid, eds., *The Professionalization of Poverty: Social Work and the Poor in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1999), especially Clarke Chambers, “Afterward,” pp. 161-5. Nina Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt, eds., *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and YWCA in the City* (New York: NYU Press, 1997). In the European context, historians of Germany have challenged the “master narrative” of social discipline. See for example Young-Sun Hong, *Welfare, Modernity, and the Weimar State, 1919-1933* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998); Kevin Repp, *Reformers, Critics, and the Paths of German Modernity: Anti-Politics and the Search for Alternatives, 1890-1914* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000) and Andrew Lees, *Cities, Sin, and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2002).

<sup>17</sup> Barbara Levy Simon, *The Empowerment Tradition in American Social Work: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

described how aid recipients manipulated the intentions of social workers and reformers so that their own immediate needs were met.<sup>18</sup> Working-class men and women may also have sought access to the social knowledge that middle-class “experts” possessed, whatever its limitations.<sup>19</sup>

Scholars who have studied travelers’ aid history have drawn from both the social control/discipline paradigm and the revisionary approach to social welfare history. Some have viewed TA as part of a larger project of bourgeois hegemony over working-class women’s morality and sexuality. Others have portrayed it as an essential and beneficial mediator between single women and their new, often harsh urban environment. In the former school are historians Joanne Meyerowitz and Marion Horan.

Meyerowitz was one of the first scholars to critically examine travelers’ aid work in the United States, studying it as part of her larger project on the social history of “Independent Wage Earners in Chicago.”<sup>20</sup> Travelers’ aid was one of numerous outreach attempts by elite urban women who sought to provide a respectable, home-like environment to “women adrift” in post-Civil War America. In the case of Chicago, the local Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) had an embedded TA Department that met native-born and immigrant women at train stations for the purpose of escorting them to the YWCA boarding house. The women of the YWCA and its related TA service thus acted as “surrogate families” to these working-class women. Meyerowitz acknowledges the potential benefits of travelers’ aid and the affordable

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<sup>18</sup> Linda Gordon, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence, 1880-1960* (New York: Viking Press, 1988). Beverly Stadum, *Poor Women and Their Families: Hard Working Charity Cases, 1900-1930* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992). Dawn Greeley, “Beyond Benevolence.”

<sup>19</sup> Larry Frohman, “Prevention, Welfare, and Citizenship: The War on Tuberculosis and Infant Mortality in Germany, 1900-1930,” *Central European History* 39 (2006), pp. 437-8.

<sup>20</sup> Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988). Lynn Weiner also briefly describes TA for women adrift in *From Working Girl to Working Mother: The Female Labor Force in the United States, 1820-1980* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 47-52 and “Sisters of the Road: Women Transients and Tramps” in *Walking to Work: Tramps in America, 1790-1935*, ed. Eric Monkkonen (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984), pp. 182-3.

lodging provided by the YWCA but, for the most part, she details how these programs stood in contrast to the wishes of working-class clients, who increasingly desired independence from family and more opportunities for sexual expression and unchaperoned leisure activities.<sup>21</sup>

Working women often viewed travelers' aid and residing at the YWCA as unnecessary burdens that had to be overcome in their pursuit of meaningful work and a fulfilling private life.

Reformers tried to adapt to working-class criticisms, but it was too little too late. At the turn of the century, working women began to look elsewhere, preferring to rely on each other rather than their social superiors.<sup>22</sup>

Horan's dissertation, "Trafficking in Danger," is the most extensive scholarly treatment of travelers' aid to date. She roots travelers' aid in the American and British anti-prostitution and moral reform milieux of the nineteenth century. Her dissertation profiles three related anti-prostitution campaigns: the drive to end state regulation of prostitution; the campaign against white slavery; and the travelers' aid movement. Horan provides a valuable overview of the establishment of numerous travelers' aid organizations during the late nineteenth century and describes the sectarian, gender, class, and racial boundaries that structured them. For Horan, social class is the most important lens from which to view travelers' aid. She describes the travelers' aid movement as an upper- and middle-class attempt at "reforming working-class women's life choices." This especially meant altering working-class travelers' willingness to trust strangers, who, according to TA leaders and agents, were the very "embodiment of sexual danger."<sup>23</sup> Horan is most interested in the misunderstandings and conflicts that resulted when

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<sup>21</sup> Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, pp. 82-6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 86-9, 118-25.

<sup>23</sup> Marion Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 21-2, 288. For a related interpretation of travelers' aid, see Val Marie Johnson, "Protection, Virtue, and the 'Power to Detain': The Moral Citizenship of Jewish Women in New York City, 1890-1920," *Journal of Urban History* 31:5 (July 2005): 655-84.

agents encountered travelers who were intent on behaving in ways contrary to middle-class expectations. Overall, she presents TA as a form of paternalistic social control that should either be evaded or, at best, manipulated to suit the traveler's own ends.<sup>24</sup>

Others, such as Daphne Spain and Floris Cash, have emphasized how travelers' aid in combination with related social services was a source of empowerment for working-class and immigrant women, creating safe spaces from which newcomers could negotiate the city and assimilate to it. Spain, an urban planner and sociologist, goes the furthest and makes the hyperbolic argument that the assimilation projects of faith-based women's organizations, such as YWCAs and their related Travelers' Aid departments, "saved" American cities from the "disorder" caused by unsanitary living conditions and mass immigration.<sup>25</sup> There is no ambivalence in Spain's account and little recognition of the darker side of social work and urban reform. Indeed, she maintains that women's associations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have much to teach the contemporary private sector since it has assumed greater responsibility for the social safety net as a result of Clinton-era Federal welfare reform.<sup>26</sup>

Floris Cash more readily than Spain admits how middle-class African-American women's clubs could be used to promote bourgeois hegemony, but she places much greater emphasis on how vital they were to helping African-American working women "acculturate to

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<sup>24</sup> Horan seems to contradict herself when she states that, by and large, most clients gave travelers' aid a "positive reception" and that TA organizations were flexible in negotiating with travelers. Her tone and evidence throughout the dissertation do little to support this position. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 22-3, 287-9. Horan's analysis of the encounters between agents and travelers is presented in Ch. 6 of her dissertation.

<sup>25</sup> Spain, *How Women Saved the City* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), pp. 2, 5, 13-20, 27 and Ch. 2. The women's organizations that Spain profiles were influenced by the complementary, and sometimes competing, tenets of the Social Gospel and municipal housekeeping movements. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9. For a similar, yet more tempered, portrayal of women's organizations, see Anne Firor Scott, *Natural Allies: Women's Associations in American History* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991). She convincingly argues that women's associations made significant contributions to the "expansion of American democracy" (2).

<sup>26</sup> Spain, *How Women Saved the City*, pp. xiii, 240-8.

urban life” and challenge racism.<sup>27</sup> One organization that she profiles is the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association, which she describes as “the earliest black settlement house in New York City.” It offered vocational courses, a kindergarten, lectures on black history, a free library, and travelers’ aid for women arriving from the South. Through these programs, the White Rose Mission aimed to provide black women with the necessary skills and values to contribute to their new communities.<sup>28</sup>

Somewhere in the middle of the two interpretations of travelers’ aid that stress either empowerment or discipline are geographer Richard Phillips’s account of the London Travelers’ Aid Society and historian Beverly Stadum’s study of the Travelers’ Aid Department of the Duluth, Minnesota YWCA. Phillips, influenced by Foucault, sees travelers’ aid as part of a larger Victorian project to construct, regulate, and reproduce “heteronormative rules” of sexual and moral behavior, which meant heterosexuality for married women and chastity for single women. Phillips describes the railway stations that were patrolled by TA representatives as “unsexy” spaces: those sites that at first appear asexual, but in fact are central to the construction and defense of dominant, “normal” sexual values.<sup>29</sup> Though Phillips is critical of such proscriptions on women’s behavior, he also contends that TA empowered female travelers by helping them preserve what little social capital they had: their chastity and respectability. If their respectability was tarnished during their travels, their potential for employment and marriage was negatively affected, leaving them in a tenuous social position.<sup>30</sup> He concludes by

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<sup>27</sup> Cash, *African American Women and Social Action: The Clubwomen and Volunteerism from Jim Crow to the New Deal, 1896-1936* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 14, 116, 154-5.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90-7.

<sup>29</sup> Phillips, “Unsexy Geographies: Heterosexuality, Respectability, and the Travelers’ Aid Society,” *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 5:2 (2006), pp. 164, 167-8, 176-8.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 182-4.



applauding the practical work of the London Travelers' Aid Society, while acknowledging that its work, for all its benefits, still left unchallenged "the power relations between men and women" under capitalism that enabled women's secondary status in the first place.<sup>31</sup>

Similarly, according to Beverly Stadum, travelers' aid in Duluth functioned to "empower" female travelers by connecting them to important resources, such as temporary lodging facilities and employment bureaus.<sup>32</sup> However, it also curtailed the autonomy of runaway girls and other young women who were involuntarily sent home or to a facility.<sup>33</sup> Stadum, like Richards, also claims that aspects of TA's program, such as its gendered assumptions about the perpetual vulnerability of single women and its reliance on individualized casework in the 1920s, prevented it from ever addressing the root causes of women's exploitation ("capitalist and sexist society").<sup>34</sup>

This dissertation on the Travelers' Aid Society of New York draws from both strands of the discipline and empowerment debate, taking seriously the TAS's claims to protect and support travelers, while acknowledging its disciplinary features and limitations. I argue that the TAS's coercive and disciplinary elements were moderate, which allowed it to, more often than not, provide valuable aid to diverse groups of travelers. And, by and large, travelers used TA to their advantage. This was especially true during the TAS's period as a women's organization, 1906-1910. We see more evidence of discipline in the ensuing period as the TAS's anti-white slavery activism became more pronounced. The TAS, like most of its contemporaries, exaggerated the threat of white slavery, which led to instances where agents were overaggressive in their

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>32</sup> Stadum, "Female Protection and Empowerment: Travelers Aid Services, 1919-1934," *Affilia* 12:3 (Fall 1997), pp. 290-3.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 287-9, 292-3.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 293-4.

handling of cases involving female travelers and unknown men. However, its focus on white slavery should not obscure the prevalence of crime and exploitation at the city's transportation hubs, or even the possibility of a small-scale white slave traffic. Subsequently, TAS vigilance also thwarted criminal attempts on women's bodies and property.

Despite its lofty intentions, the TAS could only have so much influence over its clients. TA contact was designed to be brief and in the long-run, it was up to the travelers themselves, along with their new communities, to determine their ultimate safety and quality of life. Thus, Richard Phillips is correct in recognizing that the TAS's vision of social reform, which sought to alter exploitive urban conditions by assisting female travelers one at a time, had only a limited effect on the larger economic, social, and cultural forces that constrained women's lives.

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As can be gleaned from the above literature review, discussions of travelers aid have typically been embedded within larger studies of "women adrift," urban reform, and anti-prostitution activism. There are no book-length scholarly texts that deal, first and foremost, with the history of the travelers' aid movement, as there are for its contemporaries like the settlement house movement, the Salvation Army, and the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. This dissertation can therefore be read as an opening salvo in the writing of critical histories of travelers' aid in the United States and abroad.

Chapter One surveys travelers' aid work in England and the United States prior to the founding of the Travelers' Aid Society of New York in 1907. It examines the various reform impulses underpinning early TA work, as well as the people and organizations that developed travelers' aid on both continents. From the eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth

century, male-led denominational and ethnic associations were the primary providers of TA to both male and female travelers. This pattern changed in the late nineteenth century, first in England then in the United States, when elite women began to direct the work and there was a shift away from male travelers in favor of single working women, who were increasingly migrating to cities. For elite women, TA was part of their twinned projects to reform industrialized society and to eliminate vices, like prostitution, that threatened women's morality. To this end, travelers' aid provided "moral protection" to female travelers at train stations and docks in order to forestall any circumstance that might lead them into prostitution or white slavery.

As in the eighteenth century, TA continued to be conducted on a sectarian, ethnic, and racial basis by societies that included the London-based Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women and its counterpart the New York Council of Jewish Women; the Young Women's Christian Association and Girls' Friendly Society in Boston; and Victoria Mathews' White Rose Mission in Harlem, which at the turn of the century began providing travelers' aid to African-American women arriving from the South. In the late nineteenth century, one organization, the London Travelers' Aid Society, embraced a "non-sectarian" approach. Foreshadowing twentieth century developments, the London Travelers' Aid Society counted both Jews and Christians as members, assisted Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish travelers, and rejected missionary work.

Chapter Two examines the pre-history, founding, personnel, and work of the Travelers' Aid Society of New York, the organization most responsible for the development of "modern," non-sectarian travelers' aid in the early twentieth century United States. I begin by describing the national and local developments that culminated in the creation of the Travelers' Aid Society.

This includes a discussion of large-scale travelers' aid at the 1904 and 1905 World's Fairs in St. Louis and Portland, which were expected to draw thousands of single women, both as attendees and workers. To ensure women's moral safety en route to the fairs, as well as on the fairgrounds, the Young Women's Christian Association led a campaign to coordinate travelers' aid nation-wide. One key participant in this drive was Grace Hoadley Dodge of New York, an important early leader of efforts to protect and uplift working women. After her World's Fair experience, Dodge sponsored travelers' aid in her hometown of New York through the creation of the Travelers' Aid Committee. The Committee established much of the basic principles that would govern American travelers' aid through World War I, particularly the philosophy of non-sectarianism. Non-sectarianism, as the Committee defined it, required that members belong to one of three major religious faiths: Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism. However, members' service was not to be based on the specific tenets of their respective faiths, but on the broad religious principles that they shared.

In 1907, the Committee was officially incorporated as the Travelers' Aid Society of New York (TAS-NY or TAS) with Grace Dodge as its president. The remainder of Chapter Two is devoted to the TAS-NY's personnel and work from 1907 through 1910, the period in which it was a women's organization. Using the categories of gender, class, and religion, I analyze the composition of the TAS's first Board of Directors, which was composed primarily of women from the highest echelon of New York society. The upper-class governance was an outgrowth of the nineteenth century charity organization movement and set the TAS apart from Progressivism and its mostly upper middle-class leadership. These women were also involved in a wide array of the period's reform movements, though notably absent from their work was a commitment to

the women's suffrage movement. TAS leaders' concept of women's citizenship was not based on access to the ballot, but on their gendered contributions to urban reform.

The early twentieth century saw an increased interest in the forced prostitution of women, known as the white slave traffic. Chapter Two puts the TAS's participation in the resulting "panic" into context, describing its discourse on white slavery at this stage in its history as moderate in relation to those which inflamed passions and incited racism, as did George Kibbe Turner's sensational exposés in *McClure's* magazine. The TAS took for granted the existence of white slavery, but promoted a level-headed response to it that was based on protecting women's morality through practical social work. It charted a middle ground between those, like Turner, who peddled in lurid tales of abductions and sin and those, like the social hygienist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who dismissed issues of morality in favor of a scientific approach to white slavery.

Finally, the chapter concludes with a look at how the Travelers' Aid Society operated in New York City, as well as internationally and nationally, stressing its reliance on cooperation to carry out its work. Internationally, the TAS took its place in a Trans-Atlantic network of anti-white slavery organizations and TA practitioners that exemplified the "Atlantic crossing" of reform ideas described by Daniel Rodgers.<sup>35</sup> During this period, ideas flowed to America from the TAS's more experienced contemporaries in London and continental Europe, who had assembled international societies and held conferences. In 1910, President Grace Dodge and Board member Elizabeth Harris traveled abroad to interact directly with practitioners and gauge what their European colleagues expected from American TA.

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<sup>35</sup> Daniel Rodgers, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

The third chapter examines the Travelers' Aid Society's work on the ground at the city's rail terminals and piers from 1906-1910. It first describes the methods underpinning the TAS's "short-time" social work, which called for agent/client contact to be brief and for travelers to reach their final destination or transfer point as quickly as possible. It then analyzes the TAS's record keeping practices, which were developed during a moment when "records" were emerging as a critical tool in the professionalization of social work. Much of the chapter is a statistical portrait of TA work, which includes a breakdown of the total number of travelers helped by age, sex, and ethnicity; a compilation of the transatlantic lines that the TAS serviced; and a tally of the different locations to which agents brought travelers.

At train stations, young single women, both foreign- and native-born, received the most attention. They are shown entering and exiting New York for reasons that were primarily economic (to seek work as servants) and familial (to reunite with friends and family). Married women and women over thirty also appear in TAS records: their presence highlighting the wide spectrum of women using rail transportation at the turn of the century. At the piers, where transatlantic vessels docked, the TAS primarily met passengers from second class (the steerage class having already debarked at Ellis Island), which resulted in more of a middle-class clientele. However, due to the general affordability of second class tickets, the TAS encountered a steady stream of foreign-born servants at the piers as well.

Chapter Three concludes by assessing the interaction between TAS agents and travelers in terms of the long running debate over the nature of social welfare in the United States and Europe. Invoking the categories of discipline and empowerment, I provide examples of cases where travelers benefited from their contact with the TAS, as well as more ambiguous cases in which discipline and empowerment overlapped.

The period 1910-1917 marks a second phase in the history of the Travelers' Aid Society of New York. Chapter Four considers two important developments that defined this period: the TAS's transition from a women's organization to a mixed-sex organization led by men and its drive to create a National Travelers' Aid Society. The chapter begins by examining why President Grace Dodge and the Board of Directors chose to restructure the TAS and admit men into its leadership ranks. I describe a convergence of international, national, state, and local pressures that influenced the transition. I then profile the new Board of Directors, Vice Presidents, and General Secretary. The seventeen men on the enlarged Board were well-positioned in the fields of business, industry, academia, politics, and religion. Their inclusion enhanced the credibility of the TAS at a time when masculine notions of professionalism and science were eclipsing volunteerism as the basis of social welfare work.

Over the course of 1910-1917, the new General Secretary, Orin Baker, succeeded Grace Dodge as TA's main promoter and ideologist. As General Secretary, Baker worked to build a national travelers' aid movement. From 1913-1915, he embarked on a series of national tours to promote the TAS's brand of "modern," non-sectarian travelers' aid and to establish Travelers' Aid Societies. The plan was for these new Travelers' Aid Societies, along with traditional TA providers, to be federated before the onset of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE), a World's Fair held in San Francisco to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal. Since the turn of the century, national coordination of travelers' aid had always been strongest during World's Fairs, so the PPIE was a logical choice for the unveiling of a national travelers' aid society. Tragically, Grace Dodge passed away before the start of the fair and since she was the movement's primary source of finances, unification was postponed.

Despite this setback, the PPIE remained the key proving grounds for the expansion of TA outside of New York. To meet the moral protective needs of the PPIE, Orin Baker journeyed West and helped establish the Travelers' Aid Society of California, which was incorporated under the New York model. The TAS-California was one of several organizations, such as the Woman's Board and the YWCA, that worked to make the PPIE accessible and morally safe (i.e. free from prostitution and white slavery) to young women attending the fair alone. It was also instrumental in solidifying a TA network that, after the fair, coalesced into the National Travelers' Aid Society in 1917.

While Orin Baker was traveling across the country to build support for a national TA movement, the work continued in New York City. The TAS's workforce more than doubled its size and its fieldwork expanded to all of the major rail terminals in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area. The final chapter begins by using Annual Reports and the United States Federal Census to illuminate the composition of this larger workforce in terms of class, age, marital status, ethnicity, and citizenship. Census data suggests the predominance of native-born workers with at least one parent who was foreign-born. These daughters of immigrants marked the beginning of a (lower) middle-class identity for social workers that differed from the old New England origins of the previous two generations.

The remainder of Chapter Five focuses on the TAS's fieldwork for the period 1911-1916. In 1912, the TAS was involved in providing relief to survivors of one of history's greatest maritime disasters, the sinking of the *Titanic*. In general, historical accounts of the *Titanic* neglect the relief efforts that took place on land in favor of the more melodramatic acts of heroism, as well as cowardice, that occurred at sea. This portion of Chapter Five is an attempt to begin a more sustained discussion of how the city and its citizens responded to the tragedy. It



describes the private/public partnership, which included the TAS, that was created to provide disaster relief to survivors who entered the Port of New York aboard the rescue ship *Carpathia*. As the relief effort took shape, gender and class proved to be the fundamental organizing concepts, informing the initial understanding of who lived and died on the *Titanic*, what kind of aid those who survived would need, and by whom that aid should be provided.

Chapter Five concludes with a more general discussion of the TAS's work during this period, emphasizing the noticeable increase in cases that involved strange men who appeared to threaten female travelers. Here, I examine cases from the TAS's Annual Reports for evidence of coerced prostitution (white slavery). Nothing approaching a centrally organized white slave cartel, as described prominently by the muckraker George Kibbe Turner, can be seen in the TAS's sample cases. However, it is not self-evident that white slavery was predominantly a myth, as some scholars would have it. The evidence from TAS records leaves open the possibility that a decentralized traffic in women existed during the 1910s in which the main participants were small-time criminals who pursued their potential victims aboard steamships and trains. The records also reveal bizarre plots where sexual violence, such as rape, may have been intended. Despite the threat of sexual danger, travelers more commonly faced harassment by petty crooks set on theft and unscrupulous workers trying to maximize profits.

Corresponding to this increase in cases involving strange men, there also was a marked increase in the level of discipline and surveillance used by TAS agents. We see more examples in this period of agents physically separating men and women, some of whom were in consensual relationships, and a greater willingness to hold travelers at TAS headquarters while agents investigated their backgrounds and future plans.

### *Note on Sources*

The Travelers' Aid Society of New York's Annual Reports are this dissertation's central primary source. The Annual Reports contain summaries of each year's work, sample case reports, and statistics.<sup>36</sup> Meeting minutes are used, but only sparingly since they span 1917-1979, which is outside the dissertation's time frame.<sup>37</sup> To supplement the Annual Reports, I consulted a variety of newspapers and periodicals, especially the *National Travelers Aid Society Bulletin*, *New York Times*, *New-York Tribune*, and *Charities*, the era's preeminent social work journal. In assembling brief biographies of members of the TAS-NY's Board of Directors, I relied on city directories from the turn of the century such as *Dau's Blue Book* and the *Social Register*,<sup>38</sup> as well as numerous obscure publications accessed through Google Books. If not for the breadth of material indexed on Google, the lives of many of the women associated with the TAS-NY would have been lost to history.<sup>39</sup> To identify TA agents, I used the 1910 and 1920 *United States Federal Census* for the States of New York and Connecticut.<sup>40</sup>

This dissertation not only concentrates on the Travelers' Aid Society of New York, but on other organizations important to the development of travelers' aid in New York City and nationally. For my profile of the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association, I used its

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<sup>36</sup> The Annual Reports are cataloged in the General Collection of the New-York Historical Society's library. Some can also be found in Box 6, Folder 9 of the Records of the Travelers Aid Society (MS635), The New-York Historical Society.

<sup>37</sup> For the minutes, see Boxes 1-6 in the Records of the Travelers Aid Society of New York.

<sup>38</sup> *Dau's New York Blue Book, 1912* (New York: Dau Publishing Co., 1911). *Social Register, New York*. (New York: The Social Register Association, 1904-1908).

<sup>39</sup> <http://books.google.com>. On the value of Google and Google Books to scholars, see Roy Rosenzweig with Daniel J. Cohen, "Web of Lies?: Historical Knowledge on the Internet," in Rosenzweig, *Clio Wired: The Future of the Past in the Digital Age* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), pp. 44-50.

<sup>40</sup> *1910 United States Federal Census*, State of New York. *1910 United States Federal Census*, State of Connecticut. *1920 United States Federal Census*, State of New York. Online at <http://www.ancestry.com>.

Annual Reports and the miscellaneous material found in the White Rose Mission Collection.<sup>41</sup> Wilson's 1916 history, *Fifty Years of Association Work among Young Women, 1866-1916*, was especially helpful in illuminating the YWCA's role in national travelers' aid at World's Fairs, as well as its TA work locally in London and New York.<sup>42</sup> On travelers' aid in California for the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, the subject of Chapter Four, I utilized meeting minutes from the Travelers Aid Society of San Francisco Records and, among other published sources, Anna Pratt Simpson's *Problems Women Solved: Being the Story of the Woman's Board of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition*.<sup>43</sup> In Chapter Five, when describing the disaster relief efforts for *Titanic* survivors, the lead sources were the *Report of the New York Women's Relief Committee* and Molly Brown's eyewitness account of the *Titanic's* sinking.<sup>44</sup> Finally, for general histories of travelers' aid that were written at or before mid-century, Bertha McCall's *History of the National Travelers Aid Association*; Grace Kimble's *Social Work with Travelers and Transients*; and Baker's *Travelers' Aid Society in America* are the fundamental texts.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The White Rose Mission and Industrial Association Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library.

<sup>42</sup> Elizabeth Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work among Young Women, 1866-1916: A History of Young Women's Christian Associations in the United States of America* (New York: National Board of the YWCA, 1916).

<sup>43</sup> Travelers Aid Society of San Francisco Records, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco, CA. Anna Pratt Simpson, *Problems Women Solved: Being the Story of the Woman's Board of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (San Francisco: The Woman's Board, 1915). The Travelers Aid Society of San Francisco was initially known as the Travelers' Aid Society of California.

<sup>44</sup> Women's Relief Committee, *Report of the New York Women's Relief Committee for the Survivors of the S. S. Titanic, April 16<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 1912*. The report is in the collection of the New York Public Library, Schwarzman Building. Margaret Tobin Brown, "Sailing of the Ill-Fated Steamship Titanic," *Newport Herald*, 30 May 1912. Professor Leah Schwartz of Maryville University transcribed Brown's article, which is available online at <http://clubs.maryville.edu/schwartz/molly%20brown%20titanic.htm> (accessed 6/7/2011).

<sup>45</sup> Bertha McCall, *History of the National Travelers Aid Association, 1911-1948* (New York, 1950). Grace Kimble, *Social Work with Travelers and Transients: A Study of Travelers Aid Work in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935). Orin Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society in America: Principles and Methods* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1917).

For a complete list of the archival sources, newspapers and periodicals, and other printed material beyond what is highlighted here, see the Primary Sources section of the Bibliography.

## **Chapter 1**

### **The Origins of Travelers' Aid in England and the United States, 1885-1907**

This chapter examines travelers' aid (TA) work in England and the United States prior to the founding of the Travelers' Aid Society of New York in 1907. It examines the various reform impulses underpinning early TA work, as well as the people and organizations that developed travelers' aid on both continents. From the eighteenth century through the mid-nineteenth century, male-led denominational and ethnic associations were the primary providers of TA to both male and female travelers. This pattern changed in the late nineteenth century, first in England then in the United States, when elite women began to direct the work and there was a shift away from male travelers in favor of single working women who were thought in need of "moral protection" at train stations and docks. TA continued to be conducted on a sectarian and ethnic basis by organizations that included the London-based Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women and the New York Council of Jewish Women; the Young Women's Christian Association and Girls' Friendly Society in Boston; and Victoria Mathews' White Rose Mission in Harlem, which provided travelers' aid to African-American women. In the late nineteenth century, one organization, the London Travelers' Aid Society, embraced a "non-sectarian" approach. Foreshadowing twentieth century developments, the London Travelers' Aid Society had Jewish and Christian members, assisted Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish travelers, and rejected missionary work.

## Early Travelers' Aid

The beginnings of travelers' aid work in England and the United States can be traced back to at least the eighteenth century. There are records of Methodists and other religious organizations in England providing advice and lodging to disoriented travelers.<sup>1</sup> In the eighteenth century United States, there were numerous religious- and ethnic-based associations on the east coast that helped immigrants, such as the Loyal Sons of St. Patrick (Irish) and the Andrew's Society (Scotch). These associations primarily disseminated information and advice to travelers concerning the local area and the immigrants' new country.<sup>2</sup>

Two eighteenth century societies stand out for the ways in which they foreshadowed later twentieth century TA work: the Society for the Assistance of Persons Emigrating from Foreign Countries and the German Aid Society. The former, with branches in Philadelphia (1793) and New York (1794), assisted travelers regardless of their ethnic/national background or religion; a stance that few other contemporary organizations took and that later became a hallmark of TA work in the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> The German Aid Society, founded in Maryland in 1782, was possibly the first American association to have members stationed at the docks to meet travelers, in this case German immigrants heading west. According to Grace Kimble, the society attempted to establish a national travelers' aid movement by coordinating its work with similar immigrant societies around the country. However, its efforts conflicted with the United States government's increasing control over immigration, which caused the German Aid Society to

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<sup>1</sup> Grace Kimble, *Social Work with Travelers and Transients: A Study of Travelers Aid Work in the United States* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Both Philadelphia and New York would again be at the forefront of the development of travelers' aid in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, there appears to be no direct link between the Society for the Assistance of Persons Emigrating and modern Travelers' Aid Societies.

abandon its plans.<sup>4</sup> A national movement would have to wait until the beginning of the twentieth century.

The early-mid nineteenth century saw little change in travelers' aid work in the United States and England. One noteworthy development occurred in St. Louis, Missouri in 1851 with the establishment of what came to be known as the Mullanphy Fund. The fund was named for Mayor Bryan Mullanphy, who upon his death willed a third of his money to the city for the purpose of providing relief “to all poor emigrants and travelers coming to St. Louis on their way to settle in the West.” In the twentieth century, this fund, after some legal battles, was used to establish a Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>5</sup>

These early efforts at travelers' aid were primarily, though not always, conducted on a religious and ethnic basis. Kimble does not directly indicate the sex of the members of the various organizations described above, but most likely they were male-led, as is certainly suggested in the case of the Loyal Sons of St. Patrick. In terms of aid recipients, the various associations helped both men and women and provided them with a diverse array of services, such as assistance with financial, legal and medical matters, help in continuing their journey westward, and recommendations concerning lodging. Moral protection of travelers, in particular female travelers, was not a significant issue at this time.

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 9, n. 2. Roger Baldwin, “Old Orders – New Needs: How the St. Louis Mullanphy Fund for Emigrants and Travelers was Rescued from the ‘Dead-Hand,’” *The Survey* 34:5 (May 1, 1915), pp. 114-15. Howard L. Conard, *Encyclopedia of the History of Missouri*, Vol. 4 (New York: Haldeman, Conard, and Co., 1901), pp. 504-5.

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In the late nineteenth century, the direction of travelers' aid was primarily shaped by elite female activists in England and the United States who were part of a religiously inspired movement that advocated for moral reform of industrialized society through a multi-faceted war on vice, namely alcoholism and prostitution.<sup>6</sup> Travelers' aid proponents targeted the latter by attempting to protect single, often working-class, female travelers from suspicious people and circumstances that might lead them into prostitution. The most notorious "sexual danger"<sup>7</sup> that travelers faced was that of "white slavery," which was commonly defined as the coercion of European and Euro-American ("white") women into prostitution.<sup>8</sup> However, any threat to the traveler's respectability (i.e, her perceived chastity) needed to be eliminated since once it was tarnished, she did not have far to fall. Through this constant concern for single, female travelers' morality and respectability, travelers' aid sought to define and reproduce what Richard Phillips has called the "heteronormative" moral center of society.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Moral reform was synonymous with campaigns for "social purity." The movement included such well-known organizations as the National Vigilance Association, Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the Young Women's Christian Association. Travelers' aid was most closely associated with the latter.

<sup>7</sup> For more on the gendered discourse of "sexual danger" and the reform efforts that it spawned, including travelers' aid, see Marion Horan, "Trafficking in Danger: Working-Class Women and Narratives of Sexual Danger in English and United States Anti-Prostitution Campaigns, 1875-1914" (Ph.D. diss., Binghamton University, 2006). Also see Judith Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in London* (London: Virago, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> In this context, Jewish victims were generally considered "white."

<sup>9</sup> Phillips, "Unsexy Geographies: Heterosexuality, Respectability, and the Travelers' Aid Society," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 5:2 (2006): 163-90. Victoria Woodhull and other "sex radicals" offered an alternative model of reform that rejected "moral purity" as the primary justification for women's involvement in public life and as a solution to social problems. Like anti-vice campaigners, Woodhull too was against "sexual slavery." Although for her, patriarchal constructions of respectability and marriage were its causes, not prostitution. Amanda Frisken, *Victoria Woodhull's Sexual Revolution: Political Theater and the Popular Press in Nineteenth-Century America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 31, 38.



## Travelers' Aid in England, 1880-1900

During this phase of travelers' aid, British reformers took the lead. The London Travelers' Aid Society and the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women, both founded in 1885, were instrumental in defining the scope of the work and for establishing the train station and seaport as the primary sites where TA work occurred. Women played leading roles in both societies, which marked a shift from the earlier travelers' aid work that was dominated by men.

In the early 1880s, prior to the advent of the London Travelers' Aid Society, two women shaped the work. Their individual efforts on behalf of travelers gave impetus to organizations to more aggressively focus on travelers' aid. Worried about the moral conditions aboard steamships, Charlotte Grace O'Brien founded "an order of 'ocean nuns' to protect and assist Irish emigrants, especially women, on shipboard." She also traveled to America to investigate conditions there and to learn how to better protect Irish women entering American ports.<sup>10</sup> In 1881, a woman from Liverpool, Mrs. Stephen Menzies, undertook an extensive letter writing campaign, sending out written warnings to young English working-class women to be mindful of fraudulent advertisements for high paying work in Europe. It was her fear that women would be lured to the Continent under false pretensions and possibly coerced into prostitution.<sup>11</sup> Menzies' campaign caught the attention of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA or YW) in London, which decided to assist her in distributing the warnings. Inspired by Menzies, as well as

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<sup>10</sup> "History," *National Travelers Aid Society Bulletin* 1:2 (Feb.-April 1918), p. 10. The *National Travelers Aid Society Bulletin* is hereafter referred to as the *Bulletin*.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* In the 1870s and early 1880s, anti-prostitution campaigners worked vigorously to expose cases of young English women imprisoned as "white slaves" in Continental brothels, most notably in Brussels. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 15-16 and Ch. 3.

by a German TA activist Countess Schack, the YWCA began its own travelers' aid work and soon became the driving force behind the creation of the London Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>12</sup>

### *The London Travelers' Aid Society*

By the mid-1880s, the YWCA had expanded its work on behalf of travelers, meeting young working-class women by appointment at train stations, which were thought "infested with men and women in whose hands [girls fall] an easy prey."<sup>13</sup> Under the auspices of its newly created Travelers' Aid Department, the YWCA began hanging placards in stations that advertised their lodging house and those of like organizations. The placards also publicized the YW's appointment service. Other women's organizations, such as the Girls' Friendly Society and the Female Passengers' Aid Society, soon began providing similar services at stations.<sup>14</sup> Spurred on by the July 1885 publication of W. T. Stead's sensational exposé on child prostitution,<sup>15</sup> the YWCA called a meeting of all the London groups currently providing travelers' aid, as well as those with an interest in the work, for the purposes of centralizing and further defining the field of travelers' aid.<sup>16</sup> The meeting resulted in the creation of the London

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<sup>12</sup> "History," p. 10. YWCA leadership met Schack at an 1881 meeting in London. On Schack, see Phillips, "Unsexy Geographies," p. 181.

<sup>13</sup> London Travelers' Aid Society quoted in Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," p. 196.

<sup>14</sup> Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," p. 196. Elizabeth Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work among Young Women, 1866-1916: A History of Young Women's Christian Associations in the United States of America* (New York: National Board of the YWCA, 1916), p. 101. "History: London," *Bulletin* 1:5 (Sept. 1918), p. 9. Orin Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society in America: Principles and Methods* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1917), p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> W. T. Stead, "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon," which appeared as a series of articles in the London *Pall Mall Gazette* in July 1885. Stead's series has recently been reprinted as W. T. Stead and Antony E. Simpson, *The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon: The Report of the Secret Commission* (Lambertville: True Bill Press, 2007). Also see Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 144-8 and Deborah Gorham, "The 'Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon' Re-examined: Child Prostitution and the Idea of Childhood in Late-Victorian England," *Victorian Studies* 21 (Spring 1978): 353-79.

<sup>16</sup> Among those attending the meeting were the Girls' Friendly Society, the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Girls, the Society for the Suppression of Traffic in Young Girls, the Moral Reform Union, the Bible

Travelers' Aid Committee, which soon became the London Travelers' Aid Society (London TAS). Lady Frances Balfour, a Liberal aristocrat and suffragist, was the TAS's first president and the YWCA its most influential member organization.<sup>17</sup>

Class, gender, and religious differences shaped the structure and mission of the London TAS. It was taken for granted that elite British women (referred to as "ladies") would be the ideologists, leaders and volunteers, while working women ("girls") the primary clients.<sup>18</sup> The group's mission was defined as follows: "First, meeting girls by appointment and housing them; second, placing placards in every station; third, employment of one or more workers to meet trains and offer help to girls; fourth, securing an investigated list of lodgings; fifth, undertaking similar protection for girls at docks."<sup>19</sup> Additionally, an element of the London TAS's platform was the promotion of "Women's Rights," which it considered to be "the raising of the whole standard of womanhood" and the protection of women's civil liberties.<sup>20</sup> In terms of religion, the leading role of the YWCA gave the TAS an obvious Christian feel, though as time went on,

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Woman's Mission, and the National Vigilance Association. The latter was a male-dominated organization, led by W. A. Coote, that in 1904 sponsored the creation of the International Guild of Service for Women, a group that provided TA services that rivaled those of the London TAS. Another participant was the Union Internationale des Aimes de la Jeune Fille, which was based in Switzerland. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 197, 204-5. "History: London," p. 9. "History," p. 10. Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> Balfour was also affiliated with the aforementioned Passengers' Aid Society. "History: London," p. 9. Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, p. 102. Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 27-8. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," p. 202, n. 447. For a biographical profile of Balfour, see the chapter entitled "Lady Frances Balfour: The Radical Aristocrat," in William Knox, *Lives of Scottish Women: Women and Scottish Society, 1800-1980* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), pp. 98-116.

<sup>18</sup> There was less of a class-gap between clients and paid TA agents, the latter probably coming from literate working-class families. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 198-9. Phillips, "Unsexy Geographies," pp. 169-70. Phillips comments that the use of the diminutive category "girls" to describe working-class travelers was condescending and divorced from reality since "few of those in question were less than sixteen, in a society in which childhood, at least for the working classes, had ended long before." *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>19</sup> "History: London," p. 9.

<sup>20</sup> London TAS quoted in Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," p. 198. Phillips, "Unsexy Geographies," p. 172. The London TAS understood coerced prostitution as a violation of women's civil liberties. By holding this position, the TAS had much in common with the feminist Ladies National Association, which defended prostitutes' rights against coercive state regulation.

the TAS included a Jewish organization, discouraged missionary work, and began to assist women of “all religions and none.”<sup>21</sup>

To promote its work to the public, particularly wealthy donors and potential female clients, the TAS printed thousands of copies of its Annual Reports and informational placards that were posted at train stations and on steamships. One placard warned girls “not to accept offers of help from men or women who are unknown to them... Such persons are often the agents of evilly disposed people, whose object is to entice young girls to their ruin.”<sup>22</sup> The London TAS also used church networks to communicate with young women leaving from the countryside for the city and also placed travel advisories in local newspapers. In the early years the number of girls helped was small (forty two by February, 1886). However, the numbers grew steadily and, by the twentieth century, TAS records showed thousands of travelers helped annually in and around London.<sup>23</sup>

### *The Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women*

Another prominent organization engaged in TA work in London was the Jewish Association for the Protection of Girls and Women (JAPGW),<sup>24</sup> which was founded in 1885 and counted two members of the famous Rothschild banking family among its leading officers: Lady

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<sup>21</sup> Phillips, “Unsexy Geographies,” pp. 173-4.

<sup>22</sup> London TAS quoted in Horan, “Trafficking in Danger,” p. 201.

<sup>23</sup> 2,180 women were helped in 1897, 3,677 in 1904, and 4,193 in 1905. Horan, “Trafficking in Danger,” pp. 201, 203.

<sup>24</sup> The influential role of the JAPGW in travelers’ aid history is downplayed by the National Association of Travelers’ Aid Societies in favor of narratives that stress the initiatives of Christian organizations (see for example “Chronological Outline,” p. 9 and Baker, *Travelers’ Aid Society*, pp. 27-8). The JAPGW does at least receive one line of text in “History: London,” p. 9. The role of Jewish-American women is given slightly more attention in the official narratives (see the below section on the National Council of Jewish Women).

Rothschild as president and her sister, Constance Battersea, as Honourable Secretary.<sup>25</sup> The JAPGW's mission was broad and, according to Marion Horan, incorporated a variety of services that were intended to "prevent Jewish women from entering sexual relationships or occupations" and to rehabilitate those who had "fallen." Among the preventative services was travelers' aid and the JAPGW became a member organization of the London TAS in 1886.<sup>26</sup>

The work of the JAPGW was perhaps more urgent than that of the Christian-identified members of the London TAS. For example, Jewish women in need could be turned away by the numerous Christian rescue and preventative institutions, unless they promised to convert. In her *Reminiscences*, JAPGW founding member Constance Battersea recorded a prominent example of two Jewish prostitutes who wished to enter a rescue Home, but found that they had no viable options. They refused to enter a Christian Home because they knew that it would require them to "give up our own faith," yet there was no equivalent Jewish Home to which they could turn.<sup>27</sup> Likewise, prior to the JAPGW's founding, Jewish travelers who were in need of assistance had few options unless they too vowed to convert to Christianity.

Further motivation for the creation of the JAPGW came from Jewish elites' unease with the growing number of poor eastern European Jewish immigrants in London's East End, who were perceived as having strong connections to prostitution and white slavery. The women of the JAPGW did not want the bad reputation of eastern European Jews to extend to them, thereby

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<sup>25</sup> Battersea was a prominent moral reformer and temperance activist who was married to a Liberal parliamentarian, Baron Cyril Battersea. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," p. 208. Edward Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice: The Jewish Fight against White Slavery, 1870-1939* (New York: Schocken Books, 1983), pp. 236-7. On the Rothschilds, see Niall Ferguson, *The House of Rothschild: The World's Banker, 1849-1998* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998).

<sup>26</sup> Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 206, 208. "History: London," pp. 9-10.

<sup>27</sup> Constance Battersea, *Reminiscences* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1922), pp. 419-20. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," p. 207.

jeopardizing their already tenuous middle-class status in an environment that was often anti-Semitic. Therefore, the JAPGW's preventative work, such as travelers' aid, was inextricably linked to protecting the reputation and position of the established Jewish bourgeoisie.<sup>28</sup>

The travelers' aid work undertaken by the JAPGW was gendered in a different way than that of the larger umbrella organization, the London TAS. Both groups had a core of female members and leaders whose gender was central to framing their mission. However, unlike in the TAS, men played important roles within the JA and gender was no less central to defining their responsibilities. Their role can be understood as a type of paternalism; Jewish men believed that they should be involved in protecting their "daughters" (the travelers), while supervising their "wives" (JAPGW leaders).<sup>29</sup> The JAPGW's first paid station agent was a man, a Mr. Reichman, whose task it was to assist Jewish women with securing safe accommodations. Reichman stayed at this job until 1901 even though his performance rarely satisfied the women of the JAPGW.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, in 1890 a Gentlemen's Committee was created to oversee the JAPGW's TA service with the goal of making it more "efficient and effective." The core membership of the JA remained female, but Jewish men increasingly influenced its administrative and financial workings,<sup>31</sup> a gendered structure that was found in the United States as well, most notably in the Travelers' Aid Society of New York after 1910.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 208-9. Here, Horan relies on Laura Marks, "Jewish women and Jewish prostitution in the East End of London," *The Jewish Quarterly* 34:2 (1987), pp. 6-13. Also see Bristow, *Prostitution and Prejudice*, pp. 235, 239-40.

<sup>29</sup> This interpretation is mine. In some instances, the men involved were the actual husbands of JAPGW members.

<sup>30</sup> The JAPGW also helped Christian women if another TAS organization was unavailable. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 206, 211 and 211, n. 482.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209-11.

<sup>32</sup> Founded by women in 1907, the Travelers' Aid Society of New York later included both men and women with the former occupying the highest official positions.

## Travelers' Aid in the United States, 1885-1907

Shortly after the Civil War, young, single women began entering American cities in large numbers to find work in factories and workshops. Many observers alleged that these women, “adrift” in the city without the traditional protection of parents and home, put themselves at great moral and physical risk. In response, middle- and upper-class women established institutions such as the Young Women’s Christian Association and the Working Girls Society to act as “surrogate families” to this new industrial working-class.<sup>33</sup> Women migrating for employment in traditionally feminine occupations, such as domestic servitude, were also subject to reformers’ intervention. Reformers were not concerned about the respectability of servants’ work and living arrangements, as they were with factory workers, but with the moral danger that domestics faced immediately upon arriving in the city. For servants, as well as for “women adrift,” white slavers seeking to lure them into prostitution posed the greatest threat, though less sensational forms of criminal activity also raised concerns. Therefore, there needed to be some service, like travelers’ aid, that safely guided female migrants away from “danger zones” and to friends, family, employers, or proper institutions like the YWCA.<sup>34</sup> To establish travelers’ aid in the United States, proponents familiarized themselves with the London model and attempted to introduce elements of it into American cities.

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<sup>33</sup> Horan, “Trafficking in Danger,” pp. 5, 215-16. Lynn Weiner, *From Working Girl to Working Mother: The Female Labor Force in the United States, 1820-1980* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), pp. 47-51. Joanne Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift: Independent Wage Earners in Chicago, 1880-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 82-6. Nina Mjagkij and Margaret Spratt, “Introduction,” in *Men and Women Adrift: The YMCA and YWCA in the City*, eds. Mjagkij and Spratt (New York: NYU Press, 1997), p. 17. Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), pp. 169-77.

<sup>34</sup>On travelers’ aid in danger zones, see Barbara Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1987), p. 75. Also see Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and Silent Cinema* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), pp. 82-3.

*Developments in New York and Boston*

New York City and Boston were central sites in the development of travelers' aid in the late nineteenth century United States. Two Quakers from Brooklyn, William Collins and Edward Prior, are reported to have sponsored the first TA worker in North America, Etta Clark. They were motivated to do so after reading newspaper reports about "the traps and snares set for inexperienced girls who came to the city" and by having observed travelers' aid work in London.<sup>35</sup> Collins and Prior arranged for Clark's work to be overseen by the New York Bible and Fruit Mission, an organization known for its wide-ranging missionary services to hospital patients and nurses. In October of 1885, the same month in which the London TAS was founded, Etta Clark began her tenure in New York.<sup>36</sup>

Interviewed in 1915, Clark recalled her early struggles in establishing travelers' aid. Her recollection suggests that London-like TA methods were not immediately put into place in New York; rather, they evolved from a period of trial and error. Initially, her approach was to sit in the waiting room of Grand Central Depot and hope that "girls" would approach her for help. When this method proved ineffective, "small cards, bearing the worker's name, address and a brief outline of the work, were printed and distributed amongst station officials, policemen, social and religious organizations, and others who might cooperate." Soon, the recipients of these cards began calling Clark if they encountered travelers in "perplexing situations."

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<sup>35</sup> Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, p. 19. Kimble, *Social Work with Travelers*, p. 10, n.2. "History: New York," *Bulletin* 1:5 (Sept. 1918), p. 9. In London, Collins and Prior probably witnessed the TA work of the YWCA and/or the Passengers' Aid Society. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," p. 217.

<sup>36</sup> At least by 1887, the London TAS was aware of Etta Clark's travelers' aid work in New York City and viewed her presence as further proof of a burgeoning international Travelers' Aid movement that also included Halifax, Brussels, Geneva, Copenhagen, Adelaide (South Australia) and New Zealand. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 217-18, n. 500. On the Bible and Fruit Mission, see "A Mission Coffee House," *New York Times*, 1 August 1897, p. 10.



Travelers too started to call or write in advance to arrange a meeting with her, and thus “appointment work” was established in New York.<sup>37</sup>

In the summer of 1887, two years after Clark began her tenure at Grand Central, two workers also started in Boston. The Boston YWCA<sup>38</sup> arranged for Mary Blodgett, a graduate of Mount Holyoke College, to meet the tide of “girls” entering the city seeking domestic service work. Blodgett’s home base was the city’s docks.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, the Girls’ Friendly Society of the Episcopal Church collaborated with a prominent reverend, Edward Osborne, to sponsor a second worker at the city’s train stations. Osborne was familiar with travelers’ aid in England and had urged the Girls’ Friendly Society to begin a similar service. Putting an interesting twist on the London approach, the Girls’ Friendly Society instructed their worker, a Mrs. Graves, to “travel each day on the second-class cars coming from the Provinces, and tender all the aid and assistance possible to young strangers.” Graves’s trial run aboard the trains was deemed a success and in November of 1887, the Girls’ Friendly Society created a stand-alone women’s organization, the Young Travelers’ Aid Society, to conduct TA work on Boston’s rail network.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Clark made appointments with both citizens and foreigners: the latter were primarily from Norway, Sweden, and Great Britain. “History: New York,” p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> The Boston YWCA’s earliest exposure to travelers’ aid likely was through contact with the London YWCA and Travelers’ Aid Society. After 1887, local YWCAs in Chicago, San Francisco, Kansas City, St. Louis, and New York also developed TA departments. Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, p. 102. “Chronological Outline of Travelers Aid Development,” *Bulletin* 1:1 (Jan. 1918), p. 9. “History: Other Early Work,” *Bulletin* 2:1-3 (Jan.-March 1919), p. 17. Helen Bittar, “The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York, 1870 to 1920” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1979), pp. 137-8.

<sup>39</sup> “History: Boston,” *Bulletin* 2:1-3 (Jan.-March 1919), p. 16. Kimble, *Social Work with Travelers*, p. 10, n. 3. Kimble comments on Blodgett’s strikingly “modern” TA methods: “It was not only in the charity organization societies that case work methods were developed. The preventive aspects of the work, the need of skill in short time contacts, the necessity of respecting individual differences and of working with, not just for, people are mentioned in the reports of the young graduate of Mount Holyoke College.” Horan notes that it was unlikely that the London TAS’s agents were college educated like Boston’s Blodgett. “Trafficking in Danger,” pp. 228-9.

<sup>40</sup> “History: Boston,” pp. 16-17. Parallel to Graves’s work with second class passengers aboard trains, rail companies in the late nineteenth century began to take an active interest in the protection and comfort of unescorted bourgeois women. Some lines, such as the Pennsylvania, had professional chaperones that did work akin to

With two organizations covering the city's rails and docks, travelers' aid in Boston was more extensive than in New York. Official records credit the railway agent, Graves, with assisting over a thousand young women over the course of 1887. In 1891-2, the number grew to four thousand. During a similar period, the YWCA met between 450-500 steamships and helped one to two thousand ocean-line travelers each year.<sup>41</sup>

### *The White Rose Mission and Industrial Association*

In eastern U.S. cities, associations catering to the needs of Jews and African-Americans became involved with travelers' aid for similar reasons as those of the aforementioned Jews in London; they viewed travelers' aid as a useful tool in their efforts to improve their social position and dispel negative stereotypes affecting their communities. One such group was the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association in New York City, founded by African-American reformer Victoria Earle Matthews at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup>

Matthews was born in Fort Valley, GA in 1861. Her mother was a slave and her father a white slave owner. Roughly nine years after the Civil War, Matthews's mother moved the family to New York City where Matthews went to public school and eventually became a writer and a clubwoman.<sup>43</sup> As a clubwoman, Matthews was an adherent of Booker T. Washington's

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Graves's in an effort to increase the respectability of rail travel. In general, railroads took increasing responsibility for the safety and comfort of their onboard passengers, while TA aboard trains failed to catch on. Amy Richter, *Home on the Rails: Women, the Railroad, and the Rise of Public Domesticity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2005), pp. 112-14. Kirby, *Parallel Tracks*, pp. 85, 89.

<sup>41</sup> Of the travelers helped by the YWCA, only a few were immigrants. Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp 230-1.

<sup>42</sup> Despite being a widely known provider of travelers' aid with ties to the Travelers' Aid Society of New York and its founder Grace Dodge, the White Rose Mission was excluded from the National Travelers' Aid Society's account of TA history that was published in the *Bulletin*.

<sup>43</sup> For further biographical information on Matthews, see her obituary in *New York Age*, 14 March 1907, p. 6 and Jean Blackwell Hutson, "Victoria Earle Matthews," in *Notable American Women*, Vol. II, eds. James T. Edwards, et al. (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 510-11.

accommodationist approach to racial uplift, which emphasized industrial education, instead of equal civil and political rights, as the key to African-American progress in the post-Civil War era. At Washington's Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, industrial education focused on training blacks for practical careers in farming, craftwork, teaching, small business ownership, and, for women, domestic service and nursing. It also aimed at shaping their moral behavior through instruction and drill that stressed the Protestant values of cleanliness, industriousness, abstinence, and thrift.<sup>44</sup>

Washington and other like-minded black and white reformers saw the rural South, where blacks could own "a bit of land... to wrest a living from," as the ideal environment. In turn, African-Americans were warned to avoid cities, which were portrayed as hotbeds of "crime and pauperism, intemperance and vice, and industrial and class conflict."<sup>45</sup> Despite reformers' warnings, southern blacks, pessimistic about their future in the racist South, migrated to northern urban cities by the thousands beginning in the 1890s. The White Rose was Victoria Matthews' attempt to forestall the likely ruin of these new urban migrants, in particular the women amongst them, by adapting Washington's southern-based strategy for racial improvement to conditions in

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<sup>44</sup> Floris Cash, *African American Women and Social Action: The Clubwomen and Volunteerism from Jim Crow to the New Deal, 1896-1936* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), pp. 92-4. Louis R. Harlan, "Booker T. Washington and the Politics of Accommodation," in Harlan, *Booker T. Washington in Perspective: Essays of Louis R. Harlan*, ed. Raymond Smock (Jackson, MI: University Press of Mississippi, 1988), pp. 164-5. Harlan, "Booker T. Washington in Biographical Perspective," in Harlan, *Booker T. Washington*, pp. 13, 22. Ralph Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White: American Racial Reform, 1885-1912* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 134, 143. Jacqueline M. Moore, *Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois and the Struggle for Racial Uplift* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 2003), Ch. 2. A recent addition to the literature on Washington is Michael Boston, *The Business Strategy of Booker T. Washington: Its Development and Implementation* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010).

<sup>45</sup> The quotes are from "The Negro in New York," *Southern Workman* 31:6 (June 1902), p. 308 and Luker, *Social Gospel*, p. 160. Also see Marcy Sacks, *Before Harlem: The Black Experience in New York City Before World War I* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), pp. 58-9; Moore, *Booker T. Washington*, p. xvi; and Harlan, "Booker T. Washington in Biographical Perspective," p. 6.

New York City.<sup>46</sup> In so doing, she sought to elevate black womanhood away from its negative association with promiscuity and prostitution and toward a feminine respectability based on virtuousness and thrift.<sup>47</sup>

Matthews had firsthand knowledge of the dangers that southern black women faced as they attempted to come North. After attending the Congress of Colored Women of the United States at the famous 1895 Atlanta Exposition, she embarked on an extensive tour of the South to investigate the conditions of Southern women. During her travels, she uncovered the practice by which employment agencies lured “good-looking Afro-American” girls to the North through “glowing accounts of life in New York” and promises of “honorable positions in respectable families.” All was not what it seemed however, and Matthews found that upon arrival, the young women were forced into prostitution.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the victims of *white* slavery were not only young, innocent white women as was commonly claimed.

Motivated by her findings and prompted by the New York minister H. G. Miller, Matthews left the South for New York in order to do missionary work amongst its black population, which soon resulted in the establishment of the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association in February of 1897.<sup>49</sup> The White Rose was run as a “Christian, industrial,

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<sup>46</sup> Washington later wrote of the White Rose: “This is one of the places of good works in which I have been most deeply interested. It represents practical and not imaginary needs. The objects of the work... are the protection of the Negro girls coming here from the South, seeing to it that they get proper employment and that they are taught the proper habits of labor and its saving power... The simple needs of the South are gone...” This quote appears on the front cover of the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association’s *Annual Report* for the years 1907 and 1911.

<sup>47</sup> Cash, *African American Women and Social Action*, pp. 92-3, 97. Sacks, *Before Harlem*, pp. 52-3, 69-70.

<sup>48</sup> Matthews, 1897, quoted in Steve Kramer, “Uplifting our ‘Downtrodden Sisterhood’: Victoria Earle Matthews and New York City’s White Rose Mission, 1897-1907,” *The Journal of African American History* 91:3 (Summer 2006), p. 246. On Matthews’ southern journey, see Hutson, “Victoria Earle Matthews,” p. 511.

<sup>49</sup> Hallie Q. Brown, *Homespun Heroines and Other Women of Distinction*, 1926 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 211-12. Kramer, “Uplifting our ‘Downtrodden Sisterhood,’” pp. 247-8. Matthew’s missionary work and her later establishment of a “Mission” should be understood in the context of the social gospel movement,

nonsectarian” settlement house in a donated five-room apartment flat in a crowded uptown neighborhood on the east side known as “The Hollow.”<sup>50</sup> Matthews’s long-term goal, as expressed in a letter to Booker T. Washington, was for the White Rose to offer temporary shelter, industrial training, and job placement to black women arriving from the South, who were generally excluded from the social services that were available to their white counterparts. Until a “good sized house” could be secured for this purpose however, the White Rose focused instead on serving the settled local community.<sup>51</sup>

To the women of “The Hollow” and their children, Matthews and her cohort of black female volunteers provided a range of services. They offered training for domestic service work through classes in cooking, sewing, and dressmaking. For the children, Alice Ruth Moore, future Mrs. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, ran a kindergarten. To foster a positive “race consciousness,” Matthews and Moore taught “race” history and literature classes that used material from the White Rose’s library, which housed one of the era’s most extensive collections of books on African-American culture and history.<sup>52</sup>

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which advocated for a “practical” Christian approach to solving pressing social problems like racism and urban vice. See Luker, *Social Gospel*, Chs. 6 and 7.

<sup>50</sup> Since most Southern blacks by the end of the nineteenth century were settling in the San Juan district of the upper west side, it is unclear what motivated Matthews to establish the White Rose on the east side. Certificate of Incorporation of the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association, 24 August 1898, p. 1, in The White Rose Mission and Industrial Association Collection, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library (hereafter, The White Rose Collection). “White Rose Mission Settlement,” *New York Evening Post*, reprinted in the invitation “Matinee Musicale,” 1910, p. 4, in The White Rose Collection. This article is also reprinted in *New York Age*, 6 July 1905, p. 6. Lasalle Best, “History of the White Rose Mission and Industrial Association,” Unpublished Research Paper, 1938, p. 1, on Microfilm Reel 3 of the WPA Writers Project, Negroes of New York: Negro Organizations in New York City, Schomburg Center.

<sup>51</sup> Matthews to Washington, 1898, in Kramer, “Uplifting our ‘Downtrodden Sisterhood,’” p. 247. On the lack of services available to black migrant women as compared to white women, see “To Protect Negro Girls,” *Public Opinion* 32:7 (February 1902), p. 206 and Dorothy Salem, *To Better Our World: Black Women in Organized Reform, 1890-1920* (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing Inc., 1990), p. 90.

<sup>52</sup> Best, “History of the White Rose Mission,” pp. 1-2. Brown, *Homespun Heroines*, pp. 212-13. Cash, *African American Women and Social Action*, p. 94. Salem, *To Better Our World*, pp. 90-1. On the White Rose’s library, see “White Rose Mission Settlement,” p. 4 and *New York Age*, 6 July 1905, p. 6.

Sometime after 1900, Matthews instituted travelers' aid work at the White Rose as part of her long-term goal of protecting black migrants. Initially conducted on an informal basis, by 1903 Travelers' Aid had become an official department with an agent, Matthews's sister Anna Rich, stationed at Pier 26 to meet incoming steamers. Later, an agent was placed at the docks in Norfolk, Virginia so that service could be coordinated between Virginia and New York on the Old Dominion Line.<sup>53</sup> This type of coordination between locales later became a defining feature of the white-led Travelers' Aid Society of New York, whose founder, Grace Dodge, had ties to the White Rose.<sup>54</sup>

At her post, Anna Rich met young "Negro girls" who faced a variety of obstacles upon their arrival to New York. A report from 1906 tells of an "irresponsible, destitute girl who had left her simple, country home, 'on an [employment] agent's ticket,' and whose money had given out before she reached New York." The report continues, "Bewildered by the sights and sounds of a great, busy city, she is ready to go with the first man or woman who says a kind word to her – ready to go, too often, alas, unwittingly to degradation and shame."<sup>55</sup> There are additional

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<sup>53</sup> Floris Cash claims that the TA department was established in 1905, but other sources suggest it was earlier. The White Rose never settled on an official name for the department. In official documents it is alternately referred to as Traveler's Aid, Travelers' Aid (note position of apostrophe), and White Rose Traveler's Aid Society. I refer to the department as Travelers' Aid. Cash, *African American Women and Social Action*, pp. 95-7. Brown, *Homespun Heroines*, pp. 213-14. Best, "History of the White Rose Mission," p. 3. Kramer, "Uplifting our 'Downtrodden Sisterhood,'" p. 251. The Old Dominion Line linked Hampton, Old Point Comfort, Norfolk, and Richmond, Virginia to New York City. A fleet of "magnificent steamers," including the Princess Anne, shipped out daily for the city. See the Old Dominion Line's ad in *Southern Workman* 27: 8 (August 1898), p. 168.

<sup>54</sup> Like Booker T. Washington, Matthews had numerous white benefactors, including Grace Dodge. See "Sale at White Rose Home," *New-York Tribune*, 5 June 1906, Of Interest to Women Section, p. 11 and White Rose Mission, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 11-12. The Annual Reports are found in the Rare Books Collection of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

<sup>55</sup> White Rose Mission, *Report of the White Rose Home for the Summer of 1906*, p. 1, in The White Rose Collection. Rich authored the section of this report called "Travelers' Aid Work," which is a narrative of her work over the course of one summer day. A similar depiction of black women duped by employment agents also appeared in a 1905 newspaper article that was circulated by the White Rose: "[Southern young colored women] almost invariably come under contract with an employment agent who engages to place them in domestic service at a stated wage. The first month's wage, and sometimes the first two months' wage, is to be forfeited to the agent. How many girls

stories of stranded girls “in tears” whose friends or relatives failed to meet them or who missed rail connections. It was Rich’s job to ensure that girls such as these reached their destinations, met their friends or family, or made their transfers unscathed. If she determined that this was unlikely, the girls would be brought to the White Rose’s new home at 217 East 86<sup>th</sup> Street. Rich did not only help young, single girls, but generally anyone who she encountered who seemed in need, such as the confused mother with her three kids who was trying to get to Brooklyn. In this case, Rich accompanied the mother to Brooklyn herself and did not return to the White Rose until 2am.<sup>56</sup>

Some elements of Rich’s job resembled that of a police officer. She routinely dealt with “imposters, cabmen and local expressmen,” who were known to charge excessive fees “from \$1.00 to \$3.00 to carry a trunk from Pier 26 to the foot of East 34<sup>th</sup> Street.” Rich relates how she often tracked down these men to demand that they return a portion of the excessive charge to travelers, which apparently she did with some success. Later, this portion of her job was assumed by an actual policeman.<sup>57</sup> Rich did not always have success in protecting travelers as was the case when an “Agent, a vile-looking old man, plainly under the influence of drink, took away four young girls, not out of their teens.”<sup>58</sup> In terms of numbers, Rich met 500 steamers and helped 250 girls on a budget of sixty dollars in 1907. She took fifty-seven of them to the White Rose Home and assisted sixty-five in finding their “Friends and Relatives.”<sup>59</sup> Undoubtedly,

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go adrift on account of these agreements no one knows.” See “White Rose Mission Settlement,” p. 4 and *New York Age*, 6 July 1905, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> White Rose Mission, *Report for the Summer of 1906*, pp. 1, 3-4.

<sup>57</sup> White Rose Mission, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 6. As this example shows, travelers’ aid not only sought to prevent crimes involving sexual danger, but petty thefts as well.

<sup>58</sup> White Rose Mission, *Report for the Summer of 1906*, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> White Rose Mission, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 7-8.

there were numerous others who did not cross her path and ultimately had to fend for themselves in the big city.

### *The National Council of Jewish Women*

The National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) was formed in 1893 owing to much of the same impulses that drove its sister group in London. It sought to ensure that the behavior of recent Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe, mainly Russia, did not damage the reputation of the already established Jewish-American community.<sup>60</sup> It was also a reaction to rumors that Jews were leaders of an international white slavery ring that preyed on Jewish and Christian women. By organizing against vice, Jewish leaders could claim that if such a conspiracy existed, it was being combated and should not be used to smear the wider Jewish community.<sup>61</sup> Through their actions, the women of the NCJW shaped the gendered terms by which urban citizenship for immigrant women was defined, while carving out a niche for themselves where they could publicly demonstrate their own elite citizenship and “whiteness.”<sup>62</sup>

The NCJW initiated a campaign to “Americanize” the immigrant woman’s foreign culture, while also protecting her from people or circumstances that might compromise her

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<sup>60</sup> Horan, “Trafficking in Danger,” pp. 222-3. Val Marie Johnson, “Protection, Virtue, and the ‘Power to Detain’: The Moral Citizenship of Jewish Women in New York City, 1890-1920,” *Journal of Urban History* 31:5 (July 2005), p. 661. “History: Other Early Work,” p. 17. Bertha McCall, *History of the National Travelers Aid Association, 1911-1948* (New York, 1950), p. 2. Numerous other Jewish-American welfare organizations, such as the Educational Alliance and the National Desertion Bureau, were also motivated by a desire to defend their community’s reputation against the influx of Eastern Europeans and the anti-Semitism that typically followed. Anna Igra, *Wives without Husbands: Marriage, Desertion, and Welfare in New York, 1900-1935* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 8-10, 15, 18-19.

<sup>61</sup> David Langum, *Crossing over the Line: Legislating Morality and the Mann Act* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 17-18. Johnson, “Protection, Virtue,” pp. 662-8.

<sup>62</sup> Johnson, “Protection, Virtue,” pp. 656-62. The NCJW’s citizenship project had its counterpart in the work of the male-led National Desertion Bureau, which sought to reconstruct Eastern European Jewish masculinity along the lines of the male breadwinning ideal in order to protect wives from desertion and prepare immigrant men for American citizenship. Igra, *Wives without Husbands*, p. 5 and Ch. 1.



morality. Jewish immigrants who had already crossed the line into immorality were to be appropriately disciplined.<sup>63</sup> As part of this project, the New York branch of the NCJW (New York CJW) instituted travelers' aid at the docks and at Ellis Island in 1903. The New York CJW assisted travelers with their immediate health needs and with finding respectable accommodations. The CJW's work at Ellis Island is noteworthy because they worked with the Federal Government to discipline those new arrivals who were judged "immoral." Consistent with Federal immigration policy, the CJW sought to identify women who were prostitutes, those who were deemed flirtatious, and those who engaged in extra-marital sex. Once identified, these women could be denied entry into the U.S. and returned home. Less threatening women, such as those traveling with improper escorts, were sent to local reformatories. The travelers' aid work described in the preceding pages had its disciplinary aspects, but the New York CJW appears to have had the strongest authority over its clients.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 222, 224-6. "History: Other Early Work," p. 17.

<sup>64</sup> Horan, "Trafficking in Danger," pp. 222-6. Johnson, "Protection, Virtue," pp. 668-70, 676. On federal immigration policy toward immigrants who were guilty of "moral turpitude," see Vincent Cannato, *American Passage: The History of Ellis Island* (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), Ch. 13.

## Chapter 2

### The Travelers' Aid Society of New York, 1903-1910

Chapter Two examines the pre-history, founding, personnel, and work of the Travelers' Aid Society of New York (TAS-NY or TAS), the organization most responsible for the development of "modern," non-sectarian travelers' aid in the early twentieth century United States. I begin by describing the national and local developments that culminated in the creation of the Travelers' Aid Society. This includes a discussion of large-scale travelers' aid at the 1904 and 1905 World's Fairs in St. Louis and Portland, as well as a profile of Grace Hoadley Dodge, an important early leader of efforts to protect and uplift working women in New York City. Next follows an examination of Dodge's Travelers' Aid Committee, the forerunner of the TAS-NY. The Committee established much of the basic principles that would govern travelers' aid until World War I, particularly the philosophy of non-sectarianism.

In 1907, Dodge's Committee was officially incorporated as the Travelers' Aid Society of New York. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to the TAS-NY's personnel and work from 1907 through 1910, the period in which it was a women's organization. Using the categories of gender, class, and religion, I analyze the composition of the TAS's first Board of Directors, which was composed primarily of women from the highest echelon of New York society. A sketch of the Society's first field workers is also presented.

The early twentieth century saw an increased interest in the white slave traffic and I put the TAS's participation in the resulting "panic" into context, describing its discourse on white slavery as moderate in contrast to those which inflamed passions and incited racism. The TAS

took for granted the existence of white slavery, but promoted a level-headed response to it that was based on protecting women's morality through practical social work. Finally, the chapter concludes with a look at how the TAS operated in New York City, as well as internationally and nationally, stressing its reliance on cooperation to carry out its work.

### **Travelers' Aid at the World's Fairs, 1904-5**

For the 1904 and 1905 World's Fairs (International Expositions) in St. Louis and Portland, the YWCA saw travelers' aid as the best antidote to the perceived moral dangers that single women attendees, as well as female grounds' employees, would face.<sup>1</sup> Since visitors were coming from throughout the United States and Europe, national coordination of TA was required. A special committee, which included future TAS-NY founder Grace Dodge as its vice president, was placed in charge of developing a "plan of organization" for national travelers' aid work. The committee's final report was the subject of much discussion at the International Board of the YWCA's 1903 Conference and led to resolutions that urged every local YWCA to create a Travelers' Aid Department with its own director and corps of agents. The resolutions also promoted the compiling of a national directory of YWCAs that provided lodging to travelers, the creation of a standard identification badge to be worn by agents and travelers, and the writing of a national body of TA literature to be used for training and publicity.<sup>2</sup>

The first serious test of these resolutions came during the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis.<sup>3</sup> To provide travelers' aid at the fair, the International Board of the

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, pp. 199-200.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200-1. Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York," p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> On the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, see James Gilbert, *Whose Fair?: Experience, Memory, and the History of the Great St. Louis Exposition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). Other than a brief mention of elite women's informal duties, such as hosting visiting celebrities, Gilbert writes little on their work during the fair (pp. 154-5).

YWCA created the Exposition Travelers' Aid Committee with Grace Dodge as its chairwoman.<sup>4</sup> To advertise the Committee's services to the visiting public, the YWCA, in conjunction with its auxiliaries throughout the U.S.A., distributed "278,000 leaflets, circulars, placards, and cards... from Canada to the Gulf and from ocean to ocean." Travelers' Aid headquarters in New York and St. Louis received and answered nearly 8,000 letters, presumably sent from travelers looking to arrange assistance in advance of their arrival. To meet this need, over a dozen of the YW's best "train-meeters," outfitted in blue silk badges, were sent to St. Louis to guide and protect single women. Additionally, the YW and cooperating individuals and organizations provided housing to 866 Fair attendees.<sup>5</sup>

For the following year's World's Fair in Portland, the YWCA was determined to include more women's organizations as official partners. The YW assembled a new Exposition Travelers' Aid Committee that included organizations with a history of providing travelers' aid, such as the Girls' Friendly Society of America, the National Council of Jewish Women, the International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons, and the Women's Auxiliary of the American Bible Society. Little has been written about how this committee operated. Wilson, in her history of the YWCA, only comments that it fulfilled an "appalling need" for protective work in Portland. In the fair's aftermath, the International Board reaffirmed its commitment to further developing travelers' aid at the local and national levels.<sup>6</sup> However, the leadership of the travelers' aid movement would soon shift from the International Board of the YWCA to the above-mentioned Grace Dodge and her new Travelers' Aid Society of New York.

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<sup>4</sup> "Fund to Fight Vice," *New-York Tribune*, 22 April 1904, For and About Women Section, p. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, p. 201. The above description of the "train-meeters" is from "Work of the Trained Train-Meeter," *New York Times*, 3 July 1904, Sunday Magazine Section, p. 8.

<sup>6</sup> Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, p. 202. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 2.

## Grace Hoadley Dodge of New York City

Grace Hoadley Dodge, of the prominent Dodge merchant family,<sup>7</sup> was a leader in late nineteenth century efforts to protect and uplift working women through education and practical training. Prior to 1905, Dodge led or co-led a range of institutions dedicated to such ends, such as the Kitchen Garden Association, Industrial Education Association, and Working Girls' Societies.<sup>8</sup> These organizations resulted from Dodge's early penchant for centralizing small-scale and loosely allied efforts at social reform in order to make them more efficient. Here, Dodge was influenced by the New York-based "charity organization" movement (also known as scientific charity) that stressed the systematic management and coordination of the city's charitable institutions in order to more effectively rehabilitate "paupers" and eliminate poverty.<sup>9</sup>

When she was a young woman, Dodge's father, William E. Dodge, had introduced her to one of the leading charity organizers, Louisa Lee Schuyler, whose short- and long-term influence on Dodge proved "enormous." Dodge joined Schuyler's State Charities Aid Association (SCAA) in the late 1870s and was later appointed chairman of its Committee on the Elevation of the Poor in Their Homes.<sup>10</sup> After she left the SCAA in 1886, Dodge continued to apply the

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<sup>7</sup> The Dodge family left England and arrived in Salem, Massachusetts in 1629. They began as middling farmers, but by the nineteenth century one descendent, David Low Dodge, had opened up a small shop in Connecticut. In 1805, he became a partner in the firm of S & H Higginson, "one of the largest importers and jobbers in the nation." Dodge then moved his family to New York City, where he passed his wealth, business acumen, and philanthropic ways to several generations of Dodges. Esther Katz, "Grace Hoadley Dodge: Women and the Emerging Metropolis, 1856-1914" (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1980), pp. 1-18.

<sup>8</sup> For more on Dodge's late nineteenth century reform projects, see Katz, "Grace Hoadley Dodge," Chs. 2-4; Abbie Graham, *Grace H. Dodge: Merchant of Dreams* (New York: The Womans Press, 1926); and David Pivar, *Purity Crusade: Sexual Morality and Social Control, 1868-1900* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1973), pp. 177-8, 227.

<sup>9</sup> On charity organization/scientific charity, see Dawn Greeley, "Beyond Benevolence: Gender, Class, and the Development of Scientific Charity in New York City, 1882-1935" (Ph.D. diss., Stony Brook University, 1995) and Daniel Walkowitz, *Working with Class: Social Workers and the Politics of Middle-Class Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), pp. 33-4.

<sup>10</sup> Katz, "Grace Hoadley Dodge," pp. 42-51. Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, pp. 58-61.

tenets of charity organization, namely the elimination of overlapping services through centralization, throughout her career and they informed her later understanding of travelers' aid in New York City.

Dodge's push for centralization peaked in the early twentieth century when, between the years 1905 and 1907, she helped establish three major organizations: the National Board of the YWCA, the National Vigilance Committee, and the Travelers' Aid Society of New York.<sup>11</sup> Concerning the history of the latter, Dodge's interest in travelers' aid first emerged as a result of her informal ties with the YWCA in the 1880s.<sup>12</sup> Dodge also knew of the TA work being done by the New York-based Bible and Fruit Mission. In the late nineteenth century, she is reported to have worked with its TA agent to arrange for the meeting of a young German girl who was scheduled to arrive in the city from the west.<sup>13</sup> Lastly, Dodge was an early supporter of Victoria Matthews' White Rose Mission and Industrial Association, which began providing TA to African-American women at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>14</sup>

The year 1903 marked a turning point for Dodge in terms of her commitment to travelers' aid in the United States. In the summer, she defended a travelers' aid-related program at Ellis Island that was under attack by the Immigration Commissioner William Williams. The program, initiated at the beginning of the year by the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in

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<sup>11</sup> On the National Board, see Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, pp. 232-48; Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, pp. 217-29; and Katz, "Grace Hoadley Dodge," Ch. 5. The National Vigilance Committee brought together leaders of the social purity and social medicine/hygiene movements to combat prostitution and white slavery. Later, under Dodge's auspices, it merged with several similar national organizations, such as the American Purity Alliance, to form the American Social Hygiene Association. See Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, pp. 216-7; Katz, "Grace Hoadley Dodge," pp. 247-8; Pivar, *Purity Crusade*, p. 244; and "American Purity Alliance," in Ruth Engs, *The Progressive Era's Health Reform Movement: A Historical Dictionary* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2003), pp. 18-20.

<sup>12</sup> Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, pp. 216-17. Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, pp. 216-17.

<sup>13</sup> Orin Baker, "Miss Dodge's Work for Travelers' Aid," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> Brown, *Homespun Heroines*, p. 214.

coordination with President Theodore Roosevelt, required that all immigrant women arriving in first and second-class cabins submit to inspection in order to root out those who had come for “immoral purposes.” Commissioner Williams resented the incursion of the new female “cabin inspectors” onto his turf and moved to have their positions terminated. In support of the WCTU, Dodge boldly wrote to President Roosevelt, urging him to intervene on the program’s behalf.<sup>15</sup>

Also in 1903, Dodge served on the aforementioned International Board of the YWCA’s travelers’ aid committee, which was in charge of developing a national plan of action for the World’s Fairs. At the same time, in New York, she was asked by the Mayor’s Secretary, James Reynolds, to lead an investigation into employment agency corruption, specifically the charge that agencies were placing immigrants and other “unprotected young women” in “immoral resorts.”<sup>16</sup> In response, Dodge formed the Committee on Employment Bureaus and hired Frances Kellor of the College Settlements Association to “study every agency” in the city.<sup>17</sup> Overall, some three hundred agencies were visited, of which sixty were judged guilty of various “abuses” and shut down. Two prison sentences resulted, as well as a 1904 state law that called for stricter licensing of employment agencies.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The National Council of Jewish Women also supported the inspection program because it was similar to their work with steerage class immigrants at Ellis Island described in Chapter One. Dodge’s appeal was ultimately unsuccessful and Williams was allowed to terminate the program (it was later revived). Johnson, “Protection, Virtue,” pp. 670-2, 682, n. 45.

<sup>16</sup> Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, p. 214. Katz, “Grace Hoadley Dodge,” p. 251. Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, p. 216.

<sup>17</sup> Frances Kellor, *Out of Work. A Study of Employment Agencies: Their Treatment of the Unemployed, and Their Influence on Homes and Business* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1905), pp. v-vi. The Committee on Employment Bureaus served under the auspices of the Women’s Municipal League, an organization for which Dodge was the Treasurer. When asked to work for the Committee, Kellor was already in the midst of a major investigation of employment agencies in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Chicago. Her combined findings later appeared in the above book. On Kellor’s investigation, see Ellen Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade: Women Social Scientists and Progressive Reform* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 131-7.

<sup>18</sup> Katz, “Grace Hoadley Dodge,” p. 251. Wilson, *Fifty Years of Association Work*, p. 214. Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, p. 216. David Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene: Women, Prostitution, and the ‘American Plan,’ 1900-1930* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2002), p. 75.

Over the course of the investigation, it likely occurred to Dodge that in addition to legal remedies, a stronger TA movement in the city could also help prevent women from falling victim to corrupt employment agencies. She subsequently proceeded to sponsor a study of travelers' aid in her hometown of New York City. The study revealed that there were too many competing religious organizations providing travelers' aid, such as the YWCA of New York and the Female Auxiliary Bible Society, which resulted in "useless" overlap and overall ineffectiveness.<sup>19</sup> In late 1904, Dodge called together a group of religious- and reform-minded women at her house on Madison Avenue to discuss the need for better-coordinated travelers' aid in the city as well as nationally. Among those in attendance were women from the NCJW, the YWCA, the Girls' Friendly Societies, and an unnamed Catholic organization.<sup>20</sup> At the meeting, Dodge proposed the creation of a central travelers' aid organization in New York City that would be run on a non-sectarian basis. In addition to managing travelers' aid in the city, the proposed society was to coordinate a network of TA organizations across the country in order to ensure the protection of travelers during the entirety of their journey to or from New York.<sup>21</sup>

According to one attendee, Sarah Dickinson of the YWCA, there was an initial lack of consensus among the attendees concerning Dodge's solution. Several, including Dickinson, were uncomfortable with ceding control of their associations' work to one central Travelers' Aid Society. This was especially hard for Dickinson to accept since her organization, the YWCA,

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<sup>19</sup> Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, p. 222. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 3. "History," *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7. The Female Auxiliary Bible Society was heir to the work of the Bible and Fruit Mission described in Chapter One. Since the late nineteenth century, the YWCA of New York had run a Travelers' Aid Department, which did appointment work at train stations and also provided temporary lodging at their West 15<sup>th</sup> Street headquarters. Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York," pp. 137-8. "Work of the Trained Train-Meeter," *New York Times*, 3 July 1904, Sunday Magazine Section, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, p. 222. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 3. Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 20-1. Graham claims that Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant clergymen were also in attendance. However, no other source mentions the presence of men at this initial meeting.

<sup>21</sup> Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, p. 222. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 4.



was arguably the leading provider of travelers' aid in the United States and England. However, by the end of the meeting, the skeptics had been persuaded to give Dodge's proposal a trial run.<sup>22</sup>

### **The Travelers' Aid Committee, 1905-1906**

In May 1905, Dodge and her cohort assembled the Travelers' Aid Committee with Dodge as its chairwoman. The other members were Mrs. Edward Ballard, Mrs. Alida Bliss, Kate Bond, Florence Gillies, Helena Theresa Goessmann, Mrs. Elizabeth Harris, Mrs. Belle Israels, Mrs. Harriet Judson, Julia Lathers, Mrs. Seabury Cone Mastick, Dr. Angenette Parry, Rose Sommerfeld,<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Sophia Ward, Mrs. Alice Warren, and Mrs. Catherine Weston.<sup>24</sup>

The Committee was organized and run on a "non-sectarian" basis, which meant that its members came from the three major religious faiths of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism, but were only supposed to serve on behalf of themselves, not their specific faiths.<sup>25</sup> The Committee's approach to non-sectarianism marked an evolution in the term's meaning. Traditionally, non-sectarian was used to describe organizations, like the YWCA or YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), which subscribed to an evangelical and reform agenda

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<sup>22</sup> Dickinson, 1927, in McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 3-4. Dickinson, née Truslow, was married to the physician Robert L. Dickinson, who later became a renowned women's health expert and birth control advocate. Mr. Dickinson was also a proponent of the therapeutic effects of nature walks and, in 1923, coauthored the *New York Walk Book*. See "Dickinson, Robert Latou" in *Encyclopedia of Birth Control*, ed. Vern Bullough (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2001), p. 98.

<sup>23</sup> Sommerfeld and Israels were the two Jewish members of the Committee. On Sommerfeld, see "Tell of White Slaves," *New-York Tribune*, 26 July 1905, p. 1. On Israels, see below.

<sup>24</sup> "The Travelers' Aid Committee, New York," *Charities* 17:14 (5 Jan. 1907), p. 585. "History," *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7. "History," *Bulletin* 1:7 (Dec. 1918), p. 2. For biographical information on most of these women, see their profiles in "The Board of Directors" section of this chapter.

<sup>25</sup> "History," *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7.

that called for the cooperation of the various mainline Protestant denominations.<sup>26</sup> For example, the YWCA of New York in the 1870s made no distinction between the various Protestant sects in terms of eligibility for membership in its Executive Committee and eligibility for services.

In the early 1880s, the YWCA pushed the envelope on non-sectarianism when it reoriented itself toward “social Christianity” and began to offer some of its services to Catholics and Jews as well. A few Catholics were even included on the YW’s Executive Committee in the early twentieth century, though Jews appear to have been excluded.<sup>27</sup> There were earlier travelers’ aid groups, like the London TAS and Philadelphia Travelers’ Aid Society, which went a step further than the YW and included Jews in their leadership structure. In these instances, Jewish and Christian women acted as representatives of their respective faiths and reform organizations.<sup>28</sup> This was not to be the case in the new Travelers’ Aid Committee, where non-sectarianism required that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews leave their specific religious beliefs and projects at the door, so to speak, in order to foster a universal approach to travelers’ aid.<sup>29</sup>

The task of the Committee was twofold: to investigate the condition of travelers’ aid locally and nationally, and to begin to provide direct TA services in New York at its train stations and piers. The results of both projects would determine whether or not the work needed

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<sup>26</sup> This call for Protestant unity also entailed the formation of ecumenical alliances between the major Protestant churches. Examples include Josiah Strong’s Evangelical Alliance of the late nineteenth century and the Federal Council of Churches of the early twentieth. Charles Lippy, *Pluralism Comes of Age: American Religious Culture in the Twentieth Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), pp. 13, 22.

<sup>27</sup> Bittar, “The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York,” pp. 86-91, 191-3. Social Christianity is synonymous with the social gospel movement.

<sup>28</sup> The Philadelphia Travelers’ Aid Society (PTAS) was founded in 1901 by “a consortium of women’s organizations,” including the NCJW and the YWCA. Horan, “Trafficking in Danger,” p. 232. Grace Kimble calls the PTAS the “first true Travelers’ Aid Society [in America] with community-wide representation.” *Social Work with Travelers*, p. 10.

<sup>29</sup> “History,” *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7. “Non-Sectarian: What Does it Mean?,” *Bulletin* (Feb.-April 1918), p. 7.

to be reformed as Dodge envisioned.<sup>30</sup> For her part, Sarah Dickinson was commissioned to study the issue of “travelers’ aid of nation-wide extent.” She surveyed TA organizations across the country and reported that they craved national leadership to bolster local efforts.<sup>31</sup> Also in regard to national travelers’ aid, Grace Dodge spoke out in favor of Federal involvement. In a speech to the Council of Jewish Women in January 1906, covered by the *Sun* and *Tribune*, she suggested that women’s organizations come together to urge President Roosevelt and the Department of Labor to sponsor TA agents at stations and piers throughout the country. Dodge wanted the proposed Federal agents, like those already working at Ellis Island, to be given significant power to “protect and shelter all homeless and penniless girls, old men, and women.”<sup>32</sup> She also envisioned some sort of partnership between Federal agents and private agents from a future “Travelers’ Aid Society.”<sup>33</sup> Dodge’s call for a Federal travelers’ aid program went unheeded and was not seriously considered again by the TA movement until the Great Depression.

In regard to its direct work in New York City, the Travelers’ Aid Committee assigned three paid female agents to patrol the “two great stations,” Grand Central and Pennsylvania terminals.<sup>34</sup> Although determined to modernize the travelers’ aid movement, the Committee did not intend to abandon TA’s long-standing commitment to the moral protection of young women.

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<sup>30</sup> Dickinson, 1927, in McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 4. Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, p. 222. Baker, *Travelers’ Aid Society*, pp. 21-2.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. Strangely, Dickinson does not appear on the roster of Committee members, so the capacity in which she was serving is unknown. She does not reappear in the records until 1917 when she helped establish the National Travelers’ Aid Society. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 14-15, 19.

<sup>32</sup> “Grace Dodge to Jewish Women,” *The Sun*, 17 Jan. 1906, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> “National Travelers’ Aid,” *New-York Tribune*, 17 Jan. 1906, Of Interest to Women Section, p. 4.

<sup>34</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 3. “History,” *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7. In July, two workers were assigned to Grand Central and in October another was added to Pennsylvania Station. “The Travelers’ Aid Committee, New York,” p. 585.

Thus, its first agents were on the lookout primarily for “women and girls who were traveling alone.” From July 1905 to May 1906, agents helped nearly 800 women and children move from either Grand Central or Pennsylvania Station to some “definite destination” in the city. Double that number was aided solely inside the two stations.<sup>35</sup> The Travelers’ Aid Committee also dealt with women who were lured to the city under false pretenses, not only by employment agencies, but by companies. For example, the *New York Times* reported that in January 1906 the Committee lodged a written complaint against a pseudo-medical firm, the Force of Life Chemical Company, claiming that it had falsely drawn women to the city through advertisements that appeared to promise housing and work in the firm’s “spacious and sumptuous” headquarters.<sup>36</sup>

In keeping with the Committee’s non-sectarian policy, the travelers receiving TA services were Jews and Christians, Catholics and Protestants, and “those of no religion.”<sup>37</sup> What non-sectarianism meant to the Committee in terms of race was never stated explicitly, but the Committee’s priority was clearly the young female traveler who was white or at least had some claim to “whiteness,” like Jews and Catholics. In regard to African-American travelers from the South, the Committee was content to let black associations, like the White Rose Mission, and mixed black-white associations, like Frances Kellor’s newly formed Association for the Protection of Negro Women, handle their specific needs.<sup>38</sup> However, if no other help was

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<sup>35</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>36</sup> “Two of Medical Firm Miss the Police Net,” *New York Times*, 14 January 1906, p. 3. In this article, the Committee is mistakenly credited as the Travelers’ Aid Society, though the latter was not incorporated until 1907.

<sup>37</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 4.

<sup>38</sup> The New York Association for the Protection of Negro Women began its work in 1905, providing travelers’ aid to more than four hundred and fifty black women over the summer. In 1906, the Association merged with a similar organization in Philadelphia to form the National League for the Protection of Colored Women. It was led by Francis Kellor and S. W. Layten, a black woman. See Frances Kellor, “Assisted Emigration from the South: The

available, the Committee's agents would assist black travelers, usually by delivering them to the White Rose Mission for further assistance,<sup>39</sup> a policy that was followed by the Committee's successor, the Travelers' Aid Society of New York.

In April 1906, the Committee took an important first step toward its goal of consolidating the city's TA services. Initially, the Committee had confined its work to the train stations, while the Female Auxiliary Bible Society employed an agent, Esther Gunderson,<sup>40</sup> at the city's piers. To enhance coordination between station and pier, the Committee wished to take over the Bible Society's dock work. The Bible Society agreed and the Committee absorbed its lone worker and added two additional workers to jointly patrol the docks.<sup>41</sup>

### **The Travelers' Aid Society of New York, 1907-1910**

In the fall of 1906, the Committee determined that their trial run had been a success and warranted the establishment of a permanent non-sectarian society in New York City. The process of preparing the incorporation papers, constitution, and by-laws fell to the Committee's secretary, Elizabeth Harris, who was assisted by her brother, the lawyer John Comey. In the meantime, Dodge and other Committee members met with some of the city's leading citizens to

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Women," *Charities* 15:1 (7 Oct. 1905), pp. 13-14 and Judith Weisenfeld, "National League for the Protection of Colored Women," in *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, eds. Jack Salzman, David Lionel Smith, and Cornel West, Vol. 5 (New York: Simon and Schuster MacMillan, 1996), p. 1960.

<sup>39</sup> White Rose Mission, *Report for the Summer of 1906*, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> Gunderson had previously been a travelers' aid "missionary" for the Bible and Fruit Mission, replacing the TA pioneer Etta Clark in 1888. In 1900, she began her tenure with the Female Auxiliary Bible Society. "Much Good Work Done," *New York Times*, 9 Dec. 1890, p. 8. "History," *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7. Also see "Fund to Fight Vice," *New-York Tribune*, 22 April 1904, For and About Women Section, p. 9 and "Came in as Bride and Groom," *The Sun*, 10 Feb. 1906, p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 3-4. "History," *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7. The consolidation was likely a smooth process since the president of the Bible Society, Catherine Weston, was also a TA Committee member. For more on Weston, see below.

secure “their moral and financial support for the venture.”<sup>42</sup> On January 25th, 1907, the Travelers’ Aid Society of New York (TAS-NY or TAS) was incorporated as a women’s organization and officially began its long tenure in New York City.<sup>43</sup>

The goal of the new society was clear: “to provide information, advice, guidance, and protection to travelers, particularly women and girls, who by reason of ignorance, inexperience, illness, infirmity, or other disability, are in need of assistance.”<sup>44</sup> Its constitution established a Board of Directors of fifteen people to “carry out the purposes of the Society” and control “all its affairs.”<sup>45</sup> The constitution also created a four class system of general membership, which ranged from “active members,” who contributed \$5 a year to “Life Members” who donated a one-time sum of \$100. Active members were required to “promote the objects of the Society, to attend meetings, and to serve upon the committee to which they shall be appointed.”<sup>46</sup>

### *The Board of Directors*

The leadership of the TAS-NY consisted of its officers: a President, two Vice Presidents, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. All were to be elected annually by a vote of the Board of Directors.<sup>47</sup> As a result of the first election, Grace Dodge was named President and Mrs. Alida

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<sup>42</sup> “History,” *Bulletin* 1:7 (Dec. 1918), p. 2. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 1, 26-7. There had been talk of making the Travelers’ Aid Society a mixed-sex organization with both men and women on the Board. However, this did not occur until 1911. See “National Travelers’ Aid,” *New-York Tribune*, 17 Jan. 1906, Of Interest to Women Section, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> Constitution Art. 1, Sec. 2, in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 28.

<sup>45</sup> Constitution Art. 3, Secs. 1-2, in *Ibid.*, pp. 28-9.

<sup>46</sup> Constitution Art. 2, Secs 1-5, in *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> Constitution Art. 4, Sec. 1, in *Ibid.*, p. 29.

Bliss and Kate Bond the two Vice Presidents.<sup>48</sup> Bliss, from a prominent New York banking and railroad family, had previously served as the superintendent of the YWCA's West Side Settlement.<sup>49</sup> Bond was a longtime member of the New York Charity Organization Society (COS) and the Women's Municipal League. She was also the new president of the International Order of King's Daughters and Sons, a Christian non-sectarian women's organization best known for founding a settlement house with Jacob Riis at 48-50 Henry Street.<sup>50</sup>

Emma van Buren of the YWCA<sup>51</sup> was the Secretary of the Travelers' Aid Society and Katharine Potter was its Treasurer.<sup>52</sup> Other members of the Board of Directors included Mrs. Belle Israels, a young Jewish settlement worker and member of the New York CJW, who later served as principal advisor to New York Governor Alfred E. Smith;<sup>53</sup> Dr. Angenette Parry, a

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<sup>48</sup> The Officers and Board of Directors of the TAS-NY are listed in *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 2. The report does not give the date of the election. I obtained biographical information on the Officers and Board members by searching the Google Books index (<http://books.google.com>). Searches using the women's names and other relevant information returned citations in early twentieth century periodicals, directories, and reference books. These sources could then be viewed in full. Obituaries and articles in the *New York Times* were also consulted.

<sup>49</sup> Bliss is listed as the superintendent of the West Side Settlement in Isaiah Strong, ed., *Social Progress: A Year Book and Encyclopedia of Economic, Industrial, Social, and Religious Statistics* (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1905), p. 295. Her family's lineage could be traced back to seventeenth century New England. See her brother Le Grand Benedict's obituary for more on her family history. "Le Grand L. Benedict Dead," *New York Times*, 29 Oct. 1923, p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> Bond was a strong proponent of non-sectarianism. In 1890, as vice-president of the King's Daughters, she voted against an amendment that would have instituted a "creed" requirement for membership. After the amendment was rejected, half of the organization's Central Council resigned in protest. "Seven Members Resign," *New York Times*, 11 April 1890, p. 5. And, in 1896, she was an "invited guest" to the first convention of the National Council of Jewish Women. "Jewish Women Convened," *New York Times*, 16 Nov. 1896, p. 2.

<sup>51</sup> Ina Brevoort-Roberts, ed., *Club Women of New York, 1906-1907* (New York: Club Women of New York Company, 1906), p. 358.

<sup>52</sup> I could not find information on Potter for the period when she served on the Board. Later, in 1919, she was listed as the Executive Secretary of the Girls' Friendly Society of New York, an Episcopal organization with a long history of providing travelers' aid in both England and the United States. "Girls' Friendly Society of the Diocese of New York," in *The New York Charities Directory*, ed. Lina Miller, 28<sup>th</sup> Ed. (New York: Charity Organization Society, 1919), p. 124.

<sup>53</sup> Israels was the daughter of Jewish immigrants from East Prussia (her father was a watchmaker). Her first foray into social work came when she joined the staff of the Educational Alliance, a Jewish settlement home, in 1900. Soon after, she also joined the New York Council of Jewish Women (CJW) and served on its Board. Israels' biographer, Elizabeth Perry, comments that her board service with both the New York TAS and CJW provided

well-known obstetrician, settlement house founder, and future president of both the Women's Medical Society of New York State and the American Medical Women's Association;<sup>54</sup> Mrs. Harriet Judson, founder and president of the Brooklyn YWCA, as well as president of the Brooklyn Association of Working Girls' Societies;<sup>55</sup> Mrs. Catherine Weston, president of the New York Female Auxiliary Bible Society and active member of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church;<sup>56</sup> Helena Goessmann, a specialist in Catholic history, literature, and education;<sup>57</sup> Emilie

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Israels with her first real administrative experience. Coinciding with her TAS tenure, Israels became the country's leading investigator of urban amusements, specifically dance halls. Her front page obituary in the *Times* notes that as Governor Smith's chief advisor in the 1920s, she "wielded more political power than any other woman in the United States." "Mrs. Moskowitz, Smith Aide, Dies," *New York Times*, 3 January 1933, p. 1. Also see Elizabeth Israels Perry, *Belle Moskowitz: Feminine Politics and the Exercise of Power in the Age of Alfred E. Smith*, 1987 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2000), Chs. 1 and 2 and Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, Chs. 4, 5, 7.

<sup>54</sup> Born in Rome, New York, Parry was a graduate of Vassar College. In 1899, in conjunction with the Madison Square Church House, she founded and served as the head resident of the Parry Settlement, located at 249 E. 32<sup>nd</sup> St., Manhattan. In addition to her work with the city's poor, Parry also delivered babies for the New York elite and was a friend of the author Mark Twain. "Angenette Parry, Noted Physician, 81," *New York Times*, 3 March 1939, Obituaries, p. 28. "Parry, Angenette," in *Women in Particular: An Index to American Women*, Kali Herman (Phoenix, Az: Oryx Press, 1984), p. 528. On her settlement work, see State of New York, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Annual Report, 1900* (Albany, 1901), pp. 406-9.

<sup>55</sup> "Mrs. Harriet Judson Dies," *New York Times*, 13 February 1922, p. 12. Judson, along with TAS members Dodge and Rose Sommerfeld, was also a member of the New York Association for Household Research, which focused on investigating and improving conditions of household employment. This society was created in 1904 as a response to Dodge and Frances Kellor's investigation into employment agency corruption described above. "Inter-Municipal Committee on Household Research," *Charities* 13:4 (22 Oct. 1904), pp. 80-1.

<sup>56</sup> Weston is listed as "first mistress" of the Female Auxiliary Bible Society in *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle Almanac, 1902*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Bulkley, Dunton, and Co., 1902), p. 317 and "A Parlor Conference," *Bible Society Record* 54:1 (Jan. 1909), p. 4. Weston's ancestors included Elias Boudinot, former President of the Continental Congress. She was also the aunt of Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson. Weston's husband, Theodore, was a founder of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and her sister, Mary Stimson, was a president of the New York YWCA. "Mrs. Theodore Weston," *New York Times*, 7 December 1942, p. 27. "Mrs. Mary A. Stimson Dies at 80 Years," *New York Times*, 24 May 1928, p. 29.

<sup>57</sup> Goessmann's father was a famous chemist of noble blood who emigrated from Germany and taught at the Massachusetts Agricultural College in Amherst. She graduated with an M. Phil. from Ohio University in 1895 and that same year published an article, "The Christian Woman in Philanthropy." She later spent time in New York City as head of the Catholic Department of Higher Education and as an employee of the American Book Company. She left the city in 1907 or 1908 to establish the Goessmann School for Girls in Amherst. "Helena Theresa Goessmann," in *Immortelles of Catholic Columbian Literature*, eds. Ursulines of New York (Akron, Chicago, New York: D. H. McBride and Co., 1897), pp. 514-15. "Helena Theresa Francesca Goessmann," in *Who's Who in New England*, ed. Albert Nelson Marquis, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Chicago: A. N. Marquis and Co., 1916), pp. 462-3.



Pupke, the daughter of a prominent German-American coffee importer and philanthropist;<sup>58</sup> Florence Gillies, coffee merchant;<sup>59</sup> Mrs. Elizabeth C. Harris, a Unitarian;<sup>60</sup> and Margaret Barker of the King's Daughters.<sup>61</sup>

The TAS-NY was more an outgrowth of the nineteenth century scientific charity movement, which was dominated by upper-class philanthropists, than the Progressive Movement and its mostly upper middle-class leadership. Ten of the fourteen elected Board members were from the original Travelers' Aid Committee: Bliss, Bond, Dodge, Gillies, Goessmann, Harris, Israels, Judson, Parry, and Weston.<sup>62</sup> The four new members were Barker, Potter, Pupke, and van Buren. The majority of the Board (10) came from socially prominent families.<sup>63</sup> Some came from famous old New York or New England families and others from New York's nouveaux riches. One member, Helena Goessmann, was the daughter of a well-known German-

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<sup>58</sup> Pupke's father was John F. Pupke, who immigrated to America from Germany in 1848. In 1895, three years before his death, he was called by the *New York Times* "one of the best known men in German charitable circles." He was associated with the German Society and the non-sectarian Isabella Heimath, a home for the "aged, poor, and convalescent." His coffee and tea business was located at 269 Washington St. Little information survives concerning his daughter Emilie. "Die Isabella Heimath," *New York Times*, 10 March 1895, p. 16. "John F. Pupke," *New York Times*, 26 May 1898, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Gillies ran Gillies Coffee Co. with her brother Edwin at 233 Washington St. They are listed in *The Trow Copartnership and Corporation Directory of the Boroughs of Manhattan and the Bronx* (New York: Trow Directory, Printing, and Bookbinding Co., 1906), p. 275.

<sup>60</sup> Harris was a member of the Colonial Dames of America. She also was an acquaintance of Mrs. J. D. Rockefeller, securing from her a modest \$50 contribution to the TAS-NY in 1907 or 1908. "Harris-The Colonial Dames of America," *New York Times*, 4 April 1936, Art and Books Section, p. 15. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> For a time, Barker and TAS-NY Vice-President Kate Bond served together as officers in the King's Daughters. "International Order of the King's Daughters and Sons," in *The World Almanac and Encyclopedia* (New York: The Press Publishing Company, 1898), p. 806.

<sup>62</sup> Three women from the original Committee were not elected to the TAS-NY Board, but did remain as due-paying members. Alice Warren, a Catholic suffragist and literary salon "mistress," was the only Committee member who did not join the Society. She would later return, along with her son, in the 1910s.

<sup>63</sup> To determine the elite status and family history of individual Board members, I consulted three directories of the city's socially prominent families: the *Social Register*, *Dau's New York Blue Book*, and the *Brooklyn Blue Book* for the years 1905-1912. I also relied on numerous obituaries, reference books, and periodicals, which are cited in the above biographical profiles.

American chemist of noble ancestry. Of those four not among the upper-class, two had definite middle-class origins. For example, Belle Israels grew up in Harlem and was the daughter of a Jewish immigrant watchmaker. The Travelers' Aid Society was thus primarily an upper-class women's organization, with some participation by middle-class women.

In regard to religion, the Travelers' Aid Society, like the Committee before it, billed itself as a non-sectarian organization, which meant that its membership included women from what it considered the three major faiths: Catholicism, Protestantism, and Judaism. This trend had emerged in the late nineteenth century as an array of moral reform organizations, such as the Society for the Suppression of Vice and the YWCA, sought to transcend their Protestant base by reaching out to Catholics and Jews. In most cases, though, Protestants continued to dominate the leadership, and this was true of the TAS-NY as well.<sup>64</sup> Presbyterians, with four Board members (including President Grace Dodge), had the most representation. Episcopalians and Methodists counted two members each. There was one Unitarian (Harris) and one Catholic (Goessmann). The lone Jewish member was Belle Israels.<sup>65</sup> In later years, there would be more of a Jewish and Catholic presence in the Society, but it consistently remained in the hands of Protestant women and men.

The typical Board member was a white, single, older woman of great wealth and without a college education. In terms of marital status, single women made up nearly 65% of the Board,

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<sup>64</sup> Anthony Comstock's Society for the Suppression of Vice, along with three similar "preventative societies," was among the earliest to reach out to Jews and Catholics by appealing to Rabbi Gustave Gottheil and the Catholic priest Edward McGlynn for support. The New York YWCA, prior to 1900, allowed Jews and Catholics to use its services and two Catholics served on its Executive Committee. Another moral reform group, the American Purity Alliance, expanded its membership to Jews and Catholics in 1906. Timothy Gilfoyle, *City of Eros: New York City, Prostitution, and the Commercialization of Sex, 1790-1920* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1992), pp. 186-7. Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York," pp. 90, 191-3. Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene*, p. 77.

<sup>65</sup> Religious affiliation was determined by information in the obituaries, reference books, and periodicals cited above. The religion of three Board members could not be determined.

which was a sharp break from the composition of late nineteenth century women's organizations in which the number of married women dwarfed those of single women.<sup>66</sup> Only three women appear to have attended college: Goessmann (Ohio University), Parry (Vassar College), and Israels (Teachers College). Being between the ages of thirty and fifty, the educated women were amongst the youngest on the Board. Of the ten members whose ages are known or can be estimated, six were over fifty.<sup>67</sup> The college educated women also worked for a living: Goessmann as an educator and writer; Parry as a doctor; and Israels as a social worker and writer.<sup>68</sup> The older women with little post-secondary education and significant wealth had no need for economic work, though their active club work suggests that they were no less busy or competent than their educated peers. Historian Helen Bittar makes the point that through informal training, "on-the-job" or in the home, elite women acquired the necessary business and administrative skills to successfully run their own associations.<sup>69</sup> Such was certainly the case with Grace Dodge, described as the consummate businesswoman and a "merchant of dreams," who honed her early business acumen in the home by observing her father.<sup>70</sup>

Board women were also heavily invested in a broad array of the period's reform movements. They could be found in organizations that were dedicated to improving the spiritual, moral, and environmental conditions of the city's working-class, such as the YWCA,

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<sup>66</sup> Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York," pp. 37-8, 47, and Appendix I.

<sup>67</sup> At 30, Israels was the youngest member and Kate Bond, 74, the oldest. President Dodge was 51. In 1909, twenty-four year old Mrs. Rita Halle was elected to the Board and became the Society's youngest member. The ages of six of the fourteen original Board members are definitely known. I used information from obituaries and other sources to estimate the ages of four others.

<sup>68</sup> Board member Florence Gillies, likely in her forties, worked as a coffee merchant with her brother, though there is no evidence that she attended college.

<sup>69</sup> Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York," p. 36.

<sup>70</sup> Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*.

the COS, Working Girls Societies, the King's Daughters, the CJW, the Female Auxiliary Bible Society, and the Association for Household Research.<sup>71</sup> Notably absent from Board members' outside work was a commitment to the women's suffrage movement. One former member of the Travelers' Aid Committee, Alice Warren, was a suffragist, but when the Committee became the TAS-NY, Warren resigned.<sup>72</sup> For the remaining members, their concept of women's citizenship did not hinge on the vote, but on their gendered contributions to urban reform.<sup>73</sup>

From 1907-1910, there were only two additions to the Board. In 1909, Mrs Rita Halle, a twenty-four year old recent Wellesley graduate and future Roosevelt Family biographer, replaced Goessmann.<sup>74</sup> Halle was Jewish, so her election meant that there were now two Jews on the Board and no Catholics. The last addition to the Board before it underwent re-organization in 1911 was Ida Greenleaf. Greenleaf was forty four years old and a descendent of John White, one of the original settlers of Lancaster, Massachusetts. She was also a frequent small donor to numerous city charities, such as the Board of Missions of the Episcopal Church and the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> I could not find evidence of prior philanthropic activity for four TAS-NY Board members: Gillies, Harris, Potter, and Pupke.

<sup>72</sup> Warren later joined the Travelers' Aid Society in the 1910s. On Warren, see Chapter Four. Another Board Member, Belles Israels, was not a suffragist at this time, but by 1914 had converted to the cause.

<sup>73</sup> I found no evidence that any of the Board members were anti-suffrage. The Travelers' Aid Society never took a stance either way on women's suffrage and its position on the issue can best be described as "neutral." Likewise, the New York YWCA, which had a similarly composed Board, also stayed out of the suffrage fray. Bittar, "The Y.W.C.A. of the City of New York," p. 135.

<sup>74</sup> In the 1930s and 40s, Halle, then known as Rita Halle Kleeman, wrote biographies of FDR and his mother, Sara. *Young Franklin Roosevelt* (New York: J. Messner, Inc., 1946) and *Gracious Lady: The Life of Sara Delano Roosevelt* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1935).

<sup>75</sup> *White Family Quarterly* 3:1 (January 1905), pp. 91-2. *The Spirit of Missions* 58 (1893), p. 239. New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 145.

### *The General Secretary and the Agents*

The day-to-day running of the TAS was the responsibility of the General Secretary, which was a salaried position. Helen Bullis, who was the General Secretary of the original Travelers' Aid Committee, continued with the Travelers' Aid Society until resigning in the summer of 1907 to work for the Immigration and Naturalization Service as an inspector at Ellis Island. Miss C. M. Anderson replaced her and served until the 1911 re-structuring.<sup>76</sup> The General Secretary supervised the work of the agents at the stations and piers, as well as coordinated relations with the numerous officials and organizations that cooperated with the Society. She also was the chief investigator of conditions on the ground. Her first-hand knowledge of how travelers' aid functioned likely permitted her some influence over the Board of Directors as they set policy, though just how much power and independence the position had vis à vis the Board is unclear.

Initially, the Society continued with the same number of female dock agents, three, as the Committee had employed. It probably used a similar number of station agents, though the exact total is unknown.<sup>77</sup> Sometime after April 1907, the total force was expanded to fourteen agents: twelve in the "Field" (stations and docks) and two in the office.<sup>78</sup> The TAS's Annual Reports from 1907 through 1910 do not provide specific information on the backgrounds of its first

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<sup>76</sup> "The Travelers' Aid Committee, New York," p. 585. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 4. Bullis was considered an expert on white slavery due to her nation-wide investigations into its extent. On Bullis, see "Tell of White Slaves," *New-York Tribune*, 26 July 1905, p. 1; "Woman to Help Stamp Out White Slave Traffic," *The Evening World*, 29 August 1907, Final Results Ed., p. 1; Cannato, *American Passage*, p. 282; and Johnson, "Protection, Virtue," p. 683, n. 50.

<sup>77</sup> "The Travelers' Aid Committee, New York," p. 585. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 9, 15.

<sup>78</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 6. The report only gives the total number of Field Agents, not the number of train and dock agents. In 1909, there were still fourteen agents (eleven Field Agents and three Office Agents). No information on size is given for 1910. However, the salaries paid were consistent with those of the previous years, which I assume to mean that the composition of the force did not undergo any significant change. *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 4 and *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 21.

agents, but some observations can be made.<sup>79</sup> Agents, like the General Secretary, were to be paid a monthly salary. For the year 1909, the TAS paid out \$9,000 in salaries to their staff.<sup>80</sup> As wage-workers in a yet to be professionalized field, agents' class position would have fallen somewhere between working- and middle-class.<sup>81</sup> Additionally, the 1907 Annual Report mentions that among the workers then employed, ten different languages were spoken, such as German, Russian, Polish, Yiddish, Italian, and Swedish. The wide-variety of known languages, which were needed to communicate with foreigners arriving at the docks, suggests that immigrants or daughters/granddaughters of immigrants were among those hired as dock agents.<sup>82</sup>

The TAS-NY's policy of non-sectarianism meant that Jews, Catholics, and Protestants were all eligible to serve on its staff. That Yiddish, as well as German, Russian, and Polish, was spoken indicates that the TAS likely employed one or more Jewish agents. Similarly the presence of Italian suggests at least one Catholic agent. The question arises as to whether or not non-sectarianism allowed for the participation of atheists. The first Annual Report leaves this possibility open. It states, "Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Protestant, and those of no religion, have been helped, solely on the ground of their necessity, by agents selected for their capacity for

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<sup>79</sup> In general, the official records of the TAS-NY rarely provide specific information on their workers. In this sense, TA workers are more subaltern than their traveler clients, who appear in accounts that are rich with detail.

<sup>80</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 7. It is possible that some agents were volunteers, though their presence would have been minimal as the TAS was trying to eliminate this type of labor.

<sup>81</sup> Daniel Walkowitz discusses the confusion that "semi-professional" social workers must have had regarding their class status in *Working with Class*, pp. 27-31. The term "semi-professional" was used by the 1910 federal census to classify the occupational status of social workers.

<sup>82</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 7. Workers at the train stations had little to no foreign language experience. See TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 12-20. The only clear example of a station agent communicating fluently in a foreign language (German) appears in *Annual Report, 1909*, pp. 8-9.

help, and *for no other reason*” (emphasis mine).<sup>83</sup> In this statement, atheists were both potential clients and agents.

In the following years, the TAS-NY moved toward stricter eligibility requirements regarding religion. The Annual Report of 1908 states that religious sentiment was crucial to the work. In fact, the report conflates religion with Christianity, explaining that agents were expected to be “Christian women in the broadest and highest sense of the word.”<sup>84</sup> It is unlikely that this statement was intended to bar Jews, or Catholics, from the work, rather it was meant to invoke Christian concepts of duty, charity, and sacrifice as the basis of travelers’ aid, principles which could also be found in Judaism and Catholicism. In other words, after 1908, it did not matter whether an agent was Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic, but she needed to be one of them and have deep religious conviction.<sup>85</sup>

In 1909, nearly 100% of the field agents (all but one dock worker) lived full-time at headquarters (“the house”), a four-story row house located a short walk from Grand Central Station at 238 East 48<sup>th</sup> St in the Turtle Bay neighborhood.<sup>86</sup> For the 1908 Annual Report, General Secretary Anderson wrote a brief narrative that hints at what life was like for the agents boarding at 48th Street. Anderson’s account stresses moments of domestic camaraderie and begins by describing a house fund-raising project initiated by the women. They dressed dolls in “foreign costumes” that were to be sold at the Annual Meeting, with the money raised going

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<sup>83</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 4.

<sup>84</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 6.

<sup>85</sup> The relationship between religion, non-sectarianism, and TA work was codified several years later in Baker, *Travelers’ Aid Society* (1917), pp. 49-50. Also see, “Non-Sectarian: What Does It Mean?,” p. 7 and Untitled Document (begins “Travelers Aid is fundamentally a non-sectarian, humanitarian organization”), in TAS Executive Committee, Minutes, 8 January 1918, Records of the Travelers Aid Society of New York (MS635), Box 1, Folder 1, The New-York Historical Society (hereafter, Records of the TAS-NY).

<sup>86</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 4. In the previous year, all of the station agents, but only one dock worker, lived in the house. *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 6.

toward the purchase of a “dinner and glass” set for the house.<sup>87</sup> On another occasion, due to election-night crowds, the agents in the field were called in early at 7pm, which led to the “rare occurrence” of all the workers being in the house at the same time. A spontaneous party promptly broke out. One other evening featured the agents throwing a bridal shower/farewell party for their colleague, Miss Nissen. They presented her with a set of silver spoons and organized a “candy pull,” which involved the women taking turns picking from a “‘grab-bag’ of oddities,” resulting in much enjoyment.<sup>88</sup>

These scenes of domestic harmony among the housemates were occasionally disturbed. Anderson relates how one irresponsible agent brought measles into the house, but thanks to the quarantine instituted by the house physician, Dr. Kent, an epidemic was averted.<sup>89</sup> Not just measles, but the day-to-day stresses of TA work, the “dirty” parts of the job, may have also led to tension at headquarters.<sup>90</sup> One can imagine that, for instance, after a long day working with foreigners in the chaotic environment of the docks, agents arrived home tired and, depending on their personalities, short tempered. In general, living and working together probably was not as utopian as Anderson describes, and agents may have preferred more low-key and private evenings than the group activities she describes.

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<sup>87</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 9.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10. Outside of headquarters, the residents sometimes had the opportunity to attend concerts or lectures using complimentary tickets provided by individuals or city organizations supportive of the Travelers’ Aid Society’s mission. For example, the League for Political Education, an organization founded by suffragists to prepare women for politics and citizenship, regularly made available two tickets for their Saturday morning and Monday evening lectures. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8. On the League for Political Education, see the biography of its founder, Adele Fielde: Helen Norton Stevens, *Memorial Biography of Adele M. Fielde, Humanitarian* (New York: The Fielde Memorial Committee, 1918), Ch. 22.

<sup>89</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 7, 9-10.

<sup>90</sup> “Dirty” in this sense describes women’s early professional work that involved “the most human contact with all its attendant complexities.” This point is made by Tomes and Brumberg and is used by Stadum to describe TA in the 1920s and 30s. I believe it holds for TA at the beginning of the twentieth century as well. Joan J. Brumberg and Nancy Tomes, “Women in the Professions: A Research Agenda for American History,” *Reviews in American History* 10 (1982), pp. 287-8. Stadum, “Female Protection.”



Presumably, residing at the house would only have been an option for single women, so we can therefore assume that the vast majority of the workers were unmarried or widowed. Three of the four workers whose names are known were unmarried: Mary Dean Adams, Esther Gunderson, and Miss Nissen. In the case of the latter, described above, she left the TAS to be married in 1908.<sup>91</sup> The fourth agent, Mrs. J. M. Childres, was likely a widow.<sup>92</sup> With regard to education, the requirements were vague. Agents needed to possess “some degree of education,” especially since they were responsible for writing up detailed case reports. There was at least one college graduate among the first cadre of agents: Mary Dean Adams, Smith College Class of 1899. However, college or professional training was not required. More important than education was whether or not the agent possessed the necessary physical and mental stamina to handle the long hours and emotional stress of the job.<sup>93</sup>

### *The Travelers’ Aid Society and White Slavery*

The Travelers’ Aid Society of New York sought to prevent traveling women from falling victim to the white slave traffic. It believed that white slavery caused a great “leakage” of human life from American cities, which it intended to block.<sup>94</sup> Its incorporation at the end of January 1907 occurred two months *ahead* of the publication of George Kibbe Turner’s exposé on

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<sup>91</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 10-11. Gunderson was previously a dock agent for the Bible and Fruit Mission, the Female Auxiliary Bible Society, and the Travelers’ Aid Committee. Mary Dean Adams is mentioned in a Smith College publication as having worked for the TAS for a year and a half. Her career likely began with the TA Committee and then briefly continued after the formation of the TAS. By 1909 she was working as an immigrant investigator for the state and was becoming well known as an anti-suffragist. *Catalog of Officers, Graduates and Non-Graduates of Smith College* (Alumni Association of Smith College, 1911), p. 95. Donald Stephenson, *The Right to Vote: Rights and Liberties under the Law* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2004), p. 163.

<sup>92</sup> Childres is identified by the *New York Times* as a TAS “matron” who discovered a deserted wife at Grand Central Station. “Husband Takes Her Cash,” *New York Times*, 7 Nov. 1909, p. C6.

<sup>93</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

white slavery in Chicago, a piece of muckraking journalism that kicked off the white slave “panic” of the early twentieth century.<sup>95</sup> It is therefore important to note that the founding of the Travelers’ Aid Society was not a reaction to the panic that Turner sparked; rather, it was a product of the organized charity movement and anti-white slavery campaigns of the late nineteenth century. Its work did take on added relevance as the panic progressed, especially after Turner published a similar piece on New York in 1909.<sup>96</sup> During this new era of anti-white slavery activism, the TAS charted a middle ground between those, like Turner, who peddled in lurid tales of abductions and sin and those, like the social hygienist John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who dismissed issues of morality in favor of a scientific approach to white slavery.<sup>97</sup>

The TAS rarely used the term “white slavery.” However, anyone reading its literature at the time would have immediately grasped that coerced prostitution was being invoked through euphemisms like “Moral Problems” and through phrases like “the greatest peril that can threaten a woman.”<sup>98</sup> In Travelers’ Aid Society narratives, the potential victims of white slavery came from a diverse cross-section of women. The most likely victims, and therefore most deserving of the TAS’s help, were young single women, often referred to as “girls,” whose ages fell into two

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<sup>95</sup> George Kibbe Turner, “The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities,” *McClure’s* 28 (April 1907), pp. 575-92. Gretchen Soderlund, “Covering Urban Vice: The New York Times, ‘White Slavery,’ and the Construction of Journalistic Knowledge,” *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 19:4 (Dec. 2002), pp. 438-40. Brian Donovan, *White Slave Crusades: Race, Gender, and Anti-Vice Activism, 1887-1917* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), Ch. 4. Langum, *Crossing Over the Line*, pp. 27-35.

<sup>96</sup> Turner, “Daughters of the Poor: A Plain Story of the Development of New York City as Leading Center of the White Slave Trade of the World, Under Tammany Hall,” *McClure’s* 34 (Nov. 1909), pp. 45-61. Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, pp. 90-1. President Grace Dodge’s earlier investigation of employment agency corruption also received new attention after the publication of Turner’s “Daughters of the Poor.” See “Attack on Gaynor by Woman’s League,” *New York Times*, 28 Oct. 1909, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> On Rockefeller and Social Hygiene, see Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene*, p. 78 and Ch. 6.

<sup>98</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 11-12. Also see *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 5.

categories: those under 21 and those between 21 and 30.<sup>99</sup> They could be either native- or foreign-born. If native-born, the ideal type was the “unsophisticated young country girl,” who left for the big city to work in a factory, shop, or office.<sup>100</sup> Often, she had been lured to the city by false advertisements promising “wonderful salaries” and other benefits to “young women of intelligence and refinement.” Upon arrival, her innocence made her vulnerable to the manipulations of various urban con-men, such as the “runners” who roamed the stations on behalf of cheap hotels and employment agencies.<sup>101</sup> If foreign, she was a “bewildered non-English speaking woman,” whose innocence and ignorance of American culture made her an easy prey of the “procuress” and “cadet.”<sup>102</sup> Consistent with most narratives of sexual danger, young women traveling alone were gendered as innocent, passive, and dependent, incapable of negotiating on their own the “larger world” they encountered at the city’s transportation hubs.<sup>103</sup>

Also at risk were mothers and “self-supporting, middle-aged women” from the working-classes who were priced out of respectable lodging, but were ineligible for the affordable rooms at the various “girls” Homes.<sup>104</sup> Middle-class women could also find themselves stranded in the

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<sup>99</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 22 and *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 16.

<sup>100</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 4-6. The innocent young country girl has been a common trope in white slavery narratives since the nineteenth century. See Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*, pp. 54-61 and Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, pp. 20, 23-9. On the contrary, the era’s popular literature encouraged young “farm boys” to travel on trains out of their small village in order to “pass into adulthood, into adventure, and into real or seeming wisdom.” John Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor: Railroads and the American Scene* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 11, 218.

<sup>101</sup> Belle Lindner Israels, “Modern Samaritans,” *Good Housekeeping* 14:6 (Dec. 1907), pp. 718-19.

<sup>102</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 5-6. Cadets were said to be young men in ethnic street gangs who typically scouted local neighborhoods and department stores for girls to supply to white slave traders or directly to brothels. See Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene*, pp. 79, 83 and Theodore Bingham, *The Girl that Disappears: The Real Facts about the White Slave Trade* (Boston: The Gorham Press, 1911), pp. 39-44.

<sup>103</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 5. *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 5. Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue*, pp. 55-6, 75 and Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*. The TAS did acknowledge that some women “were capable of caring for themselves” and required less direct help than others. *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 10.

<sup>104</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 11.

city after missing a rail connection. They could not afford elite “city hotels” and refused to consider charity because of its stigma. The TAS lamented that there were few viable lodging options in between luxury and charity for middle-class travelers.<sup>105</sup>

Finally, children traveling alone were also susceptible to crime and abuse. In this category belonged children who were stranded at train stations after a relative failed to meet them. TAS Board member Belle Israels wrote in *Good Housekeeping* magazine of a typical scenario in which a little girl arrives at Grand Central Station to meet her “Aunt Martha,” who never appears. The girl knows only that her aunt resides in “New York, New Jersey.” Agents were to help children like this locate their relatives before they fell into the wrong hands. Similarly, runaway children found loitering at stations were also to be reunited with their family before they could venture out into the city on their own.<sup>106</sup>

In the early reports of the Travelers’ Aid Society, the travelers’ race is assumed to be white or near-white (i.e. the “racial in-betweenness” of groups such as Italians and Jews<sup>107</sup>). Ideally, black travelers from the American South or the West Indies were to be met by their own organizations, such as the White Rose Mission discussed in Chapter One. However, since white slavers were believed to cast their racial net wide for potential captives, black travelers in distress were not ignored by the TAS. During its first years, the Society, in cooperation with the White Rose, aided hundreds of black travelers, the majority of whom were women.<sup>108</sup> Descriptions of

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<sup>105</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 5.

<sup>106</sup> Israels, “Modern Samaritans,” pp. 718-19. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 8, 12.

<sup>107</sup> Johnson, “Protection, Virtue,” pp. 660-2.

<sup>108</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 4, 8-10. *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 8, 24-6. *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 19. The White Rose Mission also kept records of its contact with the Travelers’ Aid Society. In 1910, for example, the TAS sent thirty travelers to the White Rose. See White Rose Mission, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 2 and White Rose Mission, *Annual Report, 1911*, p. 8.

several of these cases were made available to the public through the Annual Reports, most notably in 1907, though most publicized cases involved white native-born Americans or foreign-born Europeans.<sup>109</sup> Thus, “non-sectarian” implied that racial difference, like religious difference, could not preclude the provision of TA services. And, in general, gender took priority over race when organizing the field work.<sup>110</sup>

When representing white slavers, the TAS did not rely on the vulgar xenophobic stereotypes that were commonly deployed in typical white slave narratives of the period. Unlike George Kibbe Turner, who explicitly linked white slavery to scheming Jews and violent Italians, the TAS portrayed the perpetrator as racially/ethnically anonymous.<sup>111</sup> He or she was simply an evil person partaking in an evil business, looking to exploit innocent women. When the Society did invoke race and ethnicity, it was usually to praise the numerous groups dedicated to protecting immigrant women, such as the Council of Jewish Women, the Italian Immigrant Society, and the Polish Home.<sup>112</sup> Italians, Jews, and others were seen as capable counterparts to the native-born, Protestant led protective organizations, like the Travelers’ Aid Society and the YWCA.

Even when immigrant groups displayed dubious behavior, the TAS did not connect it to supposed inherent qualities of Southern and Eastern Europeans. For example, the 1908 Annual Report contains an excerpt of a case involving a TA agent who encountered a Polish traveler at

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<sup>109</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 17, 24.

<sup>110</sup> Mara Keire makes a similar point concerning the primacy of gender over race. Though white slavery was often racialized, with Jewish, Italian, and Asian men presented as the stereotypical procurers, gender generally took precedence over race in terms of understanding the phenomenon. It was a crime of greedy men against helpless women. See Mara Keire, “The Vice Trust: A Reinterpretation of the White Slavery Scare in the United States, 1907-1917,” *Journal of Social History* 35:1 (Autumn 2001), p. 8.

<sup>111</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 4-5 and *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 5. On Turner, see Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, pp. 90-1.

<sup>112</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 8.

Grand Central Station. The young woman needed help getting to an address on Washington Street and the agent decided to escort her there. When they arrived at the house, the agent was initially uncomfortable with its appearance. However, with the help of a local interpreter and police officer, she surveyed the scene. Though the environment was less than ideal (on the second floor, the family was getting drunk while observing a wake), the agent and the officer escorted the “girl” upstairs and left her. Instead of ending with a diatribe about the immoral and dirty habits of Eastern European immigrants, the excerpt concludes by describing how “grateful” the family was to have the girl delivered safely.<sup>113</sup> Similarly, in other cases from 1907-1909, scores of “ignorant” foreign women are encountered and helped, but ignorance is represented as more of a gendered trait than one associated with certain races.

#### *International, National, and Local Cooperation*

At the international level, the Travelers’ Aid Society participated in overlapping trans-Atlantic networks of anti-white slavery and travelers’ aid organizations. Traditional letter writing, modern telegraph technology, and overseas travel enabled the exchange of information between the Europeans and Americans involved in this dialogue. Domestically, the Travelers’ Aid Society communicated with other TA organizations outside of New York to facilitate interstate travel. The strongest example of national coordination came when the TAS led the Exposition Travelers’ Aid Committee for the 1907 Jamestown World’s Fair. Locally, in New

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., p. 19. For more on Polish women’s experience with TA, see Lucille O’Connell, “Travelers’ Aid for Polish Immigrant Women,” *Polish American Studies* 31:1 (Spring 1974): 15-19. O’Connell’s only primary sources are the TAS-NY’s Annual Reports and she accepts their version of events uncritically. Additionally, she does not use any secondary literature to situate travelers’ aid and Polish immigration within larger developments in U.S. history. Her article does contain a few sample cases that are reprinted in full, which may be useful to scholars who do not have access to the Annual Reports.

York, the TAS served as a vital link in a wide-ranging chain of care facilities, such as Immigrant Homes, affordable lodging homes, hospitals, and children's aid societies.

In an effort to augment its anti-white slavery work, the earlier Travelers' Aid Committee had reached out to the London-based International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic (IB). Committee leaders learned that the United States was one of the only industrialized nations *not* to have representation in the IB.<sup>114</sup> To remedy this situation, Grace Dodge called a meeting of prominent reformers at her Madison Avenue house in 1906, which resulted in the creation of the National Vigilance Committee (NVC). Internationally, the NVC was to serve as America's delegate to the IB. Domestically, its mission was to eliminate the white slave traffic by lobbying state and national legislatures to enact anti-white slavery laws.<sup>115</sup> The legislative campaigns of the NVC were intended to complement travelers' aid's day-to-day work protecting women. Additionally, the Travelers' Aid Society would cooperate with the NVC by providing it with first-hand evidence of sexual danger, which the NVC could then investigate further.<sup>116</sup> Through its association with the NVC and IB, the TAS maintained its strongest link to the Progressive reform milieu, while still concentrating most of its efforts on aiding travelers in distress.

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<sup>114</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid. Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, pp. 216-18. Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene*, pp. 44-5, 76-8. "Mann Act of 1910," in Engs, *The Progressive Era's Health Reform*, p. 210. Most of the major players at Dodge's meeting were members of the American Purity Alliance (Dodge too was a member), who sought to revitalize their movement by shifting its focus from anti-state regulation of prostitution to anti-white slavery. The NVC was partly responsible for the passage of the era's most significant anti-white slave bill, the 1910 Mann Act, which defined white slavery as the "transportation of a woman or girl in interstate or foreign commerce for immoral purposes" and mandated up to five years imprisonment if convicted of the crime.

<sup>116</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 12.

The TAS's ties to the International Bureau for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic also led to partnerships with foreign anti-white slavery organizations, such as the German National Vigilance Committee and the English National Vigilance Association, both IB members. More directly related to the provision of travelers' aid, the Society was in frequent contact with the London and Liverpool Travelers' Aid Societies, primarily to coordinate the protective services for English women traveling to the U.S., as well as for American women going abroad.<sup>117</sup> In 1909, communication between them was facilitated when the TAS-NY signed up for a transatlantic telegraph address, under the word "Newtas."<sup>118</sup> Elsewhere though, the TAS occasionally struggled to build up a dependable network of European contacts. This was evident in 1908 when the State of New York enlisted the TAS to handle the deportation of "insane aliens." After only a year, the TAS had to abandon its efforts because of a lack of cooperation between it and relief organizations from the deportees' home countries.<sup>119</sup>

In 1909, the TAS-NY was invited to participate in the first International Conference of Station Workers in Berne, Switzerland to be held in 1910. The event was sponsored by the Union des Amies de la Jeune Fille (Union of the Friends of Young Women), a Swiss Protestant organization that provided lodging and travelers' aid to young women throughout continental Europe.<sup>120</sup> President Dodge arranged for a delegate, Elizabeth Harris, to attend the conference. Harris's presence marked the formal introduction of the Travelers' Aid Society to the international TA community. At the conference, Harris learned first-hand what TA experts

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid., pp. 14, 17.

<sup>118</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report*, 1909, p. 6.

<sup>119</sup> State of New York, State Commission in Lunacy, *Twentieth Annual Report: Oct. 1, 1907 to Sept. 30, 1908* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Co., 1909), pp. 42-3. State of New York, State Commission in Lunacy, *Twenty-First Annual Report: Oct. 1, 1908 to Sept. 30, 1909* (Albany: J. B. Lyon Co., 1910), p. 235. TAS-NY, *Annual Report*, 1908, p. 9.

<sup>120</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report*, 1909, p. 6. *Annual Report*, 1907, p. 14. "Chronological Outline," p. 9.



abroad expected from the United States, namely a centralized TA network that would ensure the safety of European travelers as they made their way through America.<sup>121</sup>

During this period, a permanent national network did not yet exist. Outside of New York, organizations that provided TA could be found in locations such as Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago. To assist travelers with interstate journeys, the TAS coordinated its services on a case by case basis with these sister societies.<sup>122</sup> Additionally, many of the local moral protective organizations that the TAS worked with in New York, such as the YWCA, CJW, and Girls' Friendly Society, had branches throughout the country, which the TAS reached out to with some regularity.<sup>123</sup> The closest thing to the national network envisioned at the International Conference of Station Workers occurred during the World's Fairs. For example, the TAS led the Exposition Travelers' Aid Committee at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition in Virginia, taking over for the YWCA, which remained a participating partner. For the event, the Travelers' Aid Society's 48<sup>th</sup> Street address in New York doubled as Exposition Committee headquarters and two TAS Board members served as officers.<sup>124</sup>

Locally, in New York City, the Travelers' Aid Society forged partnerships with lodging facilities and institutions such as hospitals. TA agents sent foreign young women to the city's

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<sup>121</sup> "History," *Bulletin* 1:7 (Dec. 1918), pp. 2-3. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 18. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 5-6. Dodge herself followed up on Harris's visit by traveling extensively throughout Europe to observe TA and interact with its practitioners. For more on Dodge's and Harris's travels, see Chapter Four. This pattern of Americans going abroad to gain access to European ideas and practices is explored in great detail by Daniel Rodgers in *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>122</sup> Israels, "Modern Samaritans," p. 718. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 14.

<sup>123</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 14.

<sup>124</sup> "For the Protection of Young Women," *The Outlook* 85:17 (27 April 1907), pp. 913-14. "Traveler's Aid at Jamestown," *Charities* 18:10 (8 June 1907), p. 291. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 4. The Board members were Harris and Potter.

numerous “Immigrant Homes,” which served women of common “nationality and creed.”<sup>125</sup> Two such Homes were the Polish Home and the Italian Immigrant Society, both on Broad Street. Other cooperating Homes were the Hebrew Relief Society on East Broadway, the Hungarian Relief Society, the Italian Girls’ Home, the Mädchen Heim for German Women and Girls, and the Swedish Home on Walter Street.<sup>126</sup> The TAS was also a backer of the newly established German-American Friendship Club for Young Women on Park Avenue. The Friendship Club was founded in 1908 to protect young immigrant Germans of the non-industrial working-class from the “evils” of the white slave traffic. It sought to remedy their perceived ignorance, which made them vulnerable to the city’s dangers, by teaching them English and explaining New York’s street plan and subway system. It also maintained bedrooms for those needing a place to stay.<sup>127</sup>

Native-born, English speaking young women were sent to the Shelter for Respectable Girls on 46<sup>th</sup> Street and Sister Catherine’s Home for Girls. They were sent in smaller numbers to the YWCA, the Young Women’s Hebrew Association, and the public Municipal Lodging House for the homeless.<sup>128</sup> Single working-women who desired “greater independence” and were judged capable of taking care of themselves were lodged at the Trowmart Inn on 12<sup>th</sup> street in the West Village. The Trowmart offered room and board at \$4.50 to \$5.00 a week to “low-salaried” workers and travelers under thirty-five years old. It did not require its boarders to follow strict

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<sup>125</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 11.

<sup>126</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 8, 16.

<sup>127</sup> “The Friendship Club,” *New-York Tribune*, 14 Feb. 1909, Woman’s Realm Section, p. 4.

<sup>128</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 11. *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 8-9. *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 5.

daily check-in or check-out procedures and allowed male guests in the parlor.<sup>129</sup> The Travelers' Aid Society delivered Black travelers, categorized as a separate "nationality," to their own Home, the White Rose Mission at East 86<sup>th</sup> Street.<sup>130</sup> Finally, children met by TA agents were sometimes cared for by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the Children's Aid Society.<sup>131</sup>

In addition to women's lodging facilities, the TAS worked with several of the city's hospitals. When hospitalization was required, it was usually for mental health reasons and, in such cases, travelers were taken to Bellevue Hospital or the Manhattan State Hospital for the Insane.<sup>132</sup> In instances where lodging or hospital care was not needed, travelers could be escorted to the CJW or the Charity Organization Society (COS) for further services. Grace Dodge especially sought to cultivate a relationship with the COS and in either 1907 or 1908 spoke at one of their conferences to promote and explain the work of the new Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>133</sup>

Cooperation with major and minor officials from the Police Department and the train stations was also a part of the TAS's routine. Police officers referred cases to the TAS in which social work was deemed more appropriate than police power. Similarly, officers would work with agents to convince travelers to accept TA.<sup>134</sup> According to the Annual Reports, the head

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<sup>129</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 11. *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 8. On the Trowmart Inn, see *Putnam's Monthly* 1:1 (Oct. 1907), p. 91 and Mary Maule, "What is a Shop-Girl's Life?," *The World's Work* 14:5 (Sept. 1907), p. 9315.

<sup>130</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 17. *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 8, 24-6. *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 19.

<sup>131</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 12. *Annual Report, 1909*, p.16.

<sup>132</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 8. *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 25.

<sup>133</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 13. *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 8. *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 7.

station masters of Pennsylvania Station and Grand Central directed their train conductors to immediately refer to the Travelers' Aid Society any "girls asking for advice, or who seem to be in difficulties." Workers onboard trains, such as expressmen and brakemen, and off trains, such as the "colored porters," were also known to send distressed women to the TAS. In its early years, the TAS was very pleased with the support it received from train station officials, explaining that these were men with years of experience who knew firsthand how necessary travelers' aid was for the "protection of womanhood."<sup>135</sup> Such cordial relations were less evident a decade later when a power struggle erupted between the Travelers' Aid Society and officials from Pennsylvania Station, which escalated to the point where the TAS considered appealing to the Federal Government in Washington, D.C. for assistance in resolving the conflict.<sup>136</sup>

From the TAS's conception, founders envisioned it as the central body that would direct and promote TA in New York City, as well as nationally. But exactly how this was to be accomplished was never explicitly stated. Initially, the situation looked promising in New York with the absorption of the Female Auxiliary Bible Society's dock worker in 1906, but this seems to be the TAS's only early victory in its drive to consolidate. Other organizations, such as the YWCA, had a longer history of TA work and showed no signs of wanting to cede control to the

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<sup>135</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 13. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 7.

<sup>136</sup> During World War I, two officials at Pennsylvania Station (Station Master Eagen and Train Master Marr) became increasingly hostile to any outside influence over station affairs. They were especially dismissive of "any kind of social work" and refused to support travelers' aid. In response, General Secretary Orin Baker envisioned a scenario in which the U.S. War Department's Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) intervened on the TAS's behalf. He believed that if Pennsylvania officials continued to obstruct travelers' aid, then the CTCA would threaten to send men with "police power" to assume the agents' work. Faced with the choice between police or TA agents, Baker reasoned that the railroad would opt for the agents' more benign presence. "General Secretary Report," 2 April 1918, in Records of the TAS-NY, Box 1, Folder 1. The CTCA's interest in travelers' aid stemmed from its desire to protect U.S. soldiers from the related evils of vice and venereal disease. During the war, TA's mission was also adapted to this end (see Epilogue). On the CTCA and its social work arm, the War Camp Community Service, see Brandt, *No Magic Bullet: A Social History of Venereal Disease in the United States Since 1880*, pp. 70-1 and "Report of the National Secretary," 16 Oct. 1918, in Records of the TAS-NY, Box 1, Folder 1.

TAS.<sup>137</sup> The TAS did work with the CJW to coordinate the deportation of “insane aliens” for the State, but in this instance, the TAS was the junior partner and ultimately dropped out, while the more experienced CJW soldiered on.<sup>138</sup> At this early stage, it was not a preordained conclusion that the TAS would be able to streamline the city’s, or the nation’s, TA services. Its restructuring as mixed-sex association in 1911, discussed later in Chapter Four, can be understood as a response to its uncertain position in the travelers’ aid field.

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<sup>137</sup> At the national level, the YWCA did give the TAS control of the Jamestown Exposition Travelers’ Aid Committee in 1907. See above.

<sup>138</sup> State of New York, State Commission in Lunacy, *Twentieth Annual Report*, pp. 42-3 and *Twenty-First Annual Report*, p. 235. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 9.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Encounters Between Agents and Travelers, 1906-1910**

Chapter Three examines the Travelers' Aid Society of New York's work on the ground at the city's rail terminals and piers. It first describes the methods underpinning the TAS's "short-time" social work, which called for agent/client contact to be brief and for travelers to reach their final destination or transfer point as quickly as possible. It then discusses the TAS's record keeping practices, which were developed during a moment when "records" were emerging as a critical tool in the professionalization of social work. The bulk of the chapter is a statistical portrait of TA work, which includes a breakdown of the total number of travelers helped by age, sex, and ethnicity; a compilation of the transatlantic lines that the TAS serviced; and a tally of the different locations to which agents brought travelers (or, in TA lingo, how travelers were "disposed of").

The chapter concludes by assessing the interaction between TAS agents and travelers in terms of the long running debate over the nature of social welfare in the United States and Europe. Some have interpreted social welfare primarily in terms of social control and discipline, while a more recent approach recognizes the potential of social work to deliver meaningful aid and empower clients. Invoking both discipline and empowerment, I provide examples of clear-cut cases where travelers benefited from their contact with the TAS and more ambiguous cases in which discipline and empowerment overlapped.

## The Methods of the Travelers' Aid Society

During the period 1906-1910, the Travelers' Aid Society of New York established the basic methods of pre-war travelers' aid. The TAS continued the nineteenth century precedent of targeting single young women. In addition, children and older women were also made a top priority. Agents were therefore instructed to be on the lookout for women of all ages and children "who for any reason seemed likely to fall into moral danger."<sup>1</sup> However, the TAS's constitution did not limit the Society's clients to only women and children. All travelers, including men, who found themselves in distress were eligible for aid. For instance, from May 1906 to April 1907, the TAS helped twenty men because to refuse would have been "inhuman."<sup>2</sup>

To meet travelers, agents patrolled the city's piers and the two main rail hubs, the Pennsylvania Railroad's Pennsylvania Station and the New York Central Railroad's Grand Central Station. The piers were situated along the Hudson River from the Battery in Lower Manhattan to West 22nd Street. The largest transatlantic ocean liners docked at Chelsea Piers (Piers 53-62), which spanned West 12th Street to West 22nd Street.<sup>3</sup>

Pennsylvania Station was initially located outside of New York City on the Hudson River waterfront in Jersey City, New Jersey. The terminal was built in 1891 and was most noted for its monumental train shed. According to one commentator from *Engineering News*, the shed's "colossal arched roof and great glass gable loom up in such proportions as to dwarf into insignificance every building in the vicinity with the exception of the lofty grain-elevators." In between the train shed and head house was a narrow concourse that passengers used to navigate

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<sup>1</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 8. Constitution Art. I, Sec. 2, in *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 4, 8, 20. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 5.

<sup>3</sup> New York City WPA Writers' Project, *A Maritime History of New York*, 1941 (Brooklyn: Going Coastal, Inc., 2004), p. 193.

from their trains to the ferries that shuttled them across the river to Manhattan. In November 1910, a new Pennsylvania Station, designed by the famous firm of McKim, Mead and White, opened in Manhattan between 31<sup>st</sup> and 33<sup>rd</sup> Streets and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenues. With the new station, Pennsylvania Railroad passengers now had direct access to Manhattan via twin tunnels under the Hudson River.<sup>4</sup>

Pennsylvania Station's rival, Grand Central Station, was located at 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and Park Avenue in Manhattan. Its head house was a six story neo-Renaissance building with a stone facade. Its interior featured separate waiting rooms for men and women, as well as a special private compartment for upper- and middle-class women that was overseen by a maid. Behind the head house was a wide concourse of uninterrupted space in which passengers could move freely from waiting room to train.<sup>5</sup>

At Pennsylvania and Grand Central Stations, TA agents met incoming express and local trains. At the docks, agents met the transatlantic lines that connected New York with Liverpool: the American, White Star, and Cunard. Other lines included the Hamburg-American, the North German Lloyd from Bremen, and the Red Star, which linked New York with the European continent. Since the TAS did not have an official desk at either the stations or docks, agents had to claim informal spaces for themselves. At the stations, agents stood in the concourses near the train exits. At the piers, one or two agents positioned themselves near the second cabin gang-

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<sup>4</sup> The quote appears in Walter Berg, *Buildings and Structure of American Railroads: A Reference Book* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1893), p. 412. Also see Hilary Ballon, *New York's Pennsylvania Stations* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2002), pp. 19-21; Carl Condit, *The Port of New York: A History of the Rail and Terminal System from the Beginnings to Pennsylvania Station*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 152-9; and Stilgoe, *Metropolitan Corridor*, pp. 21-3, 32-6.

<sup>5</sup> In 1913, the station was renamed Grand Central Terminal and replaced by the classic Beaux Arts building designed by Warren & Wetmore and Reed & Stem. Condit, *Port of New York*, Vol. 1, pp. 121-4. James Mooney, "Grand Central Terminal," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, ed. Kenneth Jackson (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 498.



planks to watch for debarking passengers.<sup>6</sup> They did not wear uniforms and were only identifiable by their Travelers' Aid Society badges made of ribbon.<sup>7</sup>

In general, whether working the stations or piers, TA agents used the technique of *observe, assess, approach, and help*.<sup>8</sup> First, they were to observe individual travelers from a distance; second, assess their degree of vulnerability to moral danger; then, if warranted, approach and offer help. Not all cases were initiated by the agents. Travelers or their families could pre-arrange, by telegraph or mail, for an agent to meet them at a dock or train station. Or, travelers themselves might seek out a TA worker after they disembarked, having heard of the TAS through word of mouth.<sup>9</sup> Officials, such as Immigration Inspectors and police officers, also referred cases to agents. Immigration Inspectors were to alert agents to the presence of young women aboard steamships who seemed in need of protection. In these cases, agents would be allowed to board the vessel to take temporary custody of the traveler.<sup>10</sup>

In whichever way agents and travelers came into contact, their time together was designed to be brief, especially as compared to the social work offered by “protective residential organizations,” like the YWCA.<sup>11</sup> In the 1920s, TA practitioners dubbed their method “short-

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<sup>6</sup> Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, p. 77. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 9. *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 7. At the piers, the TAS did not handle steerage class passengers because they were the responsibility of the Federal Government at Ellis Island.

<sup>7</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 4. By 1911, the badge had been changed to a “white enamel shield” that contained an image of the “Travelers' Palm which grows in the desert and gives shade and water to weary travelers.” *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 16.

<sup>8</sup> This description of TA method is mine. Horan gives a similar account in “Trafficking in Danger,” p. 262.

<sup>9</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 6. *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 77-8. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 16. *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 8, 20.

<sup>11</sup> This point is made by Beverly Stadum in “Female Protection and Empowerment: Travelers Aid Services, 1919-1934,” *Affilia* 12:3 (Fall 1997), pp. 280-1.

time” social work, a designation that also fits the period under discussion here.<sup>12</sup> In a typical TA scenario, the agent was to “conduct” the traveler as quickly and efficiently as possible to her final destination in the city or, if the traveler intended to leave New York, take her to another station or pier where she could continue her journey. A photograph from 1910-11 shows an agent, recognizable by her TAS badge, leading a small caravan of travelers on foot from a pier to a train station, which suggests that if several travelers required a transfer to the same location, then agents would take them all in one trip. Those leaving the metropolitan area would be given a postcard and instructed to mail it to Travelers’ Aid Society headquarters so that their safety could be accounted for.<sup>13</sup>

If an agent encountered a traveler who did not have a definite address to go to, it was the agent’s responsibility to guide her to one of the numerous temporary lodging facilities for single women. If the traveler was a child, possible destinations included the Children’s Aid Society or the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Upon arrival, the traveler became the responsibility of the “Home” or institution, though follow up TA services could be given if the agent deemed it necessary.

Other scenarios required that the TA worker provide immediate aid within the station or on the pier, and did not require her to escort the traveler to any further point. In these cases, services included helping travelers transfer to a connecting train, watching over travelers until their relatives arrived, helping them find luggage, arranging for lost tickets to be replaced, and providing food “in cases of destitution.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 72-4.

<sup>13</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, pp. 5, 7, 13. “History,” *Bulletin* 1:6 (Oct.-Nov. 1918), p. 7. For examples of travelers writing to the TAS to provide updates on their arrival status, see *Annual Report, 1910-11*, pp. 30-1.

<sup>14</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 9-10.

As part of their short-time work, agents needed to be prepared to intervene in situations where female travelers appeared threatened by suspicious men or women. The agents did not have police power, but they did wear badges that could be used to invoke some modicum of authority for the purposes of scaring away potential criminals and/or convincing the traveler to trust them. The police could also be involved when extra help or official power was necessary.<sup>15</sup>

In the fall of 1909, the TAS opened an “emergency room” at headquarters. A photograph shows a small, narrow, one window room that contains two beds, a chair, and a wash bin. On the walls hangs a variety of framed pictures. The room was intended to house middle-class women who were accidentally stranded in the city and refused to stay at a public charity if the respectable Homes were full. Later, older working-women and women with children were also included in the list of potential emergency boarders. It was the responsibility of the three Office agents to care for the house guests and see to it that they resumed their journey with the proper resources. If the boarders planned to stay in the city, the agents would assist with their transition to a more permanent home and respectable employment.<sup>16</sup>

## **Record Keeping**

In the early twentieth century, case records were an important tool in the drive to professionalize the social work field and President Grace Dodge was at the forefront of efforts to standardize record keeping practices. Her approach mixed two competing ideals: one, that records should be scientifically objective, employing standard “typologies, outlines, and

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<sup>15</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 13. The photo appears in the 1909 Annual Report between pages 14 and 15.

questionnaires,” and two, that they should privilege “local color and human interest.”<sup>17</sup> In the 1920s, social work leaders would argue in favor of one or the other of these positions. However, Dodge in 1906 saw no conflict between them.

Dodge insisted that all but the most minor of interactions between agent and traveler be recorded on printed “cards.” The cards were meant to be duplicated by TA organizations throughout the country in order to facilitate data collection and inter-organizational communication. Their format informed TA work for the next several decades.<sup>18</sup>

The first card for 1906-1907 contained twelve lines onto which required information was to be filled. Below is an example of a filled-in card from 1906<sup>19</sup>:

Date and time of arrival. *June 25, 1906, Evening.*  
Station. *Grand Central.*  
Name. *Mrs. \_\_\_\_ (2 small chil.). Mrs. \_\_\_\_ (1 young daughter).*  
Age. *30, 40.*  
Nationality. *Russian. (Jewish.)*  
Why helped. *No English.*  
Home address. \_\_\_\_.  
Occupation at home. *Housewives.*  
Object of coming to city. *En route \_\_\_\_ , Mass.*  
Destination: \_\_\_\_ , *Mass.*  
How disposed of. *To Hebrew Shelter, E. Broadway, for night.*  
If delivered to friends or relatives, full address. \_\_\_\_.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Karen Tice, *Tales of Wayward Girls and Immoral Women: Case Records and the Professionalization of Social Work* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), p. 4 and Ch. 2.

<sup>18</sup> “History,” p. 7. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 5.

<sup>19</sup> The original TAS cards/reports are not available. For the period 1906-1909, fifty four case reports were printed in full or in part and appear toward the end of each Annual Report. The authors of these sample reports, the agents, are never credited. The samples are not titled or numbered, therefore I assigned numbers to them that correspond to the order in which they appear in the Annual Reports. For example, Case 2 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907* designates the second case that is listed in the 1907 Annual Report.

<sup>20</sup> Case 2 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 16. In 1908, the form was scaled down to only ten lines with “Nationality” and “If delivered to friends” eliminated. For samples of the new card, see *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 12-15.

If the traveler came by boat, there was another form, similar to the above, that contained an extra line to record the traveler's "Ship" and class of "Cabin."<sup>21</sup>

After the required information was recorded, there was a section of the card entitled "Remarks," in which the agent was to write a detailed description of her interaction with the traveler. Here, the human interest side of record keeping was emphasized over impersonal objectivity. In the above case of the two women and their children, the agent recorded the following "Remarks."

"These poor women were fleeing from the recent massacre in Russia.<sup>22</sup> Their families had put together all their money to send these two women with their children away. They had been charged \$13.00 by a cab-driver for bringing them from \_\_\_\_ pier. The matter would have been investigated if the women had been willing to stay over for a day. But they were too frightened, and insisted on going in the morning."<sup>23</sup>

Another summary from 1909 reads:

"A Syrian woman... was referred to us by one of the interpreters. She was en route to her home in Beyrout, Syria. The woman had just come from a hospital up the State, where she had undergone an operation, and on account of her weakened condition she was refused on board the steamer. The poor woman, having no friends here, we took her to a home where she remained a week, then it was learned she had tuberculosis and had to be sent to a hospital. We visited her every week or so, bringing her fruit and Syrian newspapers which we obtained from some kind Syrian merchants downtown. Later we interested a benevolent Syrian lady in her behalf, who visited her at the hospital and talked to her in her own language. We made every effort to locate her relatives in the old country but were unsuccessful. The poor woman was always cheerful in spite of her suffering and tried so hard to express her gratitude for our kindness. She died on December 4, 1909."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> See for example Case 1 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup> The massacre was most likely the June 1906 pogrom in Bialystok, Poland, which was then part of the Russian Empire. See H. H. Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 886-7.

<sup>23</sup> Case 2 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>24</sup> Case 8 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 11.

More mundane cases were also reported, such as that of a seventeen year old Irish woman who arrived on the White Star line:

“Her trunk was in the steerage, and when we were ready to go I found that she had only twelve cents. She had told the Inspector she had a pound, but she had spent it for soda water, fees to stewards, etc. I told the ship matron and she said the girl should have gone to Ellis Island, but the barge had left. So by her advice I took Miss \_\_\_ to the Mission of Our Lady of the Rosary, where I left her in care of a very kind priest, who promised to telegraph her sister.”<sup>25</sup>

For travelers who only required “in-station” or “on-pier” help, meaning that they did not need to be taken from the station or pier to another destination, reports were kept in log form.

The Pennsylvania Station log for April 15, 1907 reads:

Sent telegram to \_\_\_\_ for a Scotch woman, brought to station by dock agent.  
A pretty Scotch girl got parted from her friend, a young man. Said she had lost him in the station somewhere. We found him downstairs in the ferry-house. He was worried and feared the girl had been lost...  
Telegraphed to Brooklyn for young American girl whose cousin had not come for her. Cousin came after receiving telegram...  
Bought food for Polish family; apparently very poor...  
Several colored people in the station, looking for friends coming from the South. Found by speaking to them that they... did not know just what day or what time the expected friends had started or intended to start... But they waited almost all day... Most of them went away disappointed.  
Took the names and addresses of some of them.  
Saw colored woman on car for D., L. & W Station...<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Case 1 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 16.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24. The 1907 Annual Report is the only one that includes examples of the “in-station” logs.

## A Statistical Portrait of Travelers' Aid Work

Toward the end of each Annual Report, the Travelers' Aid Society presented a statistical breakdown of that year's work, such as the total number of travelers assisted; travelers' age and sex; how they were "disposed of" by agents; their nationality; and, if met on a pier, on which transatlantic line they arrived. Using this information, along with case summaries, I will present a profile of the TAS's work from May 1906 through 1910.<sup>27</sup>

### *The Travelers*

From May 1906-1910, I estimate that over 32,500 travelers were helped by the TAS-NY; the vast majority (over 31,500) being met at Grand Central Station, Pennsylvania Station, and the city's piers.<sup>28</sup> Those coming directly to TAS headquarters for assistance numbered only around 1,000. Travelers met at the stations and piers received either out-station/off-pier or in-station/on-pier TA. The former meant that agents escorted travelers from train stations/piers to other locations or transportation lines. The latter referred to instances where travelers received basic assistance on-site and continued on their own *without* a TA agent. From 1908-1910, 11,063 people (out of 21,273) received out-station/off-pier help and 9,037 in-station/on-pier.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> The Annual Report for 1907 covers the period May 1906-April 1907. The Annual Report for 1908 covers two periods: May 1907 – Dec. 1907 and 1908. See TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 21-2 and 23-7.

<sup>28</sup> These figures are an estimate because the data in the 1907 Annual Report is incomplete. The statistics for 1907 neglect travelers who received "in-station" assistance; children who were accompanied by adults; and children who were traveling alone who were met at the docks. I estimate that these omissions add 3,000 additional travelers to the 29,713 that are accounted for in the reports.

<sup>29</sup> Because there is no data on off-pier work for the period May 1907-Dec. 1907, I only present the combined off-pier and out-station statistics for 1908-1910.

### *By Rail*

In the first decade of the twentieth century, railroads transported hundreds of millions of passengers to New York City each year. At Grand Central Station alone, between 16 and 20 million people a year arrived or departed. The great majority were male commuters, in whom the Travelers' Aid Society took little interest. It was the lesser, though still significant, numbers of non-commuters whom the TAS sought to protect.<sup>30</sup> Between 1906 and 1910, the TAS met over 20,500 rail travelers. Beginning with the 1908 Annual Report, statistics were kept on the number of travelers helped at Pennsylvania and Grand Central Stations. They show a relatively even distribution between the two stations: 8,537 travelers in Pennsylvania and 8,434 in Grand Central.

Detailed records were kept only on travelers who required sustained intervention and whom agents escorted outside of the rail terminals (out-station). We know that "Girls 21 to 30" years old, the majority of whom were unmarried, received the most attention (see Table 1).<sup>31</sup> From May 1907-1910, they made up 29% of the out-station cases (2,355 out of 8,049).<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> For yearly statistics on the passenger traffic on New York railroads, see Table 9 in Carl Condit, *The Port of New York: A History of the Rail and Terminal System from the Grand Central Electrification to the Present*, Vol. 2 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 287. For passenger numbers at Grand Central Station, see Table 7 in *Ibid.*, p. 277. On commuters, see *Ibid.*, p. 54. For Pennsylvania Station, see *Port of New York*, Vol. 1, pp. 273-4 and Table 7 on pp. 348-9.

<sup>31</sup> 61% of Girls 21-30 were unmarried.

<sup>32</sup> The Annual Report for 1907, which covers May 1906-April 1907, omits statistics for two important categories of travelers, children traveling with adults and children traveling alone (the latter is omitted only in the pier statistics). Therefore, I exclude this period in the following analysis of the number of travelers helped by age and sex.



Table 1: Number of Travelers Helped, by Age and Sex, May 1907-1910

|                   | Train Stations* | Piers        |
|-------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Girls 21-30       | 2,355           | 3,193        |
| Children w/adults | 1,921           | 1,966        |
| Older Women       | 1,633           | 1,858        |
| Girls under 21    | 1,609           | 862          |
| Children Alone    | 494             | 44           |
| Men               | 37              | 413          |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>8,049</b>    | <b>8,336</b> |

\*Train station statistics only include those travelers receiving out-station assistance. Pier statistics include travelers receiving both on- and off-pier service.

Source: Annual Reports, 1908-1910

Seven of the sample case reports included near the end of each Annual Report describe encounters with women in the 21-30 category. Four of the seven show recent immigrants arriving in New York City from other points in the United States, mostly the east coast (Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania), but also the west (Washington State). These women came looking for work in the city, or were on their way to a job that required them to pass through New York, as was the case with a 22 year old Syrian woman, who was en route to Macon, Georgia where she believed a position awaited. They had only been in the U.S. for several months and, with the exception of an Irish woman, spoke little to no English.<sup>33</sup> Of the three remaining cases of women between the ages of 21 and 30, two involved married

<sup>33</sup> See cases 8, 9, and 15 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 19, 22 and case 1 in *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 12.

housewives; one was a German Jewish woman who was attempting to re-unite with her husband, who had earlier left Pennsylvania to work in Brooklyn.<sup>34</sup>

Only in 1909 were “Girls 21-30” not the top group assisted at the stations. That year, they were second to Children with Adults.<sup>35</sup> The latter made up 24% of the total helped (1,921 of 8,049). Of the eight sample cases in this category, all involve children of immigrants, usually traveling under duress. Agents described tired and stressed mothers with “poorly dressed” and “crying” children, such as the 35 year old German Jewish mother and her six children, ages 10, 9, 8, 7, 4, and 2, en route to her husband somewhere in New York State.<sup>36</sup> Six of the eight cases involved children on their way to re-unite with family, usually the father. There was the case of the six month old baby, brought by a young Russian mother who had come to New York City to “hunt” for the baby’s father.<sup>37</sup> Less typical was the case of the five year old Hungarian girl, who arrived at Pennsylvania Station from a mining town in West Virginia, accompanied by a “middle-aged man.” Her parents had died within a short time of each other and the man, an acquaintance of the father, wished to locate the Hungarian Consul for the purpose of returning the girl to Hungary to be raised by her grandparents.<sup>38</sup>

“Older Women” and “Girls under 21” were the next largest categories. Of the four sample cases involving older women (over 30), all involved foreign women and none described

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<sup>34</sup> Case 2 in *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17 and Case 2 in *Annual Report, 1909*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>35</sup> The TAS considered travelers to be children if they were under 16 years of age.

<sup>36</sup> Case 5 in *TAS-NY, Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 14-15. Also see Cases 2 and 18 in *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13, 19 and Case 4 in *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 10.

<sup>37</sup> Case 4 in *TAS-NY, Annual Report, 1909*, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Case 9 in *TAS-NY, Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 16-17.

women seeking work. Three women were traveling with their children.<sup>39</sup> The lone single woman was found by a station interpreter, stranded at Grand Central after having been denied passage on a steamship due to her ill health. The 35 year old Syrian woman had been attempting to return home and now did not know what to do.<sup>40</sup> The *New York Times* reported a case of an older, working-class woman, Josephine Wiznieska, who had come from Buffalo to New York in the fall of 1909 with her husband of three days, Michael Solomonwitz. Solomonowitz was ten years younger than Wiznieska and claimed to own property in Brooklyn. At Grand Central Station, he “deserted” his bride and ran off with her life-savings of \$1,800 in what appeared to be a very deliberate scheme.<sup>41</sup>

Crime or other suspicious activity was also a factor in several of the sample cases involving Girls under 21, none of whom were married. Three young women were fleeing from “unprincipled” men. One man had tried to convince two “young, pretty Polish girls” to accompany him to a hotel. Another had tricked a nineteen year old woman into leaving New York with him. The woman, a Venezuelan immigrant who had previously worked as a servant in the city, realized her “mistake,” left the man, and returned to New York.<sup>42</sup>

In some cases, travelers were participants in behavior that they knew the agents would find inappropriate. A 17 year old American found at Grand Central admitted upon repeated questioning to running away from her Maryland home, but would not say why.<sup>43</sup> A belligerent

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<sup>39</sup> Case 2 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 16-17 and Cases 2 and 5 in *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>40</sup> Case 8 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 11.

<sup>41</sup> “Husband Takes Her Cash,” *New York Times*, 7 Nov. 1909, p. C6. The above was Wiznieska’s version of events as told to the TA agent, Mrs. J. M. Childres.

<sup>42</sup> Cases 3 and 8 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 13, 16. The Polish girls were attempting to get to Worcester, MA to visit friends.

<sup>43</sup> Case 1 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 8.

20 year old from Poland reprimanded agents through her impromptu translator, a Polish hotel runner, that her plans were “none of your business.” Her motives for keeping silent are unclear, but she may have been attempting to conceal questionable behavior.<sup>44</sup>

When the TAS encountered Children traveling Alone (494 of 8,049, 6%), they were usually coming to New York to connect with a relative.<sup>45</sup> In two instances, children were on their way to a relative after their primary caregiver had taken ill or died. In a case from 1907, three children, 11, 2, and 1, arrived in Pennsylvania Station. The mother of the two youngest children had been traveling with them but, tragically, had died on the train of a heart attack. Her body was removed in Trenton, NJ and the children were “sent on” to their grandmother in New York. Once in the city, the TA agent took charge of the two siblings and their young aunt in order to deliver them to the grandmother.<sup>46</sup>

Children rode the rails not just to connect with their families or guardians, but to escape them. For example, agents met an African-American boy who had run away from his family. They also encountered an 8 year old German boy who had fled his convent orphanage on the Hudson River.<sup>47</sup>

In summary, the station records show young women, mostly immigrants, entering and exiting New York City for reasons that were primarily economic and familial. By and large, they were not “new women,” who rejected traditional feminine roles in favor of greater sexual and intellectual independence, nor typical “women adrift,” who lived alone and worked for low

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<sup>44</sup> Case 4 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>45</sup> 6 of 9 cases of children traveling alone involved those trying to reach a family member.

<sup>46</sup> Case 12 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 21.

<sup>47</sup> Case 3 in *Ibid.*, p. 17. Case 16 in *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 18-19. For a third example of a runaway child, see Case 10 in *Annual Report, 1909*, pp. 11-12.

wages in factories.<sup>48</sup> Rather, the single women met by the TAS sought work chiefly as domestic servants or they came to find friends and family, while married women were attempting to reunite with their husbands.

These cases are not the whole story however. A seventeen year old American woman encountered at Grand Central Station defied tradition by running away from home. And, surely, of the thousands of women assisted, some must have been looking for work in factories or workshops: jobs that did not involve living with their employer. A Japanese traveler was met who sought employment as an artificial flower maker.<sup>49</sup> A young Russian woman had lost her factory job in Utica, NY and was coming to live with her brother on the upper west side of Manhattan.<sup>50</sup> No details are given about her future employment plans, but it is likely that she once again searched for factory work. Other than these two examples, the records are silent on women seeking non-domestic positions. Most likely this is because the TAS preferred that newcomers work as servants in a home environment rather than in a factory, workshop, or store, and may have wished to underscore in print those cases that conformed to their vision.<sup>51</sup>

It should also be noted that though its emphasis was on protecting young women, large numbers of women over thirty and children were met at train stations as well. Older women were often traveling with children under stressful conditions. Children, whether alone or with an

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<sup>48</sup> Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York and the Creation of a New Century* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000). Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*. Lara Vapnek, *Breadwinners: Working Women and Economic Independence, 1865-1920* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), p. 64.

<sup>49</sup> Case 1 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 12.

<sup>50</sup> Case 11 in *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> It was a common position among reformers that housework was healthier and safer than industrial work and should be promoted over the latter. This was despite the fact that working women themselves seemed to increasingly prefer factory work to domestic work. See Vapnek, *Breadwinners* and Vanessa May, *Unprotected Labor: Household Workers, Politics, and Middle-class Reform in New York, 1870-1940* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

adult, were typically on their way to other family members, sometimes due to illness or death of a primary caretaker. Several runaway boys and girls also received TA and ultimately were returned home or to an institution.

Finally, in regard to the station records, the sample cases presented in the Annual Reports overwhelmingly emphasize the TAS's work with immigrant women. Yet, statistically, native-born American women of European descent were the most numerous of all the "nationalities" encountered at the rail terminals (African-Americans were number four). Only seven cases definitely describe Americans receiving TA, which make it difficult to draw conclusions about this population. The cases include a "slightly insane" thirty year old woman, two runaways, children traveling alone to family, and a "confidential" case involving an eighteen year old.<sup>52</sup>

### *By Ship*

The TAS encountered roughly 10,500 travelers at the city's docks from May 1906-1910, peaking at 2,504 travelers for the year 1909.<sup>53</sup> The TAS's clients came exclusively from the first and second cabins of transatlantic steamers because only cabin-class passengers were allowed to enter New York from the docks. In contrast, steerage-class passengers upon docking were promptly shuttled over to Ellis Island for more thorough inspection and processing. Of the cabin-class, the TAS primarily dealt with those from the second cabin, over a hundred thousand

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<sup>52</sup> The "insane" woman had wandered away from an outing in New Jersey. Somehow she made it to Grand Central Station, where she believed "she had stayed all night once, a long while ago." Case 6 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 18.

<sup>53</sup> After 1909, there is a drop in the number of dock travelers assisted, making for a loss of 472 in 1910. This is the only time in either the dock or station records that the total helped actually declined between years. The number of agents seems to have stayed the same, so it was not for lack of manpower that the totals declined. Since 1907, the number of second cabin passengers arriving in New York had been steadily decreasing, which may partially explain why less were helped in 1910. It may also be that the restructuring of the TAS that began in October of 1910 had a negative impact on the dock work: the leadership being preoccupied with other issues.

of whom arrived in the port of New York each year.<sup>54</sup> The second cabin was intended to provide comfortable accommodations for middle-class travelers, but was used by the working-classes as well. It was often the case that the price of a second-class ticket differed only slightly from that of a steerage ticket, so immigrants who more closely fit the profile for steerage-class could be found in second-class as well.<sup>55</sup> For those who could not afford the difference in price, their second-class tickets could be pre-paid by employers or relatives already established in the U.S.

In the Annual Reports, the age and sex breakdown for the docks was tallied by using data gathered from both on- and off-pier work, so the numbers are inflated as compared to the statistics for the train stations, which utilized only out-station cases. However, I will venture a tentative comparison between the docks' and stations' age and sex statistics, primarily in terms of percentages. At the docks for the period May 1907-1910, Girls 21-30, the majority of whom were single, were the travelers encountered the most, as they were in the station records (see Table 1). They accounted for 3,193 out of 8,336 travelers, or 38%.<sup>56</sup> They outnumbered Children with Adults, the second most helped group, by nearly 1,227, a far larger gap than at the train stations.

The three cases that appear in the Annual Reports from the 21-30 category show women who were arriving for work or marriage. Two women immigrated to the United States to work

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<sup>54</sup> For data on second cabin passengers, see "Steamship Travel During Year 1908," *Freight: The Shippers' Forum* 10:1 (Jan. 1909), p. 28 and New York State, Department of Labor, Bureau of Industries and Immigration, *Annual Report, 1911* (Albany: State Department of Labor, 1912), p. 46. On steerage immigrants and Ellis Island. see Cannato, *American Passage*.

<sup>55</sup> Amy Fairchild, *Science at the Borders: Immigrant Medical Inspection and the Shaping of the Modern Industrial Labor Force* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), pp. 127-8, 330, n. 16. On steerage-class, see Nancy Foner, *From Ellis Island to JFK: New York's Two Great Waves of Immigration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 30-2.

<sup>56</sup> 72% of Girls 21-30 were single.

as domestic servants.<sup>57</sup> The third case involved a 22 year old English woman who was met at the pier by her fiancé. The Immigration Inspector would not let her off the ship until she was married, and the task of getting a wedding together fell to the TA agent.<sup>58</sup> Similarly, the newspaper, *The Sun*, reported on a case in 1906 in which Esther Gunderson of the Travelers' Aid Society acted as a witness during the wedding of another young English couple on board the *Baltic*, an ocean liner in the White Star fleet.<sup>59</sup>

Older Women (1,858 of 8,336, 22%) were the third most helped group at the piers. Only one case was printed from this category, which involved a 64 year old Dutch woman who was met after she disembarked from the *New Amsterdam*, a ship from the Holland-American Line. She was returning from her native Holland to her adopted home in Wisconsin, where she had lived for the past thirty years. The experience of being left on the pier overwhelmed her and when the agent found her, she was “beside herself” and “too excited” to proceed any further without help.<sup>60</sup>

For Girls under 21 (862 of 8336, 10%), three of the four sample cases deal with young women who were coming to live with family members and not seeking work.<sup>61</sup> An Irish girl, 17, sailed into harbor on board the *Majestic* of the White Star Line to meet her sister, who she had not seen in ten years. She had only 12 cents to her name and her luggage was still on board the

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<sup>57</sup> Cases 3 and 16 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, pp. 9, 13-14. The English were the number one nationality encountered by the TAS at the city's piers. See Table 4.

<sup>58</sup> Case 20 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 20. Apparently inspectors and ship officers had some leeway in terms of how they compelled a couple to marry. They allowed a 20 year old German girl and her fiancé to leave their ship, the *Potsdam*, with the understanding that the couple would marry immediately in the city. The TAS worker was placed in charge of arranging and witnessing the marriage, which was carried out at the German Lutheran Home at 4 State Street. Case 14 in *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.

<sup>59</sup> “Came in as Bride and Groom,” *The Sun*, 10 Feb. 1906, p. 12.

<sup>60</sup> Case 5 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>61</sup> Likewise, Girls under 21 who were met at the train stations were generally not looking for employment.



ship, which had since left port.<sup>62</sup> Another case involved an English schoolgirl found on the pier who was en route to join her parents in San Francisco.<sup>63</sup>

There was a significant difference in the number of men met at the docks as compared to the stations. At first, the difference was minimal. From May 1906 to May 1907, 6 men received out-station assistance, while 15 men and boys were met at the docks. However, after May 1907, the number of men found at the piers began to rise, peaking at 155 in 1909, while no more than 12 men were ever taken out of the train stations in a given year. In total, men made up 5% of those helped on the docks, as compared to .5% at the stations. What accounts for this difference? For men advanced in age and in poor health, the lengthy overseas voyage likely took a heavier toll on their bodies than if they had traveled by train.<sup>64</sup> Additionally, since for most men it was their first time on American soil, they likely exhibited a more obvious disorientation with their surroundings than at train stations, making them more visible to agents.

Another noteworthy difference between docks and stations is seen in the number of children helped. At the docks, Children traveling Alone were rarely encountered, making up only .5% of the cases, while Children Alone were 6% (494 out of 8,049) of the clientele at the stations. Due to the shorter distances involved in rail travel, adults were more comfortable with sending unescorted children by train than by ship. And, for runaway children, trains provided a more accessible mode of escape.

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<sup>62</sup> Case 1 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 16.

<sup>63</sup> Case 7 in *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>64</sup> See for example case 5 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p 10.

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The Travelers' Aid Society met travelers from 47 different "Nationalities" or ethnic groups, primarily from Europe and North America, but a minority were also from the Middle East, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and Australia. Between May 1906-1910,<sup>65</sup> English travelers were encountered the most (2,231 out of the 15,530 travelers with a known nationality, or 14.4%), followed by Germans (2,197, 14.2%), Poles<sup>66</sup> (1,926, 12%), native-born U.S. Americans of European descent<sup>67</sup> (1,430, 9%), Scotts (1,255, 8%), and Irish (941, 6%). Significant numbers of Hungarians, Russians, African-Americans, Italians, Swedes, "Slavish," Norwegians, Danes, and "Syrians" were also assisted (see Table 2).<sup>68</sup> By region (Table 3), travelers from Great Britain and Ireland were helped the most (4,499 of 15,530, 29%). Those from Eastern Europe were next (3,876, 25%), followed by Central Europe (2,560, 16.5%), North America (2,061, 13%), Scandinavia (1,337, 9%), the Mediterranean (661, 4%), and Western Europe (434, 3%).<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Within this time frame, the period May 1907-Dec. 1907 is omitted because no nationality statistics were kept.

<sup>66</sup> For more detailed statistics on Polish travelers, see O'Connell, "Travelers' Aid for Polish Immigrant Women," pp. 18-19.

<sup>67</sup> Includes native-born Jews.

<sup>68</sup> The TAS considered "Slavish" a nationality in their Annual Report statistics. It seems to have been used in reference to Eastern Europeans whose ethnicity can broadly be described as Slavic. "Syrian" was a common designation in the early twentieth century for Christian Arabs from the Ottoman Empire who today we would refer to as Lebanese. Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (New York: Perennial, 2002), p. 206.

<sup>69</sup> I am using Daniels' definitions of Eastern European and Mediterranean. The former includes, among other peoples, Russians, Hungarians, Poles, Lithuanians, Romanians, Slovaks, and Croatians. The latter includes Italians, Greeks, "Syrians," and Armenians. Daniels, *Coming to America*, Ch. 7 and p. 212. I consider as Central European, Germans, Austrians, Czechs (Bohemians), and Swiss; as Scandinavian, Swedes, Norwegians, Danes, and Finns; as Western European, the French, Dutch, and Belgians; and as North American, U.S. Americans (white and black) and Canadians.

Table 2: Travelers Helped, by Nationality/Ethnicity

|                      | Stations†and Piers,<br>May 1906-1910* | Stations†,<br>May 1906-1908* | Piers,<br>May 1906-1908* |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| English              | 2,231                                 | 206                          | 841                      |
| German               | 2,197                                 | 375                          | 693                      |
| Polish               | 1,926                                 | 612                          | 80                       |
| American (non-black) | 1,430                                 | 629                          | 82                       |
| Scottish             | 1,255                                 | 53                           | 431                      |
| Irish                | 941                                   | 212                          | 257                      |
| Hungarian            | 693                                   | 156                          | 125                      |
| Russian              | 625                                   | 135                          | 110                      |
| American (black)     | 581                                   | 263                          | 1                        |
| Italian              | 534                                   | 127                          | 85                       |
| Swedish              | 481                                   | 107                          | 139                      |
| Slavic               | 453                                   | 144                          | 11                       |
| Norwegian            | 408                                   | 35                           | 144                      |
| Danish               | 315                                   | 18                           | 101                      |

\*Excludes May 1907-Dec. 1907.

†Out-station only.

Source: Annual Reports, 1907-1910

Table 3: Travelers Helped, by Region

|                           | Stations†and Piers,<br>May 1906-1910* | Stations†,<br>May 1906-1908* | Piers,<br>May 1906-1908* |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Great Britain and Ireland | 4,499                                 | 485                          | 1,549                    |
| Eastern Europe            | 3,876                                 | 1,123                        | 339                      |
| Central Europe            | 2,560                                 | 410                          | 824                      |
| North America             | 2,061                                 | 912                          | 85                       |
| Scandinavia               | 1,337                                 | 192                          | 406                      |
| Mediterranean             | 661                                   | 178                          | 96                       |
| Western Europe            | 434                                   | 75                           | 157                      |
| Other Regions             | 102                                   | 19                           | 13                       |
| <b>Total</b>              | <b>15,530</b>                         | <b>3,394</b>                 | <b>3,469</b>             |

\* Excludes May 1907-Dec. 1907.

† Out-station only.

Source: Annual Reports, 1907-1910

If one breaks down the nationality statistics in terms of stations and piers, the picture changes slightly. For May 1906-1908, U.S. Americans of European descent (629 of 3,394, 18.5%) were the most numerous group encountered by TA agents at Penn and Grand Central stations, followed closely by Poles (612, 18%). After Poles came Germans, African-Americans, Irish, English, Hungarians, “Slavish,” Russians, Italians, and Swedes. By region, Eastern Europeans were assisted the most (1,123 of 3,394 travelers, 33%). Next were North Americans (912, 27%), British and Irish (485, 14%), Central Europeans (410, 12%), Scandinavians (192, 5.6%), Mediterraneans (178, 5.2%), and, finally, Western Europeans (75, 2%).

At the docks from May 1906-1908, the English were the leading group of travelers (841 of 3,469, 24%). Next were the Germans (693, 20%), Scotts (431, 12%), Irish (257, 7%), Norwegians (144, 4.2%), and Swedish (139, 4%). In contrast to their marked presence at the

stations, only 82 Euro-Americans and one African-American were met at the docks. White Americans, often tourists returning home, were familiar with the city and, therefore, were less in need of TA than foreign-born travelers. Black travelers were rarely found on European ocean liners, though they did frequently travel on domestic ships from the South. Upon arrival, African-Americans received TA not from the Travelers' Aid Society, but from the Harlem-based White Rose Mission at Pier 26.

By region, transatlantic travelers from Great Britain and Ireland were the most numerous, accounting for nearly half of all passengers (1,549, 45%). Central Europeans made up 24% (824), Scandinavians 12% (406), Eastern Europeans 10% (339), Western Europeans 4.5% (157), travelers from the Mediterranean 2.8% (96), and North Americans 2.5% (85).

What is striking about the data from the piers is that the top six nationalities (English, German, Scottish, Irish, Norwegian, Swedish) were those that had dominated national immigration statistics *before* the era of mass migration, 1880-1920, and saw their numbers decline during it. For example, during “the heaviest decade of American immigration” (1901-1910), immigrants from Great Britain and Ireland accounted for only 10.7% of European immigrants, Scandinavia for around 6%, and Germany for 4%.<sup>70</sup> Yet, they are over-represented in TAS records from this period (45%, 12%, and 20% respectively). In the era of mass immigration, it was Mediterranean people (Italians) and Eastern Europeans (primarily Jews and Poles) who dominated the immigrant ranks, though they barely register in TAS records. Two million Italians immigrated to the United State between 1901 and 1910, accounting for 25% of

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<sup>70</sup>Daniels, *Coming to America*, pp. 165, 188. However, from 1899-1910, northern Europeans were amongst the highest in terms of percentage of female immigrants. The Irish (52.1%) and Germans (40.6%) were two of the seven ethnicities that had women as over 40% of their total immigration. Scottish women were 36.5% of Scottish immigration and Scandinavian women were 38.2%. United States, Senate, Immigration Commission, *Statistical Review of Immigration, 1820-1910*, By W. Dillingham (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1911), pp. 47-8.

the total European immigration. However, Italians were only 2.5% of travelers encountered at the docks by the Travelers' Aid Society. No figures were given for Jewish travelers met, but Eastern Europeans accounted for only 10% of TA recipients, while being over 20% of the immigrant population.<sup>71</sup>

The discrepancy between national immigration figures and TAS figures is due in part to the TAS limiting the scope of its work to second cabin passengers at the docks when the new wave of immigrants (Italians, Jews, and Poles) were arriving primarily via steerage class and discharged at Ellis Island.<sup>72</sup> Though Italian women were less than a quarter of Italian immigrants, tens of thousands would have passed through Ellis Island each year, as would tens of thousands of Jewish women, who accounted for 45% of Jewish immigration.<sup>73</sup> As a result of confining its activities to the piers, the TAS had only limited contact with Mediterranean and Eastern European women.

In regard to the number of Jewish travelers met by TA agents, the statistics are incomplete. In all but one Annual Report, the TAS categorized Jews solely by their country of origin.<sup>74</sup> For example, if an agent assisted a Russian Jew, the traveler's "nationality" would be recorded only as Russian: her Jewish identity erased. Undoubtedly, many of the Russians,

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<sup>71</sup> Daniels, *Coming to America*, p. 188.

<sup>72</sup> Young women were not allowed off Ellis Island unless in the custody of a trusted male relative or "immigrant aid" worker. On the island, the Council of Jewish Women in conjunction with Immigration and Naturalization officials provided "immigrant aid," which included services akin to TA. Cannato, *American Passage*, p. 265. Johnson, "Protection, Virtue," pp. 668-70.

<sup>73</sup> Daniels, *Coming to America*, p. 225. Senate Immigration Commission, *Statistical Review of Immigration*, p. 47.

<sup>74</sup> Similarly, U.S. immigration officials did not record the number of Jewish immigrants entering the U.S.A. for the period 1901-1910. Jews were considered subject people of the various central and eastern European empires (Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and German) and were therefore categorized by their "national origin" (where they came from). Unlike as in the TAS, this policy was applied to all imperial subjects, not only Jews. Daniels, *Coming to America*, p. 188.

Austrians, Hungarians, Germans, and Americans encountered by the TAS were Jewish, though there is no way of knowing exactly how many.

The 1907 Annual Report is the only one that included statistics on the number of Jewish TA recipients. It states that from May 1906-April 1907, 153 of the 1,557 travelers met at the train stations were Jewish (10%).<sup>75</sup> After 1907, Jewish clients only appear in the sample cases that were printed in each Annual Report. For instance, in 1908, 5 of the 20 sample cases (25%) involve Jews assisted at train stations. In 1909, it is 2 of 18 sample cases (11%). Since the number of cases presented above is limited, it is difficult to make a general claim concerning the overall percentage of Jewish travelers. Tentatively, I estimate that Jews made up somewhere between 10-25% of TA recipients, and were most commonly found at the train stations.

### *The Transatlantic Lines*

The TAS recorded the total number of steamers that it met per year. For 1908 and 1909, it also kept track of how many times it met each individual line. During this two year span, three of the top five lines were British: the White Star was number one (178 of 1,032 ships); the Cunard number two (164); and Anchor, a line out of Glasgow, Scotland, was number five (89). Two German lines, the North German Lloyd and the Hamburg-American, were numbers three (156) and four (131) respectively. See Table 4 for the entire list of Transatlantic lines.

Though the White Star was number one in terms of arriving ships, TA workers met the most travelers from the Cunard, a rival English line. During 1908 and 1909, 967 passengers debarked the Cunard and received travelers' aid. The Scottish Anchor line was number two with 855 passengers assisted, followed by the White Star with 797. The two German lines were

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<sup>75</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, p. 8.

fourth and fifth: 521 from the North German Lloyd and 386 from the Hamburg (see Table 4). On the whole, the lines linking Great Britain with New York<sup>76</sup> accounted for 61% of the total passengers met by the Travelers' Aid Society. The German lines were next with 19%, followed by two other lines from northern Europe (the Holland and Scandinavian) at 11%. This hierarchy is not surprising since the British and Irish as a group were the most frequently encountered travelers at the piers, followed by Germans and Scandinavians (Table 2). Eastern European travelers, the fourth most met group, also typically sailed aboard English and German lines since there was no port for them to leave from in their region.<sup>77</sup>

#### *To Line, City Address, or Home*

If a traveler required out-station or off-pier TA, statistics were kept as to where she was taken (how she was "Disposed Of"). From Pennsylvania Station and Grand Central Station during the years May 1906-1910,<sup>78</sup> travelers were most commonly delivered to other transportation lines in the city: to another station if they were going to continue their journey by land or to a dock to continue by sea. Of the 7,772 out-station cases, 4,152 (53%) received such help (see Table 5). In the TAS samples, travelers ranging from children to older women were escorted to other lines and, ideally, placed on board by an agent. An inability to speak English combined with a general unfamiliarity with the city's transportation network was the primary reason travelers were guided to other stations or piers.<sup>79</sup> Reasons for leaving the city included to

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<sup>76</sup> The White Star, Cunard, Anchor, and American lines.

<sup>77</sup> Daniels, *Coming to America*, pp. 186-7.

<sup>78</sup> These figures exclude the period May 1907-Dec. 1907 since no records were kept at this time regarding where out-station and off-pier travelers were taken.

<sup>79</sup> It was usually the case that foreigners who were taken from stations to other lines did not speak English, but not always. One case from 1909 involved two Swiss women who were met by appointment at Erie Station and later



find employment and to visit relatives. The farthest anyone was traveling was to Macon, Georgia; closer destinations, such as Pennsylvania and New York State, were more common.

Table 4: Steamships and Travelers Met per Line

| Lines            | Steamers Met,<br>1908-1909 | Travelers Met,<br>1908-1909 |
|------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| White Star       | <b>178</b>                 | 797                         |
| Cunard           | 164                        | <b>967</b>                  |
| N. German Lloyd  | 156                        | 521                         |
| Hamburg-American | 131                        | 386                         |
| Anchor           | 89                         | 855                         |
| American         | 85                         | 241                         |
| Red Star         | 77                         | 299                         |
| Holland-Am.      | 65                         | 195                         |
| Scandinavian-Am. | 55                         | 334                         |
| French           | 31                         | 65                          |
| Austro-Am.       | 1                          | 4                           |
|                  | <b>1,032</b>               | <b>4,664</b>                |

The numbers in **bold** are the highest total in their respective categories.

*Source:* Annual Reports, 1908-9

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taken to a pier for their return to Europe. It was only their lack of familiarity with the city that caused them to request TA. The report comments that they “spoke English very well, but were perfect strangers in New York.” Case 6 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 10.

Table 5: “How Disposed Of,” May 1906-1910\*

|   | From Stations | From Piers   |
|---|---------------|--------------|
| Travelers Taken to other Transportation Lines | 4,152         | 5,085        |
| To Addresses in the City                      | 2,146         | 380          |
| To the Homes                                  | 1,090         | 387          |
| To Hotels                                     | 111           | 125          |
| To YWCA                                       | 59            | 52           |
| To TAS Office                                 | 40            | 9            |
| To Relatives Met on Street                    | 39            | 0            |
| Misc.†  | 135           | 24           |
| <b>Total</b>                                  | <b>7,772</b>  | <b>6,062</b> |

\*Excludes the period May 1907-Dec. 1907.

†Miscellaneous includes travelers who were taken to the police, hospitals, the Children’s Aid Society, the Charity Organization Society, and the Salvation Army. It also includes travelers who were “seen married” by TAS agents. *Source:* Annual Reports, 1907-1910

An agent escorting travelers from a station to a known address, usually a relative’s home, was the second most common method of disposal (2,146 of 7,772, 28%). Travelers were also taken to the city’s various protective “Homes” (1,090, 14%). The primary mission of the Homes was to provide safe and affordable lodging to single young women, and of the 13 sample cases in this category, 9 involve Girls under 21 or between the ages of 21-30. Three came to New York City for work, but had no leads, nor a place to stay. The Homes were ideal in this situation; not only for their temporary hospitality, but because many promised to assist with the job search (typically by locating a respectable family in need of a servant).<sup>80</sup> Most of the remaining young

<sup>80</sup> Cases 8 and 15 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 19, 22. Case 3 in *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 13. Also see Case 4 in *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 10.

women were traveling to re-unite with family or friends. Due to a wrong address or the failure of a relative to meet them at the train station, these travelers found themselves stranded at night without a place to stay. Agents judged the Homes as their best option.

Once the traveler was delivered to a Home, her case became its responsibility. Occasionally, however, if the TAS believed that the case was close to being resolved, an agent might return in the morning to pick up the woman and help her complete her journey or, as in the case of a 17 year old runaway girl, turn her over to the proper authorities.<sup>81</sup>

The Travelers' Aid Society had intended to use its new emergency room for travelers, such as older women and women with children, who might be refused admittance to a Home. However, young women and children traveling alone most often stayed overnight at the Society's 48<sup>th</sup> Street headquarters. These travelers intended to leave the city, but for a variety of reasons, could not do so at the time. The TAS was familiar with their situation and preferred to continue to work with them, rather than turn them over to a Home. Such was the case of a 20 year old English girl, who arrived at Grand Central in November of 1909. From the station, she needed to travel to a town in New Jersey in order to begin a domestic service position. There was a problem, however, in that nobody had heard of the location. Her case therefore required more investigation and the agents decided to keep her overnight. The following morning, they obtained the correct address (a professor's home in a college town) and that afternoon delivered the woman to her new employer.<sup>82</sup>

The hierarchy of locations to which travelers were taken from the piers was similar to that of the stations. Transportation lines were number one, though by a much wider margin than

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<sup>81</sup> Case 6 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 15. Case 1 in *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 8.

<sup>82</sup> Case 12 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 12.

at the stations. 5,085 out of 6,062 travelers (83%) receiving off-pier help were taken to another line (see Table 2). This was roughly 4,700 more than those who were taken to a protective Home or to a city address. In comparison, lines outnumbered city addresses by only 2,000 at the stations. That a greater percentage of travelers were taken to other transportation lines from the piers than from the stations was due to the overwhelming numbers of new immigrants at the piers for whom New York was only the first leg of a longer journey into the United States.

Like their rail counterparts, the immigrants who came by boat were often leaving the city to reunite with family members. In an example of “chain migration,” two English women, their father, and their children arrived on the Anchor Line in March of 1909, intent on making their way to Illinois where the other members of their extended family had previously settled.<sup>83</sup> However, due to the father’s old age, they were “detained” by authorities and taken to Ellis Island.<sup>84</sup> When they were finally discharged, the TAS delivered them to a train station so that they could complete their journey.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Roger Daniels defines chain migration as the process in which “migrants, whether members of a nuclear family or an extended family, follow one another as links in a chain.” Daniels, *Coming to America*, p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> Upon docking, second cabin passengers were subject to medical inspection on board their vessel. If the examiner felt that a more thorough exam was necessary, he could have the passenger in question transferred by barge to Ellis Island, like the elderly man above. A failed evaluation at Ellis Island would result in deportation. Fairchild, *Science at the Borders*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>85</sup> Case 5 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p 10.

## Encounters between Agents and Travelers

To evaluate the interaction between social workers and their clients, scholars have often invoked theories of social control and social discipline.<sup>86</sup> Others have been more willing to acknowledge welfare's potential to deliver meaningful aid and to "empower" clients.<sup>87</sup> My interpretation of TA borrows from both approaches, taking seriously its claims to protect and aid travelers, while recognizing its disciplinary elements and related limitations. At this stage of the TAS-NY's history, its coercive elements were moderate and travelers typically used TA to their advantage. Nevertheless, since the TAS's contact with its clients was intended to be brief, in the long-run it was up to the travelers and their new communities to determine their ultimate safety and quality of life.

In this section, I will describe several agent/traveler encounters, emphasizing what transpired after their initial contact and how both sides may have understood the end result. The report authors, the agents, stood in an unequal power relationship vis à vis their clients, which no doubt led to a privileging of their understanding of events. Appearing in Annual Reports for promotional purposes, case records were also intended to win over potential donors.<sup>88</sup> Thus, the everyday heroism and good work of the TAS was emphasized over the travelers' subjectivity. That being said, agents did not shy away from describing the many difficulties that they faced

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<sup>86</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare* (New York: Vintage Books, 1971). Michael Katz, *In the Shadow of the Poor House: A Social History of Welfare in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1986). John Ehrenreich, *The Altruistic Imagination: A History of Social Work and Social Policy in the United States* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985). Anna Igra, *Wives without Husbands*.

<sup>87</sup> Barbara Levy Simon, *The Empowerment Tradition in American Social Work: A History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). William Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State: A History of Social Welfare in America*, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1999), especially pp. xxvi-xxviii. Gary Lowe and Nelson Reid, eds., *The Professionalization of Poverty: Social Work and the Poor in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1999), especially Clarke Chambers, "Afterward," pp. 161-5. Mjagkij and Spratt, eds., *Men and Women Adrift*.

<sup>88</sup> On how case records were used to promote the social work field, see Tice, *Tales of Wayward Girls*, p. 7 and Ch. 6.

while providing TA, including instances where travelers voiced their opposition to agents' intervention. Additionally, agents used a measured tone to relate the details of their clients' situations and generally avoided overly sensational and moralistic language. I believe that by placing some trust in agents' version of events, while also reading against the grain, we can gain insight into how travelers' aid was administered and experienced in New York City.

In the majority of the sample cases that are presented in the Annual Reports, the agent reasonably assessed the needs of the traveler and carried out the case to the satisfaction of both sides. In part, this owed to the often routine needs of the traveler, which offered little room for misinterpretation. In two cases in 1906-7, young women directly asked for the Travelers' Aid Society's help and the cases were carried out satisfactorily. In one case, an Irish woman at Grand Central Station was taken to the Sisters of Mercy Home, which promised to help her find domestic service work. In the other, a German woman was taken to a Home in the hopes of eventually finding work as well.<sup>89</sup> Similarly, in 1909, an Englishwoman was referred to the TAS-NY by its sister society, the London TAS. The woman arrived on the White Star line and, due to the late hour, was escorted to a Home. The next day she was taken to a train station to continue her journey to Pennsylvania where a "position" awaited.<sup>90</sup> Cases in which a couple had to be married immediately in order to enter the country were also easily carried out (see the two cases discussed above).

Other cases were not so cut and dry, but seemed to have been resolved to the travelers' satisfaction nonetheless. In instances where the traveler wanted to connect with a relative, addresses could be wrong or not what the traveler or agent expected. A "pretty, young Russian

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<sup>89</sup> Cases 8 and 15 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 19, 22.

<sup>90</sup> Case 3 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 9.

who spoke little English” presented TA agents with a Suffolk St. address. When the agents and woman arrived there, they “found it to be a music hall,” a site of amusement that was always morally suspect in the eyes of social workers. The agents quickly rejected the music hall as a suitable place to leave the girl, who then gave the agents another address on Norfolk Street. This address was her aunt’s home and the girl was left there.<sup>91</sup> Another traveler, a 20 year old Russian Jew, arrived with three potential addresses where her friends may have lived. That evening, agents took her to the first one in Staten Island, but had trouble locating the street number. After conferring with a “gentleman we happened to meet” as well as a policeman, agents determined that the address simply did not exist. Since it was now late at night, the agents brought her back to New York, where she stayed at one of the “State Street Homes.” The next day they tried the second address in Hoboken, NJ, which was a shoe store where the girl was immediately recognized.<sup>92</sup>

Agents also encountered travelers who were in the midst of a crisis and desperately needed aid. In June of 1908, a “poor, sick Belgian woman with two children” was met at Penn Station. She was attempting to get to the Belgian Consul, but was without money and her family had not eaten “for a long time.” The agents gave them food and took them to the Consul, which provided the family with free tickets back to Belgium on the Red Star Line. After leaving the Consul, the TAS took the family to the Swedish Home for the night and then returned the next day to take them to the pier.<sup>93</sup> Hunger was also an issue in a situation, mentioned earlier, involving a Russian woman who came to New York to “hunt” for her baby’s father. The woman

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<sup>91</sup> Case 12 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, p. 17.

<sup>92</sup> Case 6 in *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>93</sup> Case 13 in *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

and baby were found “very weak” and hungry in Grand Central Station. The mother was given coffee and a sandwich and then taken to a Home which promised to help her find work.<sup>94</sup>

Further examples of travelers in distress who clearly benefitted from the intervention of the Travelers’ Aid Society include the Russian Jewish family fleeing a massacre; the five year old girl attempting to return to Hungary after the death of her parents; the children whose mother died on an incoming train; and the deserted bride from Buffalo, whose husband stole her life savings and abandoned her at Grand Central Station.<sup>95</sup>

Possibly the saddest case was that of the ill 35-year old Syrian woman, who was attempting to return home to Beirut in July of 1909. She had just undergone an operation and had been denied passage aboard a steamship. Agents found her at Grand Central Station and learned that she did not know anyone in New York. They then took her to a Home, where she resided a week. During this time, her condition did not improve and her illness evolved into tuberculosis. The Home transferred the sick woman to a hospital, where TA agents visited her weekly,<sup>96</sup> “bringing her fruit and Syrian newspapers.” Agents also arranged for a “benevolent Syrian lady” to visit the woman at the hospital in order to converse with her “in her own language.” In the meantime, the TAS attempted to contact her relatives back home, but had no luck. The woman, whom agents described as “cheerful in spite of her suffering,” died on December 4, 1909.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Case 4 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> In the last case, the agent took the shocked woman to the Municipal Lodging House and telegraphed her closest friend in Buffalo to arrange for her return. “Husband Takes Her Cash,” *New York Times*, 7 Nov. 1909, p. C6.

<sup>96</sup> Such a lengthy involvement was unusual for the TAS, which considered itself a “short-time” social work organization.

<sup>97</sup> Case 8 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p.11. See the above section on Record Keeping for a reproduction of the agents’ “Remarks” on this case.



There were encounters in which the interaction between TA agent and traveler was more ambiguous than in the above portraits. Travelers sometimes immediately displayed hostility toward an agent. Such was the case with a 20 year old Polish woman found at Grand Central, who was brought to the attention of the TAS by a hotel runner.<sup>98</sup> The runner knew Polish and volunteered to interpret for the woman, who clearly just wished to be left alone. The woman would only provide her name and that she was from Vermont, on her way to Pennsylvania. The agents and the runner could get no further information out of her. Since her train was not arriving until later in the day, the agents offered to take her to TAS headquarters for breakfast and then to bring her to Pennsylvania Station to catch her next train. The woman refused: “No, I will stay right here in the station where I am.” The agents tried convincing her that the train was not leaving from Grand Central, but it was no use. They then became more confrontational and began questioning the woman about her intentions once she arrived in Pennsylvania. The woman curtly replied, “It is none of your business,” which caused them to promptly drop this line of questioning and return the focus to transferring her out of Grand Central Station. At one point, the agents even suggested that if she did not wish to go with them, a “messenger boy” could take her. This was an unusual move on the agents’ part since the TAS preferred not to entrust their clients to “amateurs.” Yet, the woman refused even this offer. Desperate, they got the police involved, who threatened that if she did not go with the agents, she would be taken to the police station. With this, the woman broke down and cried, and finally consented to accompany the TAS. The agents ferried her over to Penn Station, placed her on the train, where,

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<sup>98</sup> Hotel runners met immigrants, either by appointment or solicitation, and shuttled them to hotels that paid the runner a commission. Runners and the hotels that employed them were usually seen as exploitive, so it is surprising that the TAS considered the runner an ally in this case. On runners and hotels, see Bureau of Industries and Immigration, *Annual Report, 1911*, pp. 43-8.

according to the report, the girl finally “smiled and shook hands with us, and could not seem to thank us enough.”<sup>99</sup>

This case reveals that the TAS, in rare instances, could force a client to accept help by invoking the threat of police action. If the woman truly wished to go to Pennsylvania, then the agents’ insistence on taking her out of the station was understandable and ultimately saved the woman from missing her train. However, other interpretations of this incident are possible. One could be that the Polish woman was lying all along about going to Pennsylvania, which would explain why she did not respond to further questioning and refused to leave Grand Central Station. When the police became involved, the woman recognized that her game was up and consented to being put on a train or else risk more serious questioning from the police. Another likely scenario was that even though the agents explained to the woman how the Travelers’ Aid Society could make her journey easier, the woman remained confused and skeptical of the TAS’s motives. The agents’ words could have literally been lost in translation and/or their badges may have suggested a level of authority that the woman did not trust. However, once placed on the correct train, the woman may have finally realized the TAS’s good intentions.

There is documented evidence of travelers lying to agents, as well as being wary of the TAS badge, both of which may have occurred in the aforementioned incident. Regarding the badge, it was intended to win the travelers’ trust, but it could have the opposite effect. In September of 1909, a German Jewish woman, already referenced, was attempting to re-unite with her husband in Brooklyn. An agent took her to the address, but neighbors said that the man had recently moved. Confusion thus ensued. According to the agent’s report, “Quite a crowd gathered around this woman, offering all kinds of help and even warned her not to return to the City with me, as they were sure I was a Detective, *because I wore a badge* [emphasis mine].

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<sup>99</sup> Case 4 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 13-14.

After a great deal of trouble persuaded the woman to return with me to the City.” The woman appears to have made the right decision; back in the city, the agent escorted her to a Home, where she stayed several days until her husband was finally located.<sup>100</sup>

Lying was common amongst runaways. The 17 year–old “American girl,” briefly described earlier, who an agent met in Grand Central Station around midnight, provides a good example. She appeared in “distress,” so the agent approached her before heading home for the night. The girl claimed to be a servant working uptown, but could not produce her employer’s address. She said that she was presently waiting to meet someone coming in from Philadelphia. When informed by the agent that the trains from Philadelphia arrived in Jersey City, the girl recanted her story, but would say no more. After much prodding, the agent learned that the girl had run away from her home in Maryland. Somehow, the agent convinced the girl to accompany her to a Home for the night, and the next morning, the agent returned to take the runaway to the “proper authorities.” The TAS later learned that the girl was delivered back home to Maryland.<sup>101</sup>

Nothing is known about why the girl ran away from home or what her home situation was, so it is hard to assess whether this was the proper course of action. Her age was on the young side, though the TAS encountered runaways who were much younger. If she was mature enough, perhaps she could have made a go of it in New York like the runaways who were amongst the would-be bohemians of Greenwich Village.<sup>102</sup> In general, the TAS worked toward

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<sup>100</sup> Case 2 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>101</sup> Case 1 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1909*, p. 8.

<sup>102</sup> Stansell, *American Moderns*, p. 81.

outcomes that would result in the runaway being returned to the “safety” of their home, which was preferred to the “dangers” of the city.

A “pretty” Italian peasant also lied to an agent, covering up her intentions to meet her fiancé in Pittsburgh. A TA agent found her alone on the pier after she had exited her ocean liner. The agent seems to have had some knowledge of Italian and managed to learn from the woman that she had come to the U.S. on a prepaid ticket from her “brother.” The agent took her to Jersey City and saw her on the Pennsylvania Railroad for Pittsburgh. The case appeared closed. However, two weeks later, the woman was again found in New York, this time by a man who thought she was “too pretty to be left all night in the streets.” The man took her to the Travelers’ Aid Society because the woman showed him a postcard with the TAS’s address on it.

At headquarters, the TAS learned that the peasant woman had initially lied about meeting her “brother” (probably to avoid an investigation into her personal life). The woman related that when she arrived in Pittsburgh, she could find no trace of her fiancé. She made a lengthy search for the man, but could not locate him. She then sold all her possessions and bought a ticket back to New York. Her second encounter with the TAS ended with her being delivered to the Italian Society, which returned her to Italy.<sup>103</sup>

Despite evidence of attempted social discipline and tension between agents and travelers, when TA was administered, for the most part, travelers’ benefited. Travelers’ needs were often straight forward and the TAS was well equipped to meet them, even if it involved considerable time and resources. Travelers may not have sensed that they were in any immediate or impending danger (as the TAS liked to believe all female travelers were), but if the TAS could

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<sup>103</sup> Case 10 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 19- 20.

get them to where they needed to go or suggest viable lodging options, they were willing to accept TA. Even when encounters became tense, things might work out in the end for the traveler. The Polish girl, who had a lengthy run-in with agents and police, still may have made it to her final destination. Agents repeatedly questioned her intentions, which suggests that they had doubts about the moral legitimacy of her venture. However, the traveler's refusal to reveal intimate details did not disqualify her from being placed on a train by the TAS en route to her stated destination. Once on board, the TAS had no control over her behavior either on the train or upon arrival in Pennsylvania. In this sense, they may have even enabled "inappropriate" actions.<sup>104</sup> In their work on behalf of runaways, the TAS may have thwarted desperate attempts to flee abusive or dead-end situations. Though it is also possible that they were returning children and teenagers who were ill prepared to navigate the city and would have quickly become destitute or worse.

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<sup>104</sup> Lynne Kirby writes that the "'in-between' nature of the train journey" often presented opportunities for "romance, seduction, and crime." Kirby, *Parallel Tracks*, p. 83.

## Chapter 4

### **Building a National Travelers' Aid Movement: Orin Baker and the Travelers' Aid Societies of New York and California, 1910-1917**

The period 1910-1917 marks a second phase in the history of the Travelers' Aid Society of New York. Chapter Four considers two important developments that defined this period: the TAS-NY's transition from a women's organization to a mixed-sex organization led by men and its drive to create a National Travelers' Aid Society. The chapter begins by examining why President Grace Dodge and the Board of Directors chose to restructure the TAS and admit men into its leadership ranks. I describe a convergence of international, national, state, and local pressures that influenced the transition. The expanded twenty five member board contained seventeen men who were well-positioned in the fields of business, industry, academia, politics, and religion. Their inclusion enhanced the credibility of the TAS at a time when masculine notions of professionalism and science were eclipsing volunteerism as the basis of social welfare work.

Over the course of 1910-1917, the new General Secretary, Orin Baker, succeeded Grace Dodge as TA's main promoter and ideologist. As General Secretary, Baker strove to build a national travelers' aid movement. From 1913-1915, Baker embarked on a series of national tours to promote the TAS-NY's brand of "modern," non-sectarian travelers' aid and to establish Travelers' Aid Societies in American cities. The plan was for these new Travelers' Aid Societies, along with traditional sectarian and interdenominational TA providers, to be federated before the onset of the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE), a World's Fair held in San Francisco to celebrate the completion of the Panama Canal. Tragically, Grace Dodge

passed away before the start of the fair and since she was the movement's primary benefactor, unification was postponed.

Despite this setback, the PPIE remained the primary proving grounds for the expansion of TA outside of New York. To meet the moral protective needs of the PPIE, Orin Baker journeyed West and helped establish the Travelers' Aid Society of California, which was incorporated under the New York model. The TAS-California was one of several organizations, such as the Woman's Board and the YWCA, that worked to make the PPIE accessible and morally safe (i.e. free from prostitution and white slavery) to young women attending the fair alone. It was also instrumental in solidifying a TA network that ultimately became the National Travelers' Aid Society in 1917.

### **Restructuring the Travelers' Aid Society of New York, 1910-11**

In response to overlapping international, national, state, and local pressures, the Travelers' Aid Society transitioned from a women's organization to a mixed-sex organization that was led by men in 1911. Internationally, European TA proponents were critical of the decentralized nature of American TA and expressed skepticism in its ability to protect immigrants moving throughout the country. On the state and local level, the TAS-NY faced competition from two new organizations, the North American Civic League and the New York State Bureau of Industries and Immigration, both of which threatened the TAS's leadership of the travelers' aid field. And, due to the journalism of George Kibbe Turner, the spotlight shifted from Chicago to New York as the new center of the white slave trade, which led New York institutions, such as the TAS, to redouble their commitment to anti-white slavery activism.

In the summer of 1910, President Grace Dodge and Secretary E. C. Harris made trips to Europe that had far-reaching effects on the practice of TA in New York City and the United States. In June, Dodge arranged for Harris to represent the TAS at the first International Conference of Station Workers in Berne, Switzerland. There, European representatives told Harris that they lacked confidence in American TA. They generally approved of travelers' aid in American port cities, such as New York, but had little faith in inland TA, which they thought was too haphazard and decentralized. European immigrants might arrive safely in New York, but if they left the city, their safety was in doubt. Europeans thus passed resolutions that urged Harris to argue for more "unity and integration" in travelers' aid work back home.<sup>1</sup>

Later that summer, Dodge went to Europe on behalf of the National Board of the YWCA, of which she was president. Though officially there for YWCA business, she was determined to observe TA on the continent and interact with its practitioners.<sup>2</sup> Throughout her travels, Dodge, like Harris, learned of the shortcomings of American travelers' aid and upon her return, urged the TAS's board to take action to strengthen it.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to these international pressures, the TAS also felt increased competition from two new local organizations, the New York branch of the North American Civic League (NACL) and the New York State Bureau of Industries and Immigration, both of which were led by Francis Kellor. The NACL was a voluntary association made up of wealthy businessmen that sponsored immigrant social welfare programs in lieu of state efforts. It also lobbied on behalf of

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<sup>1</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 18. "History," *Bulletin* 1:7 (Dec. 1918), p. 2. Orin Baker, "Miss Dodge's Work for Travelers' Aid," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 28. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup> Baker, "Miss Dodge's Work for Travelers' Aid," p. 30. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 5. Increasingly, Dodge saw little separation between her presidency of the National Board of the YWCA and that of the TAS – the former was an influential organization for working women that could be used to promote the overlapping interests of the smaller TA movement. Katz, "Grace Hoadley Dodge," p. 246.

<sup>3</sup> Baker, "Miss Dodge's Work for Travelers' Aid," p. 30. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 6.



Kellor for the creation of a special State department that would investigate immigration conditions and enact legislation aimed at protecting and assimilating immigrants. The NACL's lobbying was effective and resulted in the creation of the Bureau of Industries and Immigration (BII) as a sub-division of the New York State Department of Labor in early October 1910, with Kellor as its chairperson.<sup>4</sup>

Neither the NACL nor the BII focused exclusively on TA, but their comprehensive programs for investigation, social welfare provision, and protective legislation overlapped with, and in some instances *were*, TA work. In addition, both the NACL and the BII operated under the assumption that the state should play the leading role in immigrant protection and Americanization.<sup>5</sup> The TAS was not against state involvement in welfare and travelers' aid, but it steadfastly argued throughout the 1910s that the safety of immigrant travelers and the elimination of the white slave traffic could only be accomplished under its leadership. The TAS's reorganization can thus be read as a response to increased state intervention in the welfare sector and an attempt to stake its claim as the city's and state's leader in the travelers' aid field.

The revamping of the Travelers' Aid Society of New York must also be understood as one of the many "institutional and activist" responses to the publication of George Kibbe Turner's "The Daughters of the Poor," a piece of muckraking journalism that labeled New York City as the center of the white slave traffic in the United States. Published in the late fall of 1909, it turned the nation's attention from Chicago to New York City as the new ground zero in the battle to root out white slavery. Locally, it made white slavery a central issue in upcoming municipal elections and put Tammany Hall, which was implicated in the scandal, on the

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<sup>4</sup> Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade*, pp. 142-3.

<sup>5</sup> Christina Ziegler-McPherson, *Americanization in the States: Immigrant Social Welfare Policy, Citizenship, and National Identity in the United States, 1908-1929* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2009), pp. 23-9.

defensive.<sup>6</sup> Turner's piece also led to homegrown investigations into the nature of white slavery in New York. Various reform groups, including Grace Dodge's Women's Municipal League, aimed to uncover its root causes, while the city's DA office and the State of New York undertook investigations of their own. Throughout 1910, the DA sought to find and arrest local traffickers, and the State convened a Grand Jury, led by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., that was charged with investigating Turner's claim that white slavers had formed an international "vice trust." Even after the two legal investigations revealed evidence that challenged much of Turner's portrayal of white slavery, campaigns to combat it continued or, in the case of the TAS, intensified.<sup>7</sup>

#### *The New Board of Directors*

In October of 1910, the Board made a commitment to reorganize the TAS for the sake of strengthening its work on both the local and national levels. The restructuring centered on the enlistment of men as members of the Board of Directors and as the TAS's leading officers.<sup>8</sup> Dodge's biographer, Abbie Graham, notes that throughout her career, Dodge believed that the combining of male and female "forces" always delivered the "best results."<sup>9</sup> In this sense, the addition of men to the TAS Board was a result of Dodge's leadership philosophy. However, other factors were also at work.

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<sup>6</sup> Soderlund, "Covering Urban Vice," pp. 443-4.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., pp. 445-9, 454-5. Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*, Ch. 5. Rockefeller remained interested in white slavery after the Grand Jury Trial and, in contrast to Turner, sought less sensational means to investigate and end it. Pivar, *Purity and Hygiene*, p. 78.

<sup>8</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup> Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, pp. 141-2.

As the nature of charity was undergoing significant change during the Progressive Era, moving further away from volunteerism and toward professionalism, Dodge and her cohort saw the addition of men as adding credibility to their work. What some in the public mistook for an amateurish women's organization would now count some of the city's most influential men as members.<sup>10</sup> The presence of men would also demonstrate the TAS's increasing commitment to the "scientific," i.e. more masculine, elements of its work, such as the rigorous training of agents, a rationalized system of record keeping, and the thorough investigation of their clients' social environment.<sup>11</sup>

A four person committee was formed to recruit the TAS's first generation of male leaders. Dodge was the lone woman on the new committee: she was joined by Dr. Morris Loeb, a prominent Jewish scientist and philanthropist; the Right Reverend D. J. McMahon, head of Catholic Charities of New York; and the Hon. Alfred Manierre, a lawyer and prohibitionist.<sup>12</sup> Each man came from one of three major religious faiths (Judaism, Catholicism, and Protestantism), which signaled that non-sectarianism would be an important principle guiding the selection of the enlarged Board.

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<sup>10</sup> Tomes and Brumberg describe how women often had to transcend the popular image of the female volunteer/amateur in order for their professional position to be "secure." In other words, the "culture of professionalism" required distance from the "amateur and the volunteer." "Women in the Professions," pp. 284-6. Greeley in "Beyond Benevolence" (75-7) discusses the credibility and prestige that men brought to women reformers beginning as early as the 1880s.

<sup>11</sup> Anna Igra describes a similar masculinization process that occurred within the Jewish social welfare community in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as women's organizations were absorbed into businessmen-led "federated charities." According to her, women acted as "junior partners" to their male colleagues. This is true to some degree of the Travelers' Aid Society as well, though at least one woman, Grace Dodge, continued to exert a powerful influence over the organization. Igra, *Wives without Husbands*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 17. Manierre would later serve on the TAS's new Board, but his unexpected death in October, 1911 cut his tenure short. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 8. "Alfred Lee Manierre Dies," *New York Times*, 2 Oct. 1911, p. 11.

The selection committee finished its work by February, 1911 and on the third of the month, at Grace Dodge's house, she announced the new twenty-five person Board of Directors.<sup>13</sup> Seven women from the previous Board remained (Dodge, Bond, Halle, Harris, Israels, Parry, and van Buren). Dodge was no longer the President, but from 1912 until her death at the end of 1914, she served as the Chair of the Executive Committee and continued to be the TAS's primary source of funding. Mary G. Worthington was the only new female Board member. She was a 1908 graduate of the New York School of Philanthropy, the pioneering institution that laid the foundation for modern social work education. Upon her graduation, the School of Philanthropy made Worthington its first paid employee, giving her the title Supervisor of Field Work.<sup>14</sup> Her affiliation with the School of Philanthropy placed Worthington on the frontlines of the professionalization of charity. Thus, adding her to the Board directly aligned the Travelers' Aid Society with the emerging theory and practice of social work. If a common stereotype of the TA agent was "the sweet-faced, elderly woman complacently reading or knitting while waiting for those in need," then Worthington was intended to mark its opposite; the "alert" and well-trained young female agent.<sup>15</sup>

Alongside the eight women were now seventeen men from the fields of business, industry, academia, politics, law, religion, and labor. By including "influential and well-placed"

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<sup>13</sup> For a complete list of the new Board of Directors, Executive Committee, and Officers, see TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> "New York School Commencement," *Charities* 20 (13 June 1908), p. 364. Alfred Kahn, "Themes for a History: The First One Hundred Years," in *The Columbia University School of Social Work: A Centennial Celebration*, eds. Ronald Feldman and Sheila Kamerman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 15. The School of Philanthropy was founded in 1898 by the Charity Organization Society as a summer school. It later developed a one-year program (from which Worthington graduated) and a two-year program. Its first curriculum consisted primarily of lectures given by volunteers. By 1910, it was offering regular courses on three topics: practical work with individuals and families (later called "casework"), social investigation, and social reform. Kahn, "Themes for a History," pp. 10-11, 15-17. The New York School of Philanthropy became the Columbia University School of Social Work in 1962-3.

<sup>15</sup> Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 31-2.

men, the new Board bore a striking resemblance to those of two other prominent anti-vice organizations, the Committee of Fifteen and its successor the Committee of Fourteen, both of which likely served as models for the restructuring.<sup>16</sup> The expanded Board consisted of two representatives from the transportation industry: Emil Boas, the General Manager of the Hamburg-American Line, and Mr. Frederick Underwood, President of the Erie Railroad.<sup>17</sup> Rush Taggart and Samuel Taylor represented the telecommunications industry: Western Union Telegraph and American Speaking Telephone respectively. Robert Cuddihy was from Funk & Wagnalls Publishing Company and John Mitchell was Vice-President of the American Federation of Labor (AFL). John Wanamaker was founder of the famed Wanamaker Department stores in Philadelphia and New York, and Gilbert Colgate was the Vice President of Colgate and Company, manufacturer of soap and toothpaste. Both Wanamaker and Colgate also served as Presidents of the Travelers' Aid Society. In 1911, Wanamaker replaced Grace Dodge to become the TAS's first male President. His tenure lasted only a year and he was replaced by Colgate, who served from 1912-1916 (see Table 6 for a complete list of officers).

Two members of the Board were academics: Morris Loeb and Professor Jeremiah Jenks, an economist and former member of the U.S. Immigration Commission. There were also two lawyers: William Jenner and the Hon. William Bennet. The latter was a controversial Republican congressman and a founding member of the Committee of Fourteen, who was known for his crusades against immorality and white slavery. Four of the new members were religious men: D. J. McMahon, Supervisor of Catholic Charities; Cardinal John Farley, the head of the Catholic Church in New York; Rabbi Dr. Samuel Schulman of the Temple Beth-El, a Reform

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<sup>16</sup> Fronc, *New York Undercover*, pp. 3, 37-8, 66-7.

<sup>17</sup> The Erie Railroad's terminal was in Jersey City. Prior to Underwood's election to the Board, the TAS rarely sent its agents to the Erie Railroad. A year later, in 1912, agents began to meet travelers there by appointment and, in 1913, they patrolled the Erie terminal fulltime. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 8. *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 4.

synagogue; and Rev. Dr. Francis Brown, President of the liberal Union Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church.

Table 6: Officers of the Travelers' Aid Society, 1911-1916

| <b>President</b>                               | <b>Vice President</b>   | <b>Honorary V. P.</b>                                      |
|--|---|--|
| John Wanamaker, 1911<br>Gilbert Colgate, 1912- | Francis Brown, 1911-16<br>John Farley, 1911<br>Samuel Schulman, 1911-<br>D. J. McMahon, 1912-15 | Farley, 1912-<br>David Greer, 1912-<br>Jacob Schiff, 1916- |
| <b>Treasurer</b>                               | <b>Recording Secretary</b>  | <b>General Secretary</b>                                   |
| Samuel Taylor, 1911-15<br>James Pyle, 1916-    | Elizabeth Harris, 1911-   | Orin Baker, 1911-  |

A dash (-) with no date after it indicates that the officer's tenure lasted beyond 1916.

### *The Vice Presidents*

The latter three men (Farley, Schulman, and Brown) were also elected Vice Presidents of the Travelers' Aid Society in 1911, which began a new policy that a Catholic, Jew, and Protestant occupy the three Vice Presidential positions. The by-laws stated that the Vice Presidents' only duty was to act in place of the President in case of his absence.<sup>18</sup> However, behind the scenes, they used their religious and social capital on behalf of the TAS.

Primarily known for their religious leadership, Farley, Schulman, and Brown were also committed to social work and reform. In addition to his work with travelers' aid, Cardinal Farley directed efforts to centralize the city's numerous Catholic charities in order to better coordinate welfare programs for new immigrants. The result was the establishment of the United Catholic Works in 1912.<sup>19</sup> Rabbi Schulman was a founding member of the short-lived Ethical-Social

<sup>18</sup> By-laws Art. 1, Sec. 4, in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Brown, "John M. Farley," in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, p. 190. "Catholic Societies Will Work as One," *New York Times*, 17 Oct. 1912, p. 4. Charles Plater, *The Priest and Social Action* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1914), p. 132.

League, which from 1908-1910 brought together a diverse array of progressive, conservative, and radical reformers in the hopes of finding common ground on social issues such as women's suffrage, "cheap amusements," and child labor. Members included Christian and Jewish leaders, along with representatives of labor, socialism, and business.<sup>20</sup> The third TAS Vice President, Francis Brown, led the Presbyterian settlement house movement in New York City.<sup>21</sup>

The Vice Presidents had the unofficial role of raising the TAS's profile within their respective religious and welfare circles in order to attract new members and sources of finances. For instance, Bishop Dr. David Greer, an Honorary Vice President after 1911, praised the Travelers' Aid Society to the "clergy and laity of the Episcopal Church," hoping to win their "sympathy and... generous support."<sup>22</sup> Rabbi Schulman provided the TAS General Secretary and Treasurer with names of prominent Jews to solicit for Board membership and financial donations; among the names was Adolph S. Ochs, publisher of the *New York Times*.<sup>23</sup> And, when the General Secretary traveled West to promote TA work in 1914 and 1915, Schulman and

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<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Powell Bond, "Union for Service," *Friends Intelligencer*, 7 Third Month 1908, pp. 153-4. "Committee to Censor Cheap Amusements," *New York Times*, 24 Feb. 1909, p. 6. "Ethical League has a New Mission," *New York Times*, 28 Nov. 1909, p. 9. "Ethical-Social League Lectures," *New York Observer*, 25 August 1910, p. 239. TAS Honorary Vice President, Bishop Dr. David Greer, was also a member of the Ethical-Social League. Its work to regulate cheap amusements overlapped with the activism of another TAS Board member, Belle Israels, the Chairman of the Committee on Amusements and Vacation Resources of Working Girls.

<sup>21</sup> Brown is listed as the president of the Union Settlement Association, which coordinated non-sectarian Christian settlements throughout the city. "Union Settlement Association," in *The New York Charities Directory*, ed. Lina Miller, 21<sup>st</sup> Ed. (New York: Charity Organization Society, 1912), p. 348. "The Rev. Dr. Brown, Head of Union, Dead," *New York Times*, 16 Oct. 1916, p. 11.

<sup>22</sup> Statement from Greer in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 22 and Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 55-6.

<sup>23</sup> Orin Baker to Schulman, 22 Jan. 1915. Orin Baker to Schulman, 2 March 1916. Schulman to James Pyle, 4 March 1920. Schulman had suggested Ochs, the publisher of the *Times*, as a potential Board member, but nothing ultimately came of it. In the letter to Pyle, Schulman included a printed list of 79 names and addresses of men and women to be solicited for donations. The letters are from the Samuel Schulman Papers, Box 15, Folder 8, American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati (hereafter, Samuel Schulman Papers).

another Vice President, D. J. McMahon, wrote valuable letters of introduction to influential west coast Jews and Catholics.<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, the Vice Presidents were instructed to act as liaisons to local religious organizations that incorporated some level of TA into their mission. The TAS hoped to bring these organizations in-line with its non-sectarian and professionalizing principles. A similar effort was to take place at the national level as well, with the non-sectarian leadership structure of the Travelers' Aid Society, symbolized by the Vice Presidents, serving as a model for a future National Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>25</sup>

Just as important as the active work the Vice Presidents undertook was the prestige and moral authority that their names alone bestowed on the TAS. These were busy men with multiple, competing commitments. It was generally understood that there would be times when the Vice Presidents could do no more than lend the TAS their names, which were printed on TAS fundraising appeals, annual reports, and letterhead. When, in 1919, Schulman thought that too much was being asked of him, he responded with a terse letter to then Treasurer, James Pyle, asserting that his "name" was a sufficient enough commitment.<sup>26</sup>

Sometime in either 1915 or 1916 the Board of Directors underwent further expansion, from 25 to 34 members. Three of the additions were Brooklyn women: Neva A. Chappell, Mrs. Clinton L. Rossiter, and Mrs. Edward B. Shallow. They were co-leaders of the newly formed Brooklyn Auxiliary Committee that was charged with extending TA work to Flatbush Avenue

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<sup>24</sup> Baker to Schulman, 18 Nov. 1915, in Samuel Schulman Papers. McMahon to Bishop Thomas Conaty, May 1913, in *Calendar of Documents and Related Historical Materials in the Archival Center, Archdiocese of Los Angeles for the Episcopate of the Right Reverend Thomas James Conaty* (St. Francis Historical Society, 1990), p. 218.

<sup>25</sup> "Over 50,000 Girls Disappear in this Country Yearly," *New York Times*, 21 Sept. 1913, p. SM9.

<sup>26</sup> Schulman to Pyle, 20 Nov. 1919, in Samuel Schulman Papers.



and Coney Island, Brooklyn. Other new Board members included Alice Warren and Louise Wise, who were well-known women in New York City. Warren was a “mistress of a sort of literary salon” and a Catholic suffragist, as well as an original member of the 1905 Travelers’ Aid Committee.<sup>27</sup> Louise Wise was an artist and social worker, who in 1916 established an adoption agency for Jewish orphans, later known as Louis Wise Services. Her daughter, Justine, went on to become the first female judge for the State of New York in 1935.<sup>28</sup>

The addition of Louise Wise to the Board added an interesting dynamic to the Travelers’ Aid Society. Wise’s husband, Stephen, was an outspoken Zionist and founder of the Free Synagogue. The Free Synagogue was to the left of typical Reform Judaism and posed a radical challenge to Jewish traditions.<sup>29</sup> One of Stephen Wise’s harshest critics was TAS Vice President, Rabbi Samuel Schulman, who was an anti-Zionist and a centrist Reform Jew. Schulman believed that Wise’s Free Synagogue was pushing Judaism too close to Christianity.<sup>30</sup> Schulman frequently condemned Wise in the press and elsewhere, which particularly upset his wife Louise. On one occasion, after hearing that Schulman had recently mocked the Free Synagogue, Louise refused to speak to the Rabbi when she encountered him walking on 5<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Warren is briefly described in John Lukacs, “Agnes Repplier, Writer and Essayist,” in *Remembered Past: John Lukacs on History, Historians, and Historical Knowledge; A Reader*, eds. Mark Malvasi and Jeffrey Nelson (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2005), p. 756. Also see “Art Exhibit for Suffrage,” *New York Times*, 15 April 1912, p. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Louise was born in New York to wealthy German-Jewish parents. Joe Rooks-Rappaport, “Louise Waterman Wise,” in *Jewish Women: A Comprehensive Historical Encyclopedia*, online at <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/wise-louise-waterman> (accessed 11/16/2010). Adina Back, “Justine Wise Polier,” in *Notable American Women: A Biographical Dictionary Completing the Twentieth Century*, ed. Susan Ware (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), pp. 519-21.

<sup>29</sup> Melvin Urofsky, *A Voice that Spoke for Justice: The Life and Times of Stephen S. Wise* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982).

<sup>30</sup> “Rabbi Denounces Union Services,” *New York Times*, 27 Nov. 1910, p. 9.

Avenue.<sup>31</sup> Now, Louise had to serve on the same Board with Schulman. No meeting minutes survive from this period, so we do not know how the two got along, but there must have been tension in the air if they were ever in the same room together.

### *General Secretary Orin Baker*

Concurrent with the expansion of the Board of Directors, a search committee selected a new General Secretary, Orin Baker, to direct the work.<sup>32</sup> For nearly a decade, Baker would be a tireless promoter of non-sectarian travelers' aid in New York City and in the United States. His impact on the work was no less significant than that of Grace Hoadley Dodge and in this second phase of the TAS's history, he succeeded her as the leader of the travelers' aid movement. Unlike Dodge, who was involved in numerous philanthropic and reform causes, Baker devoted himself entirely to TA, making it his life's work.

Baker and his wife Alice, a University of Wooster graduate, arrived in New York City by way of Ohio sometime after 1903. In Ohio, he had been the longtime Financial Officer of the state-run Soldiers' and Sailors' Orphans' Home. He was also the editor of its in-house publication, *Home Weekly*.<sup>33</sup> In New York City, he was known for delivering a series of lectures on "personal evangelistic work" and for leading a bible class for men at the West End

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<sup>31</sup> Urofsky, *A Voice that Spoke for Justice*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>32</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> A. J. Fretz, *A Brief History of Bishop Henry Funck* (Elkhart, IN: Mennonite Publishing Co., 1899), p. 38. "Miss Alice C. Funk was married..." *The Post Graduate and Wooster Quarterly* 2:7 (April 1888), p. 244. A photo of Baker from this era can be seen at the city of Xenia, Ohio's homepage: <http://www.ci.xenia.oh.us/index.php?mact=Album,me1a57,default,1&me1a57albumid=4&me1a57pictureid=155&me1a57returnid=134&page=134> (accessed 9/25/2010). I located the above sources on Baker and his wife through a Google and Google Books search.

Presbyterian Church. He had also served since 1905 as the Assistant Superintendent of the Evangelistic Committee of New York, primarily handling its business affairs.<sup>34</sup>

The Evangelistic Committee, which also counted Jacob Riis as a member, used open-air, tent, and factory meetings to bring Christianity to foreign populations in the city who were thought to have lost connection with their Christian roots. Additionally, “negro preachers” targeted African-Americans in the San Juan Hill district. The Committee promoted a non-sectarian approach to Christianity in the manner of the YMCA. In other words, it did not seek to convert people to a specific Christian denomination, but to lead them to accepting Christ and the message of the Gospel. What church they ultimately chose to attend was, theoretically, left up to the believers themselves. Though at least one observer, a Spanish Jesuit, believed the spirit of these meetings to be anti-Catholic; during an open air meeting in the summer of 1908, the Jesuit was overheard yelling “loud and insulting remarks” at an Evangelistic preacher.<sup>35</sup>

Given his prominent role within the Evangelistic Committee and his own personal dedication to lay evangelism, Orin Baker seems an odd choice to lead the TAS-NY, which since its founding expressly forbid agents to evangelize to clients. For the TAS, “non-sectarian” described the uniting of Jews, Protestants, and Catholics for the purpose of providing moral protection to travelers of all religions, races, and ethnicities. The spirit of the work was religious, but the clients’ own religious feelings were to be left alone. Not only did Baker tolerate the TAS’s inter-faith cooperation and anti-evangelism, he became their staunchest advocate within the organization.

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<sup>34</sup> “On their Way to the Holy Land,” *New York Observer*, 29 Dec. 1910, p. 849. “Aiding Travelers,” *New York Tribune*, 21 Jan. 1912, Of Interest to Women Section, p. 4.

<sup>35</sup> “Stormy Times for Tent Evangelists,” *New York Times*, 9 August 1908, p. C4. “Evangelists Have Extended Field,” *New York Times*, 22 August 1909, p. 7.

Perhaps then there is some truth to the myth-like account of Baker's entry into the travelers' aid field that Anna Pratt Simpson gave in 1915. According to Simpson, years after the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Baker was on a fishing expedition when he came upon a small cottage in the woods. Its kind owners, a husband and wife, invited him in for lodging and a meal. He subsequently returned numerous times to dine with the family. On each occasion, Simpson relates, the table was set for four, despite their being only three people. No reference was ever made to the vacant spot. Finally, Baker inquired about the empty chair. The family replied that they were saving it for their daughter, who had left for the Exposition years ago and never returned. Baker vowed to find their daughter and upon leaving the woods undertook an extensive investigation into the girl's whereabouts. Somehow he was able to learn that over the course of her journey, she had fallen upon "shame and disappointment" and was too embarrassed to return home. Her last years were "sad and badly-spent" and she ultimately died alone.<sup>36</sup>

Simpson states that this particular girl's fate inspired Baker to dedicate himself to protecting similar young women from "the conditions which made for her tragedy."<sup>37</sup> The timeline in Simpson's account is sketchy and there is no mention of Baker's work with the Evangelistic Committee. Still, perhaps it was this experience, or something like it, that inspired him to abruptly quit evangelical work and orient his Christian faith toward a different type of "saving" – the protection of young female travelers from white slavery.

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<sup>36</sup> Anna Pratt Simpson, *Problems Women Solved: Being the Story of the Woman's Board of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition* (San Francisco: The Woman's Board, 1915), pp. 62-3.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

## **Building a National Travelers' Aid Movement**

One of the major impetuses for restructuring the TAS-NY was to place it on a stronger footing so that it could build a centralized national TA movement.<sup>38</sup> Its new by-laws created a Department of Cooperation that was charged with “[extending] the field of co-operation to all State, National and International organizations having the same or similar aims [as the TAS].”<sup>39</sup> This meant partnering with national- and state-level organizations that sponsored local TA, or at least were sympathetic to it, and convincing them to lend their clout to a national movement. Simultaneously, the TAS would build a network of all local organizations that provided travelers' aid, which at some later point would be federated into a national society. For the most part, General Secretary Orin Baker carried out the Department of Cooperation's work, with critical behind the scenes negotiations undertaken by ex-president Grace Dodge. Although it was later claimed that the Department of Cooperation immediately decided on an eleven-point program to accomplish national expansion,<sup>40</sup> the evidence suggests that the strategies Baker and Dodge employed evolved gradually over the next six years.

### *The YWCA and National TA, 1911-1912*

During the first two years after restructuring, 1911-1912, the TAS leaned heavily on the National Board of the YWCA to promote its vision of a National Travelers' Aid Society. In this effort, Grace Dodge, as both President of the YWCA and Board member of the TAS, was instrumental. Likely due to her own urging, the YWCA adopted a resolution at its Biennial

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<sup>38</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, pp. 8-9. Orin Baker, “Philanthropic Effort to Save 50,000 a Year,” *New York Times*, 27 Oct. 1912, p. X8.

<sup>39</sup> By-laws Art. 5, Sec. 2, in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 31.

<sup>40</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1917*, pp. 18-19. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 7.

Convention in 1911 that authorized Dodge to represent the YWCA “in an effort to federate the organizations doing Travelers’ Aid work.” At this stage, this meant recruiting representatives from other national organizations to form a preliminary committee that would take up the issue of a National Travelers’ Aid Society.<sup>41</sup> Support from national organizations, such as the King’s Daughters and Council of Jewish Women, would be crucial because many of their local affiliates did TA work and, therefore, were potential members of a future national society.

The National Board of the YWCA was clear as to when such unification should take place. In 1915, San Francisco was scheduled to host the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, an event to mark the completion of the Panama Canal and to celebrate the achievements of American imperialism.<sup>42</sup> In a widely circulated letter, the YW explained that the Panama Canal would dramatically alter traditional travel patterns between East and West, while also increasing the sheer number of travelers in the United States. The changes to travel caused by the canal would require the “greatest world movement for protection that has ever yet been put into operation” and only a National Travelers’ Aid Society could undertake such a challenge. The YW’s earlier appeal was to like-minded national organizations, but now it also appealed directly to local groups and individuals in American cities to begin planning for both the 1915 Exposition and the long-term effects of the Canal.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 19. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>42</sup> On the fair’s celebration of imperialism, see Sarah Moore, “Manliness and the New American Empire at the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition,” in *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at the World’s Fairs*, eds. TJ Boisseau and Abigail Markwyn (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010), pp. 75-94. On the fair’s use and display of eugenics (“race betterment”), see Alexandra Minna Stern, *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), Ch. 1.

<sup>43</sup> Orin Baker, “The Travelers’ Aid Work of America,” in *The South Mobilizing for Social Service: Addresses Delivered at the Southern Sociological Congress, Atlanta, Georgia, April 25-29, 1913*, ed. James McCulloch (Nashville: Southern Sociological Congress, 1913), p. 343. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 15.

Since the turn of the century, national coordination of travelers' aid was always strongest during World's Fairs. The YWCA in 1904 (St. Louis) and the TAS-NY in 1907 (Jamestown) assembled and led Exposition Travelers' Aid Committees that coordinated TA on-location and throughout the country. However, these committees dissipated once the fairs closed, failing to translate into a permanent centralized network.<sup>44</sup> The YWCA and TAS hoped that this time would be different. They envisioned a TA network taking shape for the Panama-Pacific Exposition that would ultimately become a National Travelers' Aid Society.

From 1911-1912, the TAS-NY was relatively silent on the issue of national travelers' aid, confining its work to fundraising in support of an "enlarged national movement" and issuing general calls for uniform record keeping practices and enhanced communication between TA organizations.<sup>45</sup> This changed after 1912 as the TAS assumed leadership from the YWCA.<sup>46</sup> During the period 1913-1917, the Travelers' Aid Society, led by General Secretary Orin Baker, utilized a variety of strategies to build a permanent national TA network. Most importantly, Baker took the TAS's brand of "modern" travelers' aid on the road to promote its acceptance in other American cities.

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<sup>44</sup> For more on national TA at earlier World's Fairs, see Chapter Two of this dissertation.

<sup>45</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 19. *Annual Report, 1912*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>46</sup> The YWCA remained involved and continued to recruit national organizations that would support the creation of a National Travelers' Aid Society. See "Don'ts for Lone Girls:...Move for Unification of Twenty-eight Organizations Started in New York," *New York Tribune*, 24 March 1913, p. 9.

*Travelers' Aid on Tour, 1913-1915*

Baker envisioned that a new National Travelers' Aid Society would federate all existing TA organizations: sectarian (those run under the auspices of a religious organization, such as the Council of Jewish Women), inter-denominational (those run by a consortium of religious organizations, sometimes in cooperation with secular groups), and non-sectarian (those run by a Board of individual Catholics, Protestants, and Jews who each acted independently and *not* on behalf of their respective religions or organizations).<sup>47</sup> The non-sectarian societies were to be the centerpiece of the national movement and, in the long run, were to replace all other forms of TA. The only problem was that as of 1913, there were only a few independent, non-sectarian TA providers in the United States. Therefore, from 1913-1915, Orin Baker criss-crossed the country, traveling to dozens of cities with the hopes of transforming religiously-affiliated travelers' aid departments into non-sectarian "Travelers' Aid Societies," or at the very least encouraging them to "enlarge and strengthen" their work by incorporating some elements of the TAS-NY's platform before the onset of the Panama-Pacific Exposition.<sup>48</sup>

At the urging of Grace Dodge and the TAS Executive Committee, Baker began a series of national tours in 1913 that brought him to forty-six states. While he was gone, his son, Horace Baker, oversaw the work in New York.<sup>49</sup> The exact chronology and route of Baker's tours is unknown, but he writes of making two treks out West and two to the South, along with

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<sup>47</sup> See Ch. 2 of this dissertation for more on the TAS-NY's definition of non-sectarianism.

<sup>48</sup> Baker, "Philanthropic Effort to Save 50,000 a Year," *New York Times*, 27 Oct. 1912, p. X8.

<sup>49</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, pp. 7, 17. Orin Baker, "Miss Dodge's Work for Travelers' Aid," in *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 30.



numerous shorter trips.<sup>50</sup> The shorter trips were likely to cities such as Hartford and Baltimore, both of which established Travelers' Aid Societies in 1913.<sup>51</sup>

When visiting a city, Baker would typically meet with members of an interested Board in order to explain the New York model and offer his assistance with the formation of a Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>52</sup> In theory, to become a TAS meant adopting "the New York Constitution and By-Laws, the New York badge, report blanks, and definition and scope of the work."<sup>53</sup> However, there was room for maneuver in terms of how much of the New York model one had to accept in order to use the name "Travelers' Aid Society." For example, in Chicago, the YWCA relinquished control of its Travelers' Aid Department in 1914 to form a Travelers' Aid Society, though it still did not embrace the non-sectarian organizational structure that was prescribed by the TAS-NY. Chicago's board was run by a consortium of Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic organizations, such as the Protectorate of the Catholic Woman's League, making it *inter-denominational* and dependent.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, during Baltimore's first two years, it operated under the auspices of the YWCA and United Women of Maryland.<sup>55</sup>

In fact, most of the organizations that met with Baker decided against forming a Travelers' Aid Society and chose to continue to administer travelers' aid on their own. This was especially true of local YWCAs. They chose to "strengthen" their work by adopting certain

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<sup>50</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 17.

<sup>51</sup> McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 256, 259.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>53</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 24.

<sup>54</sup> Meyerowitz, *Women Adrift*, p. 120. Kimble, *Social Work with Travelers*, p. 11, n. 3. For Chicago to be considered non-sectarian, its members would have needed to act independently of their respective religious organizations.

<sup>55</sup> Later, in 1915, Baltimore became independent and non-sectarian. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 259.

“modern” elements of travelers’ aid practice, but declined to go further. In 1914, YWCAs accounted for the vast majority of the 123 organizations doing TA.<sup>56</sup>

In the South, Baker’s itinerary took him to Atlanta in April 1913 for the second Southern Sociological Congress (SSC), an annual meeting of white and black Southerners committed to improving social, economic, and racial conditions. Historian Elna Green writes that no other organization of the era so clearly “intertwined progressivism, racial liberalism, and the social gospel” as the SSC.<sup>57</sup> Baker was one of several northerners who gave guest addresses at the Congress, delivering a speech entitled “The Travelers’ Aid Work of America.” The speech was a general introduction to the “active evil” of commercialized vice and the role that travelers’ aid played in combatting it.<sup>58</sup> Though Baker’s address was meant to rally the South to the travelers’ aid cause, it made no mention of how TA could be used to alleviate the South’s unique social and racial problems. Nevertheless, by the time Baker had left Atlanta, he had established a Travelers’ Aid Section of the SSC, which consisted of representatives of nine Southern states who pledged to create local non-sectarian Travelers’ Aid Societies that would someday unite within a national society.<sup>59</sup> Shortly thereafter, Richmond, Virginia formed a TAS and New Orleans adopted the New York badge.

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<sup>56</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 24. Baker, “The Travelers’ Aid Work of America,” p. 341.

<sup>57</sup> Elna Green, “Introduction,” in Lily Hardy Hammond, *In Black and White: An Interpretation of the South*, ed. Elna Green (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2008), p. xxix. Ronald Cedric White, *Liberty and Justice for All: Racial Reform and the Social Gospel, 1877-1925* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), pp. 233-6.

<sup>58</sup> Baker, “The Travelers’ Aid Work of America,” pp. 336-44.

<sup>59</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 23. Baker, *Travelers’ Aid Society*, pp. 23-4.

*The Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the Travelers' Aid Society of California, 1913-1915*

Orin Baker undertook his Western tours in order to begin planning for the upcoming Panama-Pacific International Exposition (PPIE) in San Francisco. A Travelers' Aid Committee composed of the Woman's Board of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition and the San Francisco YWCA first summoned Baker to San Francisco in the fall of 1913.<sup>60</sup> The Woman's Board's mission was to ensure that the PPIE had a "clean bill of moral health" and that all those who wished to attend the fair, especially girls and young women, could do so safely.<sup>61</sup> Initially, it envisioned that the YWCA, then the largest TA provider in San Francisco, would simply expand its current travelers' aid work for the duration of the Expo. However, the YWCA was not interested in such a big solo undertaking, so the two groups agreed to combine and reach out to "Orin Baker of New York" for "advice and information" on forming an independent, non-sectarian Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>62</sup> After receiving some positive encouragement from Baker via telegram, the Travelers' Aid Committee decided at the end of October, 1913 to officially invite him to San Francisco. By January 10, 1914, Baker was in San Francisco and meeting with the Committee.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Travelers' Aid Committee, Minutes, 21 Oct. 1913, in Travelers Aid Society of San Francisco Records (SFH 18), Box 1, Folder 1, San Francisco History Center, San Francisco, CA (hereafter, TAS-SF Records).

<sup>61</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, pp. 64-5, 69-71. Frank Morton Todd, *The Story of the Exposition: Being the Official History of the Celebration Held at San Francisco in 1915 to Commemorate the Discovery of the Pacific Ocean and the Construction of the Panama Canal*, Vol. 5 (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), p. 122. For a recent account of the Woman's Board's moral protective work, see Abigail Markwyn, "Encountering 'Woman' on the Fairgrounds of the 1915 Panama-Pacific Exposition," in *Gendering the Fair*, p. 172. On its advocacy of woman's suffrage and world peace, see Stern, *Eugenic Nation*, pp. 37, 229, n. 45.

<sup>62</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 72. Travelers' Aid Committee, Minutes, 21 Oct. 1913, in TAS-SF Records, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>63</sup> Travelers' Aid Committee, Minutes, 31 Oct. 1913 and 10 Jan. 1914, in TAS-SF Records, Box 1, Folder 1.

Four days later, the Committee called a meeting of prominent San Franciscans to discuss the issue of exposition travelers' aid. Orin Baker delivered the opening remarks, then Rabbi Martin Meyer promptly motioned that the proper steps be taken to form a Travelers' Aid Society. The attendees selected a provisional Board of Directors and named a temporary Chair, Helen P. Sanborn of the Woman's Board. They also assembled a committee that included Orin Baker to draft a constitution and by-laws.<sup>64</sup> Two months later the work was completed and on March 13, 1914, the Travelers' Aid Society of California (TAS-California) was officially incorporated.<sup>65</sup>

Following the New York model more closely than any other contemporary Travelers' Aid Society, the TAS-California was non-sectarian. It counted among its forty-two Board members Jews, Catholics, Protestants, and a Unitarian, who served in a broad spirit of religious cooperation. Likewise, it adopted the TAS-NY's Vice-Presidential structure, whereby a Catholic, Jew, and Protestant each served as co-Vice Presidents. Three women from the Woman's Board of the PPIE (Sanborn, Phoebe Hearst,<sup>66</sup> and Mrs. Ernest Simpson) and two from the YWCA (Anna Beaver and Mrs. George Thurston) were among the founding members, and were joined by two representatives from the Council of Jewish Women (Mary Prag and Mrs. Myer Friedman). There were also secular men and women on the Board from the financial, business, railroad, legal, publishing, state, educational, and welfare sectors. M. H. Robbins was

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<sup>64</sup> Travelers' Aid Committee, Minutes, 14 Jan. 1914, in TAS-SF Records, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>65</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 74.

<sup>66</sup> Hearst was the wealthy mother of publishing magnate William Randolph Hearst. On her work with the Woman's Board and the Travelers' Aid Society of California, see Judith Robinson, *The Hearsts: An American Dynasty* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1991), pp. 360-3 and Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*.

the TAS-California's first president and Milton Esberg led the Executive Committee; both men were from the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce.<sup>67</sup>

By the time of incorporation, Baker seems to have left California. In his absence, the training of new TA agents fell to the YWCA, though the TAS-California paid at least one of their salaries.<sup>68</sup> When Baker returned again in the fall of 1914, he initiated weekly lectures on TA methods and the TAS-California began its fieldwork in preparation for the opening of the Exposition.<sup>69</sup> He also addressed a crowd of three hundred San Franciscans, including the mayor, in order to win their support for travelers' aid.<sup>70</sup> In addition to spending time in the city, Baker regularly traveled up and down the Californian coast to build a regional network of organizations that would coordinate their protective services with those of the TAS-California.<sup>71</sup>

In September, 1914 Milton Esberg, chairman of the Executive Committee, telegraphed Gilbert Colgate and Grace Dodge of the TAS-NY, requesting their permission to borrow Baker for the full Exposition year in 1915. He believed that the work would suffer if its main promoter was absent or only periodically available. By the end of October, 1914, the TAS-NY had given

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<sup>67</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, pp. 71-2. Anna Nicholson, "Travelers' Aid Society," *The Western Journal of Education* 20:9 (Sept. 1914), p. 7. TAS-California Board of Directors, Minutes, 9 April 1914, in TAS-SF Records, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>68</sup> TAS-California Board of Directors, Minutes, 9 April 1914, in TAS-SF Records, Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>69</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 76. Nicholson, "Travelers' Aid Society," p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> "A Form of Christian work...", *The Congregationalist and Christian World*, 24 Sept. 1914, p. 398. Baker appears to have impressed the mayor of San Francisco, James Rolph, who later invoked the TAS-California when defending his city against charges of immorality made by the mayor of Portland. In response, Rolph wrote that a Travelers' Aid Society had recently formed for the purpose of "safeguarding strangers, especially young women." Rolph portrayed the TAS as a critical part of the city's overall strategy for moral protection during the Exposition and ensured Portland's mayor that "There is no city where a woman or a young girl can walk the streets with greater safety or freedom from insult and molestation than San Francisco." Mayor Rolph's support was somewhat superficial, as he was subsequently criticized during the Expo for failing to follow through on a pledge to hire female police officers to assist the TAS and the Woman's Board. Bascom Johnson, "The Moral Conditions in San Francisco and at the Panama-Pacific Exposition," *Journal of Social Hygiene* 1:4 (Sept. 1915), pp. 589-92.

<sup>71</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 75.

its consent to “loan” Baker.<sup>72</sup> When the final details were hammered out, the TAS-NY agreed to pay Baker’s full salary while he was in California. They also agreed to send a trained agent to model TA work for the new recruits.<sup>73</sup>

Shortly after loaning Orin Baker, the TAS-NY was also solicited by the newly formed Travelers’ Aid Society of San Diego (TAS-SD).<sup>74</sup> The TAS-SD was looking for an Executive Secretary to lead its work during the Panama-California Exposition, which was occurring at the same time as the Panama-Pacific Exposition. Since Orin Baker had already committed to San Francisco, he chose his son, Horace Baker, to go to San Diego in February, 1915 to “take charge of their work... and to train a corps of workers.”<sup>75</sup> Ellen Scripps, Honorary Vice President of the TAS-SD and one of California’s foremost philanthropists, sponsored his salary.<sup>76</sup>

When the Panama-Pacific Exposition commenced on February 20, 1915, the Travelers’ Aid Society of California had established itself at five locations in San Francisco: two in the city proper and three on the fairgrounds, which overlooked the Bay just east of where the Golden Gate Bridge now stands. In the city, the TAS-California’s executive offices were in the Hearst Building on Third and Market near Union Square, while its departments of Field Work, Social Service, and Housing operated out of the Ferry Building, the city’s main transportation hub

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<sup>72</sup> Esberg to Colgate and Dodge, 23 Sept. 1914, in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 22.

<sup>73</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 75.

<sup>74</sup> The Travelers’ Aid Society of San Diego was incorporated in November, 1914. TAS-SD Board of Directors, Minutes, 23 Dec. 1914 in Travelers’ Aid Society of San Diego Records, Box 3, Folder 11, Special Collections and University Archives, San Diego State University, San Diego, CA (hereafter, TAS-SD Records).

<sup>75</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 22.

<sup>76</sup> TAS-SD, *Annual Report, 1915*, pp. 2, 6, in TAS-SD Records, Box 2, Folder 35. Scripps made her wealth by running a newspaper business, which she co-owned with her brother, Edward. See Kevin Starr, *Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950-63* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 64.

located at the foot of Market Street along the Embarcadero.<sup>77</sup> On the fairgrounds, the TAS-California's Headquarters was in the Palace of Education on the southwestern edge of the PPIE's central quad. The Palace also housed a travelers' aid Rest Room. In the Service Building, there was a desk for TA agents who patrolled the fairgrounds from 9am to closing. And, the Woman's Board provided the Society with additional space in the California Building, just north of the central quad, which housed an office and a second Rest Room.<sup>78</sup>

The Department of Field Work coordinated travelers' aid in San Francisco and Oakland. It managed a staff that at its peak reached forty-eight female agents, most of whom worked eight hour shifts in the city. Agents were recognized by their badge, which was a gold star set in a blue-bordered shield with the words "Travelers' Aid Society" wrapped around it.<sup>79</sup> The TAS-California publicized the badge nationally in order to familiarize travelers with its appearance. The impersonation of TA agents had been a problem at previous World's Fairs and knowledge of the badge was to be a weapon against similar imposters at the PPIE.<sup>80</sup>

Agents were to meet every arriving train from the Southern Pacific, Western Pacific, and Santa Fe lines, as well as all steamships. In total, 92,263 travelers came into contact with the Travelers' Aid Society at the city's stations and piers during the exposition year. The TAS-

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<sup>77</sup> Pamphlet entitled *Travelers' Aid: International Exhibit, Panama-Pacific International Exposition, San Francisco 1915*, in TAS-SD Records, Box 2, Folder 3. The use of the Hearst Building was donated by its namesake, TAS-California Honorary Vice President Phoebe Hearst. The Woman's Board also maintained its headquarters there. Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 181.

<sup>78</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 79. *Travelers' Aid: International Exhibit* pamphlet. *Panama-Pacific International Exposition 1915*, pamphlet online at <http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist9/ppietxt1.html> (accessed, 2/11/2011). A map of the fairgrounds is available at <http://www.sfmuseum.net/hist/ppiemap.html> (accessed, 2/11/2011).

<sup>79</sup> See the reproduction of the badge in Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 67. Also see Todd, *The Story of the Exposition*, p. 122.

<sup>80</sup> Nicholson, "Travelers' Aid Society," p. 6. Louise Shattuck, "The Work of the Travelers' Aid Society," *Girls' Friendly Society in America Associates' Record* 23:2 (Feb. 1915), p. 28. Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, pp. 65-8.

California's placards made it clear that their agents were prepared to intervene whenever a woman traveling alone was "annoyed" by a stranger. Agents also provided more mundane services such as giving directions and information to confused travelers, who then continued on their own into the city.<sup>81</sup> In other cases, agents escorted travelers with no place to stay and little money to cooperating charities or Homes.

Travelers who sought accommodations in San Francisco or the surrounding Bay Area were encouraged to contact the TAS-California's Housing Department before their departure. Prior to the exposition, the Housing Department had investigated and approved thousands of rooms in facilities such as boarding houses, lodging houses, hotels, apartments, and private homes. These rooms met the Department's standards of "safety and decency" and offered "definite rates."<sup>82</sup> In anticipation of a traveler's arrival, agents would consult "the list" and reserve the proper accommodations for her. Once in the city, the traveler was advised to proceed to any of the TAS's three locations where an agent would confirm that her room was still on the list. If it had been removed due to an infraction, the department would help locate a new place to stay. If the location remained legitimate, then she could proceed on her own or, if she wished, accompanied by a TA agent. Travelers arriving in the Bay Area without a reservation could request an agent's immediate assistance with locating suitable lodging. The TAS-California's Housing Department served 21,551 travelers in 1915.<sup>83</sup>

All travelers who were identified as at-risk, particularly children and young women, were eligible for the follow-up work of the Social Service Department. Agents from the department

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<sup>81</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 84. Todd, *The Story of the Exposition*, p. 123. *Travelers' Aid: International Exhibit* pamphlet.

<sup>82</sup> Shattuck, "The Work of the Travelers' Aid Society," p. 27. Johnson, "The Moral Conditions in San Francisco," p. 606. Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 77.

<sup>83</sup> Shattuck, "The Work of the Travelers' Aid Society," pp. 27-8. Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, pp. 77-8.



would schedule a meeting after their initial contact in order to place newcomers with the “right kind of companions or institutions”: those that would help develop them as an “asset and not a liability” to the community.<sup>84</sup>

The TAS-California’s work on the fairgrounds is not fully described in the sources, but we can assume that it bore some similarity to the onsite efforts of the San Francisco YWCA. The “gendered space” of the YWCA, where it exhibited its worldview and performed its conception of white women’s work, included a building for visitors and a clubhouse for exposition workers. It offered its services to a multi-racial and –religious group of attendees and workers, most of whom were women. At its visitors’ building, services included “meals, a place to rest, referrals to safe lodgings, a children’s day nursery, and Sunday Church Service.”<sup>85</sup> The Rest Rooms of the Travelers’ Aid Society, which were staffed by its female agents, were certainly not this comprehensive, but probably also offered food, a quiet space to escape the hustle and bustle of the fairgrounds, and help in finding accommodations, as well as assistance in leaving the Exposition for a train station or pier. Like the YWCA, the TAS-California did not limit its services to only white European or American visitors. Asian women, either as visitors or employees, were eligible for services as well. All together, the TAS-California encountered 20,852 women on the grounds of the Exposition.<sup>86</sup>

Both the YWCA and TAS-California offered their services as an alternative to some of the more dubious options that awaited fairgoers and workers at the PPIE’s amusement “Zone.” They feared men partaking in prostitution and women falling victim to it. Another related fear

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<sup>84</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 78. Nicholson, “Travelers’ Aid Society,” p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Markwyn, “Encountering ‘Woman’ on the Fairgrounds,” pp. 177-9.

<sup>86</sup> Todd, *The Story of the Exposition*, p. 123.

was the sexualization of women. Critics saw female workers in the fair's several dance halls as fetishized objects, whose morals were corrupted and who corrupted all those who watched their performances, which often mimicked the act of sexual intercourse. Such spectacles regularly took place at the dance halls of the Mysterious Orient, the '49 Camp, the Hawaiian Concession, and the 101 Ranch.<sup>87</sup> The YWCA hoped to offer "courage" to the dancers who sought respite at its workers' clubhouse: courage to continue with their work if it was their only option or courage to ultimately leave their work in favor of more respectable and safer options. This approach reflected the YWCA's worldview that "women must be able to live in a world in which female sexuality was not commodified and in which young working women could live and support themselves in the city without risking the fall into prostitution."<sup>88</sup> Similarly, the YWCA's visitors' building and the TAS's Rest Rooms served as safe havens, where women did not have to fear suspicious strangers and could by-pass the viewing of sexualized performances that might make them uncomfortable or, as some feared, lead them to an unhealthy obsession with sex (a "morbid sex curiosity").<sup>89</sup> Of course, once outside of a YWCA clubhouse or TAS Rest Room, agents had little control over how their clients behaved, but they hoped that their influence would lead to safe choices while at the Exposition.<sup>90</sup>

At the fair's end, supporters rushed to praise the Woman's Board and TAS-California for their moral protective work, comparing their efforts favorably to those undertaken at earlier World's Fairs in Chicago and St. Louis. Woman's Board biographer, Anna Pratt Simpson, and

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<sup>87</sup> Johnson, "The Moral Conditions in San Francisco," pp. 596-600.

<sup>88</sup> Markwyn, "Encountering 'Woman' on the Fairgrounds," pp. 179-80.

<sup>89</sup> Johnson, "The Moral Conditions in San Francisco," p. 597.

<sup>90</sup> Similarly, James Gilbert describes how visitors "experienced" the spectacles at the 1904 St. Louis Exposition. He writes that despite efforts to enforce good behavior, the fair "was treated as a vast amusement park where the audience could turn the concessions and displays to its own purposes." Gilbert, *Whose Fair?*, pp. 151-2.

PPIE chronicler, Frank Morton Todd, both cite the San Francisco Chief of Police who claimed that not one girl vanished from the Panama-Pacific Exposition.<sup>91</sup> Others offered higher estimates. The Travelers' Aid Society of New York issued a pamphlet in 1916, which claimed that there were fifty eight disappearances, a figure that still compared favorably to the roughly five thousand believed to have vanished from earlier fairs.<sup>92</sup> A speaker at the General Federation of Women's Clubs' biennial convention in 1920 gave the largest number. She claimed that two hundred women were unaccounted for, but stressed the vast improvement over the figures for the 1904 St. Louis Exposition.<sup>93</sup>

#### *National Coordination of Travelers' Aid for the Panama-Pacific Exposition*

For the start of the Panama-Pacific Exposition in 1915, Baker and Grace Dodge envisioned that a National Travelers' Aid Society would be in place to bolster the efforts of the TAS-California, and over the course of 1914, this seemed a distinct possibility. The first major conference on travelers' aid was held in May of 1914, which brought together representatives from eastern cities, as well as from San Francisco and Canada.<sup>94</sup> Attendees resolved to unite "the organizations interested in Travelers' Aid work to form a National Travelers' Aid Society." A committee of two New Yorkers, Gilbert Colgate and Grace Dodge, and two San Franciscans,

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<sup>91</sup> Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 186. Todd, *The Story of the Exposition*, p. 123.

<sup>92</sup> Agnes Repplier, *Strangers within our Gates* (pamphlet issued by TAS-NY), 1916. The pamphlet is in the collection of the New York Public Library, Schwarzman Building.

<sup>93</sup> Pearis Buckner Ellis, "The New Conscience," in *The General Federation of Women's Clubs Fifteenth Biennial Convention, June 16-23, 1920, Des Moines, Iowa: A Report*, ed. Mrs. Adam Weis (n.p., 1920), pp. 368-9. Neither the TAS-NY nor the GFWC provides a source for their totals, making their accuracy difficult to ascertain.

<sup>94</sup> A report from the YWCA places the total number of attendees at 87 from 32 cities in 14 states. While McCall claims that attendees came from 129 cities in 17 states (she makes no estimate of total number of attendees). "The Travelers' Aid Conference," *The Association Monthly* 8:5 (June 1914), p. 191. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 10.

Mr. F. G. Sanborn and Mr. Jesse Lilienthal, was appointed to bring about national unification.<sup>95</sup>

A convention was later set for January, 1915. However, before the year was out, two committee members, Dodge and Sanborn, were dead.<sup>96</sup> Dodge died suddenly two days after Christmas, 1914 at the age of 59.<sup>97</sup> Though battling an illness, she continued to work until the end, spending most of the morning the day before she died planning for the “new work of the Travelers’ Aid Society.” The loss of Dodge, considering her key positions within the YWCA and TAS-NY, made national unification impossible and plans were postponed.<sup>98</sup>

In place of a National Travelers’ Aid Society, the TAS-NY and the TAS-California led an informal coalition that included ten to fourteen Travelers’ Aid Societies from cities such as Hartford and Nashville, as well as numerous local and national organizations.<sup>99</sup> Regarding organizations at the nation level, at least ten gave their support to Exposition travelers’ aid, primarily in terms of publicizing the services of the TAS-California and issuing general travel warnings to women and girls. Frank Morton Todd, the PPIE’s official chronicler, lists the cooperating organizations as the National Board of the YWCA, the Women’s Christian

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<sup>95</sup> “Resolutions Adopted by the Conference of Travelers’ Aid Representatives of Eastern Cities, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>, 1914,” in McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 13 and TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, pp. 9, 21.

<sup>96</sup> McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 14.

<sup>97</sup> “Grace Dodge Dead; Noted for Charities,” *New York Times*, 28 Dec. 1914, p. 9.

<sup>98</sup> Graham, *Merchant of Dreams*, p. 327. Katz, “Grace Hoadley Dodge,” p. 246. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 10.

<sup>99</sup> For the PPIE, Baker assembled a poster presentation on the nature and scope of travelers’ aid in North America and Europe that was exhibited in the Palace of Education. Pictures of the poster were then reprinted in a brochure that is available to researchers. The print is small, but it appears to show ten Travelers’ Aid Societies: Hartford; Philadelphia; New York City; Chicago; Richmond, Virginia; Macon, Georgia; New Orleans; Nashville; San Diego; and San Francisco. McCall in her history shows four additional TAS’s: Baltimore, Syracuse, St. Louis, and Indianapolis. We can therefore conclude that by 1915 there was somewhere between ten and fourteen TAS’s in the United States. In terms of local organizations, there were at least one hundred that were “actively” engaged in some form of travelers’ aid. In Georgia, for instance, the Atlanta Women’s Missionary Society and the King’s Daughters and Sons provided TA, as did a Travelers’ Aid Society. *Travelers’ Aid: International Exhibit* pamphlet. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 258-60, 262.

Temperance Union, the King's Daughter and Sons, the National Congress of Mothers and Parents Teachers' Associations, the General Federation of Women's Clubs, Associated Charities, the YMCA, the National Grange,<sup>100</sup> the Gideon's Christian Traveling Men's Association,<sup>101</sup> and the Girls' Friendly Society.<sup>102</sup> It is probably safe to add the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) to this list as well, given their consistent support for national travelers' aid; the fact that two members of the San Francisco Council of Jewish Women were on the TAS-California's Board; and that the NCJW attended the exposition.<sup>103</sup>

A good example of the cooperative dynamic that was put into motion for the PPIE is illustrated by the actions of the General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC). First, the GFWC in the summer of 1914 issued a resolution that ordered its State Federations to "print and post" warnings that urged "girls" not to attend the PPIE alone, lest there be a tragic "loss of American womanhood." It also enlisted local clubs to help distribute these warnings. The GFWC also instructed clubs to put women who were determined to attend the PPIE in touch with the TAS-California prior to their departure. Later, in 1915, a member of the Seventh Day Baptist Church, Mrs. George Crosley, got wind of the GFWC's resolutions and urged that local churches also get involved. Writing in the Seventh Day Baptist organ, *The Sabbath Recorder*, Crosley called on churches in towns where no Women's Club existed to print and distribute their own

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<sup>100</sup> The Grange was an all-male organization dedicated to promoting the interests of rural communities through legislative and welfare campaigns. Orin Baker saw the Granges as an important link in the national travelers' aid network. Since 1912, they had partnered with the TAS-NY to coordinate TA between rural and urban areas. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 6. H. H. Turner, "Departmental Meetings. Department of Commendation," *Associates' Record* 21:9 (Dec. 1913), p. 179. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 26.

<sup>101</sup> The Gideons are best known for their project, still ongoing, of placing bibles in hotel rooms.

<sup>102</sup> Todd, *The Story of the Exposition*, p. 124. Todd also included the Catholic Society for Befriending Girls in his list, but this was an international, rather than a national, organization. Therefore, I have excluded it. For more on the Catholic Society, see Simpson, *Problems Women Solved*, p. 79.

<sup>103</sup> Nannie Reis, "In the World of Jewish Womankind," *The Reform Advocate*, 3 Nov. 1917, p. 298. Todd, *The Story of the Exposition*, p. 103. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, pp. 7-8.

warnings.<sup>104</sup> In sum, an order issued by a national organization, in this case the GFWC, trickled down to its state and local members, as well as to unaffiliated churches.

### *The National Travelers' Aid Society, 1916-1917*

In the wake of the Panama-Pacific Exposition, Orin Baker and the Travelers' Aid Society of New York focused primarily on publishing a body of TA literature that was intended to standardize TA practice in the United States and pave the way for national unification. In 1916, the TAS-NY printed the instructional pamphlet "Organize a Travelers' Aid Society," which was meant for organizations that planned to transition to a non-sectarian Travelers' Aid Society. The following year, TA practitioners gained access to the first travelers' aid textbook, *Travelers' Aid Society in America: Principles and Methods*, which Baker wrote as a guide for structuring TA work and training agents. Also in 1917, the TAS-NY issued a National Directory, which listed the 168 cities with active TA service and included relevant contact information for each city.<sup>105</sup>

To further make the case for national unification after the close of the PPIE, Baker once again delivered an address to the Southern Sociological Congress, which he published as "A National Program for Travelers' Aid." At the SSC, he also obtained the endorsement of sixteen southern states (an increase from the nine that had pledged in 1913) for the creation of a national society.<sup>106</sup> At the end of 1916, conditions seemed "ripe" for the "national unified movement" to

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<sup>104</sup> Mrs. George Crosley, "Safety First," *The Sabbath Recorder* 78:12 (22 March 1915), p. 367.

<sup>105</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, pp. 7, 15. McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 24-5. The TA Directories are housed at the Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota as part of the Travelers Aid Association of America Records.

<sup>106</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 15. Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, p. 25.

finally occur. Barring any unforeseen deaths, Baker and President Colgate pinpointed 1917 as the year it would happen.<sup>107</sup>

For a second time a committee was assembled to plan a national convention. Mrs. George Vaux of Philadelphia led the committee, which consisted of members from ten Travelers' Aid Societies (New York, California, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans, Baltimore, San Jose, and Worcester, MA<sup>108</sup>) and five national organizations (YWCA, Catholic Charities, NCJW, King's Daughters and Sons, and the SSC). The planning committee, in coordination with the TAS-NY, sent out invitations announcing an April 1917 conference. The conference's ultimate goal was to organize a National Travelers' Aid Society and decide upon "the cooperative relationship of all organizations and individuals in the United States interested in Travelers' Aid work."<sup>109</sup>

In the months leading up to April, 1917, all the key players in the TA movement stayed alive and the first national convention was held, aptly, at the home of Grace Dodge's sister, Alice Osborn. One hundred and thirty delegates were present from eight national organizations and forty two cities. TAS-NY president Gilbert Colgate delivered the opening remarks, recounting the history of the New York TAS and its role in facilitating national unification. He also praised travelers' aid at the Panama-Pacific Exposition and singled out Orin Baker and the late Grace Dodge for their work throughout the country. In Colgate's words, the conference and ultimate federation was the "culmination of six years' effort on the part of General Secretary [Baker]."<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, pp. 7, 19.

<sup>108</sup> San Jose and Worcester were the newest Travelers' Aid Societies.

<sup>109</sup> McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-19, 21.

McCall reports that no official proclamation establishing the National Travelers' Aid Society survives from the meeting. Nevertheless, before the conference adjourned a constitution was written, a name decided upon, and leaders selected. Not surprisingly, the officers came from the leadership of the TAS-NY. Gilbert Colgate was elected President of the National Society and Baker named its General Secretary. Both men planned to continue in their New York positions as well, a situation made possible by the decision to house the new National Travelers' Aid Society in the same building as the TAS-NY (rooms 20 and 21 at 465 Lexington Avenue).<sup>111</sup>

At this stage, the National and New York TAS were virtually inseparable, which ultimately proved to be Orin Baker's undoing. Within two years, he was engulfed in a bitter power struggle with the Boards of both organizations as they attempted to gain independence from each other and from Baker. Perceiving that his authority within the movement that he largely built was being undermined, Baker abruptly resigned from the TAS-NY and the National Travelers' Aid Society in February of 1919, thus ending his brief, yet dynamic, travelers' aid career.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 20, 25. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1917*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>112</sup> On the controversy surrounding Baker's departure, see "Statement on Orin Baker's Resignation," in Board of Directors, Minutes, 11 April 1919, in Records of the TAS-NY, Box 1, Folder 2 and McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, pp. 29-33.



## Chapter 5

### **Agents, *Titanic* Survivors, and White Slavery, 1911-1916**

While Orin Baker was traveling across the country to build support for a national TA movement, work continued in New York City. The Travelers' Aid Society's workforce more than doubled its size from that of the pre-1911 period. Using Annual Reports and the United States Federal Census, I begin Chapter 5 by illuminating the composition of this new workforce in terms of class, age, marital status, ethnicity, and citizenship. Corresponding to the increase in TA workers was an expansion of the travelers' aid field, which at its peak in 1916 included all of the major rail terminals in the New York-New Jersey metropolitan area.

The remainder of Chapter Five focuses on the TAS-NY's fieldwork for the period 1911-1916. In 1912, the TAS was involved in providing relief to survivors of one of history's greatest maritime disasters, the sinking of the *Titanic*. In general, historical accounts of the *Titanic*'s sinking neglect the relief efforts undertaken on behalf of the survivors. This section of the chapter is an attempt to begin a more sustained discussion of how the city and its citizens responded to this epic tragedy. It describes the private/public partnership that developed between independent organizations (including the TAS), the Mayor's office, and Federal Immigration Services to provide disaster relief when survivors arrived at the Port of New York. As the relief effort took shape, gender and class proved to be the fundamental organizing concepts, informing the initial understanding of who lived and died on the *Titanic*, what kind of aid those who survived would need, and by whom that aid should be provided.

The chapter concludes with a more general discussion of the TAS's work during this period, emphasizing the noticeable increase in cases involving strange men who appeared to threaten female travelers. Here, I examine the Annual Reports' sample cases for evidence of white slavery. I also describe the criminal milieu of New York's train stations and piers, which included a variety of petty criminals, as well as workers trying to maximize their profits at the expense of confused travelers. Corresponding to this increase in cases involving strange men was also a marked increase in the level of discipline and surveillance used by TAS agents. We see more examples in this period of agents physically separating men and women, some of whom were in consensual relationships, and a greater willingness to hold travelers at TAS headquarters while agents investigated their backgrounds and future plans.

### **The Agents of the Travelers' Aid Society**

The TAS-NY entered its second stage with a force of eighteen female agents to patrol the city's stations and piers, an increase of four from its time as a women's organization. Owing to an increase in stations served and steamers met, the force was enlarged to twenty eight by 1915.<sup>1</sup> One of the new additions was Anna Rich, who had previously worked for the Harlem-based White Rose Mission, which provided TA to African-Americans arriving in New York from Norfolk, Virginia (see Chapter One). Due to financial hardship, the White Rose decided to abandon its TA work in the city and the TAS agreed to fill the void, adding Rich, a black woman, to its "regular staff" of agents.<sup>2</sup> The workforce underwent further expansion in

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<sup>1</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 12. *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> Two years earlier, the White Rose had ceased its work in Virginia as well, transferring its agent to the National Urban League. White Rose Mission, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 3. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 11.

1915-1916 to reach thirty two agents.<sup>3</sup>

To become an agent of the Travelers' Aid Society, one had to first fill out an application and then go for an interview, during which the candidate was assessed in terms of their "conviction and health." The TAS defined "health" as the "bodily vigor and mental wholesomeness" that was required to withstand the stresses of the job. As in the previous period, agents also needed to be motivated by religious faith, broadly defined as "the old missionary spirit," minus the fanaticism and emphasis on conversion.<sup>4</sup> Foreign language skills were another requirement, as was some level of education, though formal social work training was still not a prerequisite. In most cases, agents learned TA theory and practice on the job and by attending weekly meetings with the General Secretary and, later, with the Director of Aids, Ruth Robinson.<sup>5</sup>

There are no exact figures from this period concerning wages paid, but a report of estimated expenses for 1918 shows that the majority of workers were scheduled to make "a comfortable living wage" between \$65 to \$75 a month or \$780 to \$900 a year. The highest monthly pay was \$80 and the lowest was \$50. Raises were commensurate with the agents' overall effectiveness.<sup>6</sup>

Regarding the ethnic background of the agents, we can make some generalizations using a list of thirty two names found in the Annual Report for 1916. Surnames that indicate a northern or central European ancestry dominate the list. At least fifteen surnames (47%) point to

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<sup>3</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 94-5.

<sup>5</sup> Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 95, 97. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-1911*, p. 15. *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 14. *Annual Report, 1917*, p. 13.

<sup>6</sup> "Estimated Budget of Expenses..." p. 1, in TAS Executive Committee, Minutes, 8 January 1918, Records of the TAS-NY, Box 1, Folder 1. Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 98-9.

a British or Irish identity, with German names having the second highest count at four. Additionally, there are two surnames (Quamme and Jacobsen) with possible Scandinavian roots and another (Prins) with Dutch origins. In total, twenty six names (81%) suggest northern or central European origins. Four surnames indicate a Mediterranean background: Garbarini and Garino, and possibly Palmentola, are Italian, while Hagopian is Armenian. In terms of the presence of Jewish agents, there is one definite Jewish name (Burstein) and another likely Jewish candidate (Maschke). Anna Rich was the lone African-American woman on staff in 1916.

Since each of the thirty two names in the 1916 Annual Report is preceded by the title of “Miss” or “Mrs,” the number of single and married/widowed workers can be calculated. Slightly over two thirds (22) of the women were single, while just under a third (10) were married or widowed. During its phase as a women’s organization, agents were overwhelmingly single, which was due in part to the TAS’s preference that agents reside at its 48<sup>th</sup> Street headquarters in a settlement house-type environment. Sometime in 1910 or 1911, the TAS deemphasized living at headquarters so that by 1912, the majority of the agents lived elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> This shift would have allowed for more married women to work for the TAS. Josephine Garino, for instance, was an agent for the Travelers’ Aid Society in 1916. She was married with two children and lived in a rental apartment. Her decision to work while married was likely made because her family required a dual income to meet their rent obligations and maintain their standard of living.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> It would not be until the late 1920s that rank-and-file social workers self-consciously argued for their *right* to combine marriage with a career. Walkowitz, *Working with Class*, pp. 91-3. For more on Garino, see her profile below.

To learn more about the agents beyond what the 1916 Annual Report provides, I consulted Federal census records from 1910 and 1920.<sup>9</sup> From the census we can obtain information such as employment history, birth date, place of birth, and year of immigration. The census also asked if the subject knew the English language and if the property in which she lived was rented or owned. Using the census, I was able to *definitely* identify four agents, whose biographies I will sketch below, and *likely* identify ten others (see Table 7).

All four of the definitely known agents were born in the United States to immigrant parents. Emma Haendle was born in New York in 1861 and was of German descent. She was fifty five in 1916 and was one of the oldest agents on the force. She was not married and, in 1920, was one of ten agents who resided at the TAS's Lexington Avenue Headquarters.<sup>10</sup> Antoinette Berrer, a forty year old single woman, also lived at headquarters. She was originally from Maine and came to New York sometime between 1910 and 1916. Her parents were from Germany and Switzerland. The third agent, Josephine Garino, was born in New York in 1878 to an Italian father and French mother. She was thirty eight years old, married, and had two thirteen year old sons. In 1920, Garino still worked for the TAS and is listed as living in Manhattan on Columbus Avenue in a rented apartment with her family. The last agent definitely identified is Beatrice Tormey, a single woman who, at twenty two, was one of the youngest workers. She was born in 1894 to Irish parents with whom she lived in a rented home in 1910. Her sister, Genevieve, also later worked for the Travelers' Aid Society.

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<sup>9</sup> 1910 United States Federal Census, State of New York. 1910 United States Federal Census, State of Connecticut. 1920 United States Federal Census, State of New York. Online at <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 4/7/2011).

<sup>10</sup> 1920 United States Federal Census, State of New York, New York City, 463 and 465 Lexington Avenue, online at <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 4/7/2011). All of the ten agents living at headquarters were either unmarried or widowed.

The 1920 census described Haendle, Berrer, and Garino as “social workers,” an occupation that was classified as full-time, “semi-professional” work.<sup>11</sup> This designation was a victory on three fronts for TAS General Secretary Orin Baker. It meant that travelers’ aid was viewed in official corners as a legitimate subfield of social work. The social work label also distinguished TA agents from their peers involved in more traditional charity and religious work. And, it validated Baker’s claim, made in 1912, that TA work had established itself as a “new vocation for women.”<sup>12</sup> However, there was a downside; the census grouped social work with other occupations that it deemed semi-professional, such as fortune telling and the keeping of racetracks, which meant that social work, and by implication TA, still had a long way to go before obtaining full professional and middle-class status.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The classification of social work as “semi-professional” began in 1910. Walkowitz, *Working with Class*, pp. 28-9.

<sup>12</sup> Baker, “Philanthropic Effort to Save 50,000 a Year,” *New York Times*, 27 Oct. 1912, p. X8.

<sup>13</sup> Walkowitz, *Working with Class*, pp. 28-9.

Table 7: TAS Agents Definitely or Likely Identified by Census Records  
(Italics designate agents whose identities are definitely known)

| Name                         | Date of Birth | Place of Birth |
|------------------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Ash, Esther                  | 1890          | New York       |
| <i>Berrer, Antoinette A.</i> | 1875          | Maine          |
| Brock, Frances               | 1890          | Ireland        |
| Burstein, Fannie             | 1888          | Russia         |
| Chaffee, Catherine E.        | 1888          | Vermont        |
| Garbarini, Lena              | 1878          | New York       |
| <i>Garino, Josephine</i>     | 1878          | New York       |
| Gleason, Ruby M.             | 1891          | Connecticut    |
| Goodman, Maud R.             | 1884          | New York       |
| <i>Haendle, Emma</i>         | 1861          | New York       |
| Maschke, Mabel               | 1884 or 1886  | New York       |
| Quamme, Rae                  | 1894          | Norway         |
| Rodenhouse, Mary             | 1881          | Indiana        |
| <i>Tormey, Beatrice R.</i>   | 1894          | New York       |

*Sources:* TAS-NY, Annual Report, 1916, p. 13. 1910 United States Federal Census, State of New York. 1910 United States Federal Census, State of Connecticut. 1920 United States Federal Census, State of New York.

Ten other agents *likely* appear in the census. In these cases, there was an exact or close match with a name from the 1916 Annual Report, but no smoking gun, such as a reference to the Travelers' Aid Society, that could prove beyond a doubt the woman's identity. For example, a Lena Garbarini is cited as a TA worker in the 1916 Annual Report and a woman by that same name is also listed in the 1920 census as a forty two year old interpreter for the U.S. government. In this instance, the identical names and similar employment<sup>14</sup> point to a likely match. In other cases, I assumed a match with the census records because there was only one entry in the New York area for the name in question or, if there were several entries, all but one belonged to women who were either too young or too old to have worked for the TAS in 1916.

Using the census information on the ten potential workers and the four definitely known workers, I will present a statistical portrait of the fourteen women who I believe were part of the TAS's workforce circa 1916 (see Table 7). To begin with, this group consisted of mostly young to middle-aged women: 86% were in their twenties or thirties and one was in her forties (Berrer). The average age of the fourteen workers was thirty two (Beatrice Tormey was the youngest at twenty two).

Eleven of the fourteen women (79%) were born in the United States. Five had parents who were also born in the U.S., which made them at least second generation American citizens. For example, Maud R. Goodman was born in New York, as were both of her parents. Ruby M. Gleason and her father were born in Connecticut, and her mother was a New Jersey native. Of the six remaining American women, five were born to immigrant parents and one to "mixed" parents (one immigrant, one native-born). Only three of the fourteen agents were immigrants, hailing from Norway, Ireland, and Russia. Rae Quamme left Norway in 1899 as a four year old

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<sup>14</sup> TA work relied on agents who could speak foreign languages and it would have made a good springboard for a later position as an interpreter.



girl. Frances Brock was a recent arrival, emigrating from Ireland in 1910. And, Fannie Burstein, a Jewish woman, emigrated from Russia in 1902 when she was fourteen.

Although immigrants were only a small portion of the force, nine of the fourteen women (64%) did have at least one parent who was foreign-born, a ratio consistent with the composition of the larger welfare field in New York. In *Working with Class*, Daniel Walkowitz discusses the increasing presence of both immigrants and daughters of immigrants in the emerging social work profession over the first two decades of the twentieth century. This new cadres of social workers stood in contrast to their nineteenth century predecessors, the “Ladies Bountiful,” as well as to the more recent settlement house “mothers”: both were typically native-born of old New England stock and Protestant. Thus, the immigrants and daughters of immigrants heralded the beginnings of a (lower) middle-class identity for social workers that would emerge more strongly over the course of the 1920s.<sup>15</sup>

In terms of living arrangements, eleven agents rented, lodged, or lived as dependents with family members who were renters. In 1910, a then twenty nine year old Mary Rodenhouse shared a rented apartment with three other single women (two teachers and a nurse). Josephine Garino lived with her husband and sons in a rented apartment in Manhattan. And in 1920, a twenty eight year old Rae Quamme rented with her mother, who was the head of their household. The non-property owning status of the majority of the fourteen agents is consistent with their position as modest wage earners in a professionalizing field. Only three women, all of whom were daughters of parents born in the United States, came from property owning families. Ruby Gleason’s family owned a Connecticut farm on which she lived as a nineteen year old in 1910.

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<sup>15</sup> Walkowitz, *Working with Class*, pp. 37-8 and Table A.3 in Appendix, p. 324.

Another potential agent, Catherine E. Chaffee, lived with her property owning uncle just outside of the city in Yonkers.<sup>16</sup>

### **Expanding the Work**

From 1911-1916, Pennsylvania Station and Grand Central were the core sites for station work in New York City, with agents on duty from 6:45am to 11pm daily.<sup>17</sup> In 1913, Grand Central Station moved into a new home on 42nd Street: the famous Beaux Arts building designed by Warren & Wetmore and Reed & Stem. Its name also changed to Grand Central Terminal, though most New Yorkers continued to refer to it as Grand Central Station. Pennsylvania Station stood between 31st and 33rd Streets and 7th and 8th Avenues in Manhattan, having relocated from Jersey City in 1910.

During this period, the Travelers' Aid Society sought to expand its work to the five remaining major terminals in the metropolitan area (all in New Jersey). At first, this was done only through appointment work, with agents meeting individual travelers by request at Lackawanna Station in Hoboken and at Erie Station and the old Pennsylvania Station, both in Jersey City.<sup>18</sup> The transition to full-time work was made in 1913 when agents were put into regular rotation at two of the above stations, the Erie and Lackawanna, as well as at a third,

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<sup>16</sup> Chaffee also appears in a 1920 United States Passport application, online at <http://www.ancestry.com> (accessed 4/7/2011).

<sup>17</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 7. "Aiding Travelers," *New York Tribune*, 21 Jan. 1912, Of Interest to Women Section, p. 4. *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Travelers could request appointments through the mail or by telegram and telephone. By-laws Art. V, Sec. 2, in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 31. *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 8. *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 7.

Jersey City's Central Station. Meanwhile, appointments continued at Pennsylvania Station and were added to the one remaining New Jersey terminal, the West Shore in Weehawken.<sup>19</sup>

Simultaneously, the TAS was also busy expanding its work in the city proper. Agents began doing appointment work for the urban stops of the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) in 1913 and the city's subway system in 1914. When the Brooklyn Auxiliary Committee partnered with the TAS in 1916, travelers' aid was extended into Brooklyn where workers were on duty from 5pm until the early morning at the Flatbush Avenue stop of the LIRR and, during the summer months, at the Coney Island amusement park.<sup>20</sup> Thus, by 1917, the travelers' aid field covered the New Jersey-New York metropolitan area (see Table 8). Agents had a regular presence at Grand Central and Pennsylvania Stations in Manhattan, Flatbush Avenue and Coney Island in Brooklyn, and Erie, Pennsylvania, and Lackawanna Stations in New Jersey. The remaining terminals in New Jersey and New York City were covered by appointment.

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<sup>19</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* *Annual Report, 1916*, pp. 9, 13.

Table 8: Train Stations Covered by the Travelers' Aid Society, 1916

| Station             | Location        | Coverage                  |
|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Pennsylvania        | Manhattan       | 6:45am-11pm daily         |
| Grand Central       | Manhattan       | 6:45am-11:15pm daily      |
| Flatbush Ave (LIRR) | Brooklyn        | 5pm-1am, daily            |
| Coney Island        | Brooklyn        | 5pm-2am, daily, in summer |
| LIRR and subways    | New York City   | By appointment            |
| Erie                | Jersey City, NJ | 7am-10:30pm daily         |
| Central             | Jersey City     | 7:15am-10:30pm daily      |
| Lackawanna          | Hoboken, NJ     | 7:15am-10:30pm daily      |
| Pennsylvania        | Jersey City     | By appointment            |
| West Shore          | Weehawken, NJ   | By appointment            |

Source: TAS-NY, Annual Report, 1916

At the piers, TA workers continued to meet all arriving transatlantic ocean liners during the day and were on-call overnight. For the first time, some of the transatlantic companies began allocating space for a Travelers' Aid Society desk and sign, making the agents more visible to potential clients.<sup>21</sup> While the TAS was expanding its work with the metropolitan railroads, it also sought to broaden its presence at the Port of New York. Its goal was to add the domestic (coastal) steamship companies and the South American companies to its regular work with the

<sup>21</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 9. "Aiding Travelers," *New York Tribune*, 21 Jan. 1912, Of Interest to Women Section, p. 4. The piers were better marked than the train stations. It was not until 1917 that the Travelers' Aid Society installed a permanent sign at Pennsylvania Station. A year later, in 1918, Grand Central also consented to a sign, as well as to a desk. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1917*, p. 7. *Annual Report, 1918*, p. 10. On the importance of obtaining a desk and sign at Grand Central, see "General Secretary Report," in TAS Executive Committee, Minutes, 5 February 1918, Records of the TAS-NY, Box 1, Folder 1. For Orin Baker's letter to the station master requesting a desk, see Orin Baker to William Cramer, 25 January 1918, in TAS Executive Committee, Minutes, 5 February 1918, Box 1, Folder 1.

transatlantic lines. Taking a similar approach to that used at the rail terminals, the TAS began by meeting these lines only by appointment. Then, in 1914, it attempted to add several lines to the list of those “regularly met,” planning to have agents routinely present for the arrivals of the Clyde, Old Dominion, Mallory, and Savannah companies.<sup>22</sup> This experiment, however, was short-lived. Two years later, the TAS was only providing full-time coverage for two lines, the Old Dominion and United Fruit. Appointment work thus remained the primary method that the TAS used to service the coastal and South American lines.<sup>23</sup>

### **Disaster Relief for *Titanic* Survivors, April 1912**

Early into the second phase of the Travelers’ Aid Society’s history, it was involved in relief efforts for one of history’s greatest maritime disasters, the sinking of the RMS *Titanic*. For obvious reasons, most literature on the *Titanic* emphasizes the drama of the ship’s sinking, the tragic loss of life, and the myriad stories of survival at sea. Lost in these accounts is what happened to the survivors after they were rescued. The role of New York City and its citizens in providing disaster relief is also obscured.<sup>24</sup> This section aims to uncover the Travelers’ Aid Society’s role in the crisis, while also illuminating the larger relief project in which it participated.

On the evening of April 14, the *Titanic* ocean liner of the White Star fleet struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic Ocean. By 2:20 a.m. the next day, the *Titanic* had sunk, taking

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<sup>22</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 9. *Annual Report, 1913*, pp. 4-5. *Annual Report, 1914*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>23</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, pp. 5, 9.

<sup>24</sup> See for example Daniel Butler, “*Unsinkable*”: *The Full Story of the RMS Titanic* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1998) and John Eaton and Charles Haas, *Titanic: Triumph and Tragedy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1986). Eugene Rasor’s historiographic survey of *Titanic* literature includes no scholarly account of the relief effort. Rasor, *The Titanic: Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001).

with it the lives of 1,502 passengers and crew members.<sup>25</sup> The survivors were the lucky ones who found their way to lifeboats, which were in short supply. During the ship's evacuation, the *Titanic*'s officers and crew followed the policy of "women and children first," otherwise known as the "rule of the sea."<sup>26</sup> However, even at the very beginning of the evacuation, before panic had set in, some men were able to gain access to the lifeboats. Newlyweds, for example, were allowed to board together and as the crisis accelerated, married couples in general were allowed on. With some coaxing of the crew, single men of the first class were placed on boats as well. The White Star line's owner Bruce Ismay took matters into his own hands and jumped onto a boat as it was being lowered to the sea. When steerage passengers were finally let up to the lifeboat level, some men of this class desperately scrambled aboard departing vessels. And, when it became clear that the *Titanic* was doomed, the remaining male crew members were allowed to abandon ship.<sup>27</sup>

When the Cunard liner *Carpathia* finally came to *Titanic*'s aid, it saved 705 people, 335 of whom were men as compared to 314 women. 189 of the rescued men were crew members, so if we exclude them, female survivors did outnumber male survivors 314 to 146.<sup>28</sup> However, even this smaller number of male survivors was not anticipated by those awaiting the arrival of the *Carpathia* in Manhattan. What colored most early understandings of the *Titanic* disaster were the first reports that the rule of the sea, "women and children first," was heroically followed on the sinking ship. Thus, as the *Carpathia* charted its course for New York to deliver the

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<sup>25</sup> The statistics are from Butler, "*Unsinkable*," p. 239, Appendix 1.

<sup>26</sup> Steven Biel, *Down with the Old Canoe: A Cultural History of the Titanic Disaster* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1996), pp. 23-4.

<sup>27</sup> Butler, "*Unsinkable*," pp. 92, 103, 126, 130.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239, Appendix 1.

survivors, the media wrote endlessly of the chivalric men of the first cabin and their brave widows, as well as of the desperate, poor immigrant women who survived from steerage class. In response to such information, the nature of the immediate relief effort was directed primarily toward providing for immigrant women and their dependent children. Men were an afterthought in part because those who survived were an affront to those who followed the “rule of the sea” to their death.<sup>29</sup>

On Tuesday, April 16, a day after the sinking of the *Titanic*, fifteen of New York City’s best known society women agreed to form the Women’s Relief Committee (WRC). Sarah Rodgers Henry, the wife of Surveyor of the Port of New York Nelson Henry, was its founder and chair, and Mrs Cornelius Vanderbilt was an original member. The WRC grew to include, among others, Eleanor Robson Belmont, Eleanor Alexander-Roosevelt, Virginia Fair Vanderbilt, and Millicent Hearst.<sup>30</sup>

The Women’s Relief Committee was to be the primary provider of immediate relief to the steerage class survivors, which at this early date was thought to include only immigrant women and their children. Sarah Henry justified excluding first and second cabin women from aid by explaining that their needs were likely to have already been met by their fellow wealthy passengers aboard the *Carpathia*. Speaking to reporters, she cited the example of Mrs. John Jacob Astor, who was believed to have been rescued wearing only a nightgown. Henry assumed that Astor’s class compatriots would rush to provide her with appropriate clothing. On the

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<sup>29</sup> Biel, *Down with the Old Canoe*, Ch. 2. Kristen Iverson, *Molly Brown: Unraveling the Myth* (Boulder, CO: Johnson Books, 1999), pp. 41-3.

<sup>30</sup> Robson Belmont was married to August Belmont; Alexander-Roosevelt to Theodore Roosevelt, Jr.; Fair Vanderbilt to William K. Vanderbilt, Jr.; and Hearst to William Randolph Hearst. “Women Spent \$36,175 on Titanic Relief,” *New York Times*, 8 May 1912, p. 6. “Speed Relief Work for Titanic’s Saved,” *New York Times*, 19 April 1912, p. 9. Women’s Relief Committee, *Report of the New York Women’s Relief Committee for the Survivors of the S. S. Titanic, April 16<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 1912*, p. 3. The *Report* is in the collection of the New York Public Library, Schwarzman Building.

contrary, there would not be enough passengers in steerage to meet a similar need for clothing among the third-class survivors.<sup>31</sup>

Upon reaching New York, Henry believed that the struggles for steerage women would continue. With their husbands drowned and no other family members in the city to help them, they would find themselves “strangers in a strange land.” For Henry, the dire situation for the steerage women stood in contrast to that of the first and second cabin women, who would be greeted by their friends and relatives and promptly taken from the pier to a supportive home environment.<sup>32</sup>

The Women’s Relief Committee’s plan was comprehensive. Its first order of business was to meet the steerage survivors when they debarked at the Cunard line’s Pier 54 on the foot of West Street. There they would be given clothing and food. Afterward, those requiring first-aid would be shuttled to hospitals, while those needing a place to stay would be taken to cooperating immigrant homes and other shelters.<sup>33</sup> With its plan in place, it next had to negotiate its official role with the Mayor’s Office and Federal Immigration Services, both of which would be present for the *Carpathia*’s arrival. Initially it seemed that the WRC would take a tertiary role in providing disaster relief. The *New York Times* reported that, as of the day before the *Carpathia* was to sail into port, Mayor William Gaynor was set to take charge of relief by housing survivors from steerage in the city’s Municipal Lodging House. At the same time, Immigration Commissioner William Williams announced that his department planned to oversee steerage relief. Worried about Williams’s potential use of the “somewhat uninviting” facilities of Ellis

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<sup>31</sup> “Women’s Relief Plans,” *New-York Tribune*, 18 April 1912, p. 5. Since the *Carpathia* was originally bound for Europe, Henry believed that there were very few third class passengers on board. Steerage passengers were usually more numerous on voyages to the United States.

<sup>32</sup> “Women to Care for Steerage Survivors,” *New York Times*, 18 April 1912, p. 6.

<sup>33</sup> “Women’s Relief Plans,” p. 5. Women’s Relief Committee, *Report, 1912*, pp. 4-5.



Island and its own diminished role vis à vis the public authorities, the WRC criticized these plans and argued that survivor relief be considered more of a “private” initiative under its stewardship.<sup>34</sup>

Ultimately, the city and federal authorities accepted the Women’s Relief Committee’s proposal and Mayor Gaynor recognized the WRC as the “official organization for steerage survivors.”<sup>35</sup> The city’s primary responsibility would be to secure the vicinity of the pier through its police force and coordinate the availability of hospitals. Federal Immigration Commissioner Williams would oversee the debarking of the steerage class and make sure that they were properly identified. Once processed, they would be handed over to friends or family or, in the case of those without contacts in the city, to the Women’s Relief Committee.<sup>36</sup> Williams requested that the WRC keep detailed records on its clients. For this purpose, he provided the Committee with Ellis Island’s own log book, which he expected to collect at a later date for review.<sup>37</sup> Disaster relief for survivors of the *Titanic* thus became a “patchwork” of federal, city, and private efforts.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “Rescue Ship Now Nearing Port,” *New York Times*, 18 April 1912, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup> “Speed Relief Work for Titanic’s Saved,” p. 9. On Gaynor’s colorful career as a judge and mayor, see Robert Wesser, “William J(ay) Gaynor,” in *The Encyclopedia of New York City*, p. 455 and James Lardner and Thomas Reppetto, *NYPD: A City and Its Police* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 2000), pp. 149-57, 168. He died the following year (1913).

<sup>36</sup> Commissioner Williams was known for his anti-immigrant views and favored strict immigration control. Faced with the tragedy of the *Titanic*, Williams muted his emphasis on identifying and deporting “undesirables” and vowed to make the process on the dock as quick and painless as possible. His department would follow-up and decide on issues of detention and admittance later. “Speed Relief Work for Titanic’s Saved,” p. 9. “Rescue Ship Arrives,” *New York Times*, 19 April 1912, p. 5. For a profile of Williams’s career, see Cannato, *American Passage*, Chs. 7-11.

<sup>37</sup> “Speed Relief Work for Titanic’s Saved,” p. 9. “Rescue Ship Arrives,” p. 5. Eaton and Haas, *Titanic*, p. 181. Women’s Relief Committee, *Report, 1912*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> This “patchwork” of public and private initiatives, especially in the welfare sector, was common in pre-New Deal America. See Igra, *Wives without Husbands*, p. 1.

By 8:45pm on the evening of Thursday, April 18, in anticipation of the *Carpathia's* arrival, the Women's Relief Committee had set up their emergency station, which consisted of a long table where clothing, food, and hot coffee were to be dispensed. The WRC's Housing Committee stood nearby ready to coordinate the deliverance of survivors to the various Homes and Hospitals. They would be taken from the pier in stage coaches secured by Virginia Vanderbilt and delivery trucks that had been outfitted as ambulances by the Gimbel Brothers Department Store. The Assistant Treasurer, Mrs. J. Herman Aldrich, was on hand to disburse emergency funds totaling \$1,300 that the New York Stock Exchange Committee had donated. Also present was the Men's Committee, headed by Alexander Hadden, which the WRC had assembled upon learning that some men were among the survivors.<sup>39</sup>

To carry out the work on the ground, Sarah Henry and the Housing Committee enlisted men and women from the Salvation Army, twelve deaconesses from Grace Church, and Father D. J. McMahon, who came with several Priests and Sisters to "give personal care to the third-class passengers."<sup>40</sup> The Mayor had requested that Henry limit her force to thirty women and, notwithstanding the presence of some men, she complied. However, two additional organizations with female workers, the Council of Jewish Women and the Travelers' Aid Society, were also present on Pier 54 and they appear to have acted semi-independently of the

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<sup>39</sup> Women's Relief Committee, *Report, 1912*, pp. 4-5, 17. "Sufferers' Fund Grows by Leaps and Bounds," *New-York Tribune*, 20 April 1912, p. 5. "Speed Relief Work for Titanic's Saved," p. 9. Alexander Hadden was a physician and an evangelical urban reformer. He belonged to the Bowery Mission for Men, an organization that supplied three other people to the Men's Committee: Frederick Townsend Martin, John J. UpJohn, and Everett J. Wendell. The fifth member of the Men's Committee was Frank Parsons of the Red Cross. On Hadden, see Timothy Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale: The Underworld of Nineteenth-Century New York* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 2006), pp. 304-6 and 429, n. 13. Hadden's Men's Committee was a subcommittee of the WRC, which meant that for a brief moment in 1912, a committee of men was under the authority of women. In the welfare arena of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it was common for men's committees to oversee the work of women, rarely did it occur the other way around.

<sup>40</sup> Women's Relief Committee, *Report, 1912*, p. 9. "Speed Relief Work for Titanic's Saved," p. 9.

Mayor's Office and the Women's Relief Committee. In the case of the TAS, its work both paralleled and overlapped with that of the WRC.

Prior to April 18, there seems to have been no contact between the Women's Relief Committee and the Travelers' Aid Society. The *Tribune*, in separate articles, profiled the roles of both organizations, and gave no indication that the two groups planned to coordinate their work. According to the *Tribune*, the WRC was to service steerage passengers and the TAS second cabin passengers, who were its usual clientele at the docks. A spokesperson for the TAS told the paper that they expected to find "many pathetic cases among the second cabin women," who upon docking would find themselves "quite alone in the world."<sup>41</sup>

With the arrival and disembarkment of the *Titanic* survivors, the distinct missions of the TAS and WRC began to blur. At 9:30pm, the first and second cabin survivors descended the gangways, where they were received by a large crowd of their relatives and friends. Just beyond the initial crowd awaited the "clamorous" reporters and photographers. After pushing through the multitudes of onlookers, the first cabin men and women were quickly whisked away to their homes or hotels in their private cars.<sup>42</sup> But many of the second cabin women remained. When the WRC realized that there were more second cabin survivors than had been anticipated, it adjusted its mission to provide for *both* second cabin and steerage passengers.

The steerage passengers were the last to leave, debarking at 11pm to little fanfare after being processed by Immigration.<sup>43</sup> Contrary to Sarah Henry's initial hypothesis, all of the debarkees were "surprisingly well clad," which was due to the passengers on the *Carpathia*

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<sup>41</sup> "Help for Lonely Girls," *New-York Tribune*, 18 April 1912, p. 5. "Women's Relief Plans," p. 5.

<sup>42</sup> Eaton and Haus, *Titanic*, p. 183.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

having collected clothing for all women regardless of social class. In fact, most of the large volume of clothing that the society women had prepared to distribute went unused at the pier. The only items that were in demand were hats and black clothing for the widows.<sup>44</sup> The WRC's most urgent task then was not the outfitting of survivors, but the coordination of their delivery to the city's hospitals and immigrant homes. Its Housing Department reported taking 162 steerage immigrants off the pier, as well as 99 other survivors. Of the total helped, 62% were women: the remainder being men and children.<sup>45</sup>

The Travelers' Aid Society also had to adjust its mission as the WRC assumed control over most of the second cabin survivors. Surprisingly, given the amount of publicity the TAS could have garnered, its Annual Report for 1912 is relatively silent on its work during the night of April 18. However, by relying on other accounts, including the recollections of the famous "unsinkable" Molly Brown, we can piece together the role that the TAS played in the overall disaster relief.

The Travelers' Aid Society took under its charge only a small number of survivors. The *Tribune* reported that it cared for seven people, six women and one man. The women were taken to the Shelter for Respectable Girls on 46<sup>th</sup> Street, an institution with which the TAS had a longstanding relationship. From the Shelter, the women were scheduled to return to Europe the following week, probably because they had no family connections in the U.S. or were simply tourists. The lone man described in the *Tribune* piece was from Russia. After receiving TA, he left for Philadelphia.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "Sufferers' Fund Grows by Leaps and Bounds," p. 5.

<sup>45</sup> Women's Relief Committee, *Report, 1912*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>46</sup> "Sufferers' Fund Grows by Leaps and Bounds," p. 5.

The TAS's own records describe just one case, that of a "very refined and well educated" second-cabin woman, who had fled persecution in Russia with her husband. He drowned at sea and with him were the addresses of his friends and family in the United States. It was this sort of situation in which the TAS specialized: assisting stranded female travelers with locating unknown addresses. After delivering the woman to an undisclosed location, probably the TAS's own emergency room or the Shelter for Respectable Girls, the TAS took out advertisements in New York and Boston newspapers that announced the woman's presence in New York. They also contacted the Russian Consul, which was a risky move since the young woman feared persecution from the government. Nevertheless, after two days, relatives of her husband called and she was turned over to them.<sup>47</sup>

There is one account that portrays the TAS as having a much more prominent role than helping seven or eight survivors. It comes from Margaret "Molly" Brown, a Denver society woman, social reformer, and suffragist, who survived the sinking of the *Titanic* and instantly became an advocate for its less wealthy survivors. On board the rescue ship *Carpathia*, Brown distributed basic supplies to women and children and consoled them in one of the five languages that she knew. She paid for their wireless messages to family and friends, and also coordinated a relief fund based on donations from first class passengers that totaled \$10,000.<sup>48</sup> Upon docking, she continued her advocacy for the second cabin and steerage survivors. It was at this point that she encountered the Travelers' Aid Society.

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<sup>47</sup> "'Titanic,'" in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>48</sup> Iverson, *Molly Brown*, pp. 33-5.

According to Brown's account, "ladies" from the Travelers' Aid Society boarded the *Carpathia* to take charge of passengers who required temporary shelter.<sup>49</sup> We know that, in fact, it was the Women's Relief Committee that oversaw the transportation of survivors off the pier. Nonetheless, Brown's sighting of the TAS on the *Carpathia* and her initial impression that they were the lead relief agency indicates that the TAS may have been acting as an intermediary between the WRC and survivors, explaining to the latter how the relief process worked, pointing them toward the WRC table, and taking some of them there themselves.<sup>50</sup> This role makes sense in light of the TAS's regular work at the city's piers, which often saw agents boarding vessels to work with second cabin women in coordination with immigration officials. Additionally, the WRC acknowledged that over the course of the evening, the TAS "rendered any assistance required."<sup>51</sup> Probably through some informal agreement, improvised on the spot, the TAS assumed the role of overseeing the survivors' brief trip from ship to emergency station.

In Brown's telling, the Travelers' Aid Society even returned the next day to escort those who had remained overnight on the *Carpathia* to appropriate lodging.<sup>52</sup> The Women's Relief Committee had only secured transportation for the previous evening and by the next day (Friday,

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<sup>49</sup> Margaret Tobin Brown, "Sailing of the Ill-Fated Steamship Titanic," *Newport Herald*, 30 May 1912. Professor Leah Schwartz of Maryville University transcribed Brown's article, which is online at <http://clubs.maryville.edu/schwartz/molly%20brown%20titanic.htm> (accessed 6/7/2011). An excerpt appears in Elaine Landau, *Heroine of the Titanic: The Real Unsinkable Molly Brown* (New York: Clarion Books, 2001), pp. 22-3.

<sup>50</sup> It is possible that the "ladies" whom Brown claimed were from the TAS were really from the WRC. However, I believe this to be unlikely. Both TA agents and WRC women wore badges that indicated their affiliation. Similarly, the women from the Salvation Army who accompanied the WRC were recognizable by their distinctive uniforms and would not have been mistaken for TA agents. And, the religious garb of the Sisters and deaconesses would have clearly marked them. Finally, nowhere in the comprehensive report issued by the Women's Relief Committee does it state that its members or any of its affiliates boarded the *Carpathia*. On the WRC's badge, see Women's Relief Committee, *Report, 1912*, p. 9.

<sup>51</sup> Women's Relief Committee, *Report, 1912*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>52</sup> Brown, "Sailing of the Ill-Fated Steamship Titanic."

April 19<sup>th</sup>), its efforts had transitioned from transporting survivors to coordinating their care with the various Homes and hospitals that took them in.<sup>53</sup> Of the participating agencies, the TAS was the best equipped to see the last survivors off the vessel and to their temporary homes, a role that resembled basic TA.

In sum, the Travelers' Aid Society at Pier 54 appears to have acted both independently and in tandem with the Women's Relief Committee. It acted independently when it transported several survivors to safe lodging and delivered follow up care apart from the larger efforts of the WRC. Here, its work had much in common with that of the New York Council of Jewish Women, which also ran a parallel relief effort, transporting forty people to two different shelters.<sup>54</sup> Alongside these independent efforts, I have suggested that the TAS simultaneously acted as an intermediary between the WRC and survivors, helping the latter navigate the overall relief process on the pier. It is not clear to which category the instance of the TAS returning to the *Carpathia* belongs. The TAS may have been responding to a WRC request to return for the women, or the TAS may have, on its own, decided to scope out the pier in the aftermath of the previous evenings' work.

The work of the Women's Relief Committee and Travelers' Aid Society served simultaneously to contradict and confirm the gendered understanding of the *Titanic* disaster. It was assumed that the first cabin male passengers followed the "rule of the sea," women and children first, to their deaths. The belief that men kept their calm, assisted women in evacuating,

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<sup>53</sup> "Women Work Hard for Rescued Folk," *New York Times*, 21 April 1912, p. 10.

<sup>54</sup> "Women to Care for Steerage Survivors," p. 6. "Speed Relief Work for Titanic's Saved," p. 9. "Sufferers' Fund Grows by Leaps and Bounds," p. 5. The New York CJW had intended to aid only Jewish women, but in fact only a few of the survivors who it transported to the Hebrew Shelter and Clara de Hirsch Home were Jewish and included some men.

and were ultimately willing to sacrifice their lives confirmed in the eyes of many their gender superiority. It appeared that women, in the face of disaster, needed the clarity and strength of men to ensure their survival. Thus, the women of the *Titanic* were gendered as passive and weak.<sup>55</sup> The crucial role played by women in the disaster's aftermath would seem to contradict this image of passivity and dependence. As we have seen, a committee of men was even placed under the authority of the WRC.

At the same time, however, women's heroism on behalf of *Titanic* survivors can also be understood as consistent with established gender norms. Two non-controversial ideals of public womanhood intersected in the work of the WRC and TAS on Pier 54: "Lady Bountiful" and the (semi) professional social worker. The former was a holdover from the nineteenth century and describes the voluntary work of the elite women of the WRC. The latter was an increasingly visible presence in the early twentieth century and describes the paid agents of the TAS. Both identities were social motherhood at its least threatening and posed no serious challenge to accepted notions of masculinity and femininity, which allowed the press and others to sing the praises of the WRC and TAS alongside those of the chivalrous first cabin men.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Biel, *Down with the Old Canoe*, pp. 23-33.

<sup>56</sup> A third notion of public womanhood was also found on the pier, that of the religious charity worker as represented by the deaconesses, the Sisters, and the women of the Salvation Army.



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Two years after the *Titanic*'s sinking, the Travelers' Aid Society invoked the disaster's link with heroic masculinity. In a May 1914 speech at the Conference of Travelers' Aid Representatives of Eastern Cities, TAS Vice President D. J. McMahon recounted a scene he observed as he was arriving at Pier 54 to assist with the relief efforts for *Titanic* survivors.<sup>57</sup> To his horror, he witnessed three or four "rapscallions" attempting to lure female victims away to an immoral location. McMahon was shocked that even during such an unthinkable tragedy as the *Titanic*, agents of vice were on the prowl.<sup>58</sup>

Continuing his speech, McMahan proceeded to issue a rallying cry to the men in the audience. According to him, recent economic developments (i.e. rapid industrialization) had resulted in two things: white slavery and the encroachment of women "into the fields of men." To stave off both, he called on more men to participate in the revival of "chivalry," which he defined as "man's duty to do what he can for those who run [into danger]." For McMahon's purposes, those at risk were "the mothers and daughters of our race."<sup>59</sup> McMahon did not directly mention the chivalry aboard the *Titanic*, but his initial reference to the *Titanic* would have led members of the audience to make the connection nonetheless. There was then no stronger proof of the innateness of male chivalry and its potential for protecting women than the *Titanic*. For his male listeners, throwing their support behind a national travelers' aid movement would be their *Titanic* moment, a chance for them to prove their chivalric worth. In this case, it

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<sup>57</sup> McMahon was there on behalf of the Women's Relief Committee, not the Travelers' Aid Society (see above).

<sup>58</sup> Right Reverend D. J. McMahon, "Speech Delivered at the Conference of Travelers' Aid Representatives of Eastern Cities, May 4-6, 1914, New York City," excerpted in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1914*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>59</sup> McMahon, "Speech," excerpted in Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 43-4. For more of McMahon's speech, see Baker, *Travelers' Aid Society*, pp. 51-4 and *Annual Report, 1914*, p. 18.

was not women aboard a sinking ship that needed protection, but female travelers at train stations and piers who were continually threatened by white slave traffickers.

McMahon's combined emphasis on white slavery, male chivalry, and the urgent need to keep women pure reflects a shift in how the TAS justified its work. Moral protection against white slavery had always been central to the mission of the Travelers' Aid Society, but rarely was it alarmist about the dangers travelers faced. On the contrary, from 1910-1916, instances of strange men threatening travelers appear more and more in the cases presented in the Annual Reports. This new stress on the criminal intentions of strangers toward travelers is the subject of the chapter's final section.

### **White Slavery in New York?: Strange Men, Bizarre Plots, and the TAS's Vision of Urban Crime**

In its years as a women's organization (1907-1910), the Travelers' Aid Society recognized that while white slavery was the primary justification for providing TA, the ordinary stresses of travel also necessitated a vigorous travelers' aid movement. In fact, as we have seen, the early Annual Reports emphasized cases in which agents escorted travelers to transportation hubs or to other city addresses because of travelers' general unfamiliarity with the city, which was often exacerbated by chaotic piers and railways, vague directions, lost money, or the failure of a relative to appear. The threat of strange men is invoked in only five out of fifty four sample cases (9%), only two of which hint at white slavery and serious deceit.<sup>60</sup>

In contrast, men or women with criminal intent appear in over half (34/64, 53%) of the sample cases from 1911-1916. For this period's Annual Reports, General Secretary Orin Baker

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<sup>60</sup> Cases 9 and 10 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1907*, pp. 19-20. Cases 3, 8, 19 in *Annual Report, 1908*, pp. 13, 16, 19-20.

edited agents' original records, turning them into "narratives of sexual danger" with titles such as "Our Feelings Are Stirred By A Story Like This" and "Not Careful About Trusting Herself With Strangers."<sup>61</sup> His approach entailed summarizing the details of each case, then adding his own commentary. Taken together, Baker's narratives form the core of the Travelers' Aid Society's vision of urban crime. They depict crime directed at travelers as originating from three types of locations: travelers' hometowns; transportation centers; and onboard steamers or trains. For Baker and the TAS, the potential outcome of all crime, regardless of point of origin, was white slavery. Citing statistics given by ex-Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham, the TAS claimed that 50,000 young women and girls disappeared each year ("They simply drop out of existence").<sup>62</sup>

In the traveler's town, she might answer a fraudulent advertisement for work in New York and upon arrival find herself in an economically and/or sexually exploitative situation. In another scenario, a man might make a promise of marriage to a young woman and offer to pay for her ticket to the big city. When she arrives, the proposed relationship turns out to be a scam. A case from 1913 shows a young girl named Lucy who was persuaded to leave her home by a young man. He instructed her to arrive in New York prior to him in order to evade "a well-known law" (the Mann Act), which made it a Federal crime to transport a woman of any age across state lines for commercial purposes that were considered "immoral."<sup>63</sup> Upon arrival,

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<sup>61</sup> Sample cases from this period were either embedded throughout the main body of an Annual Report or placed in their own section near the Report's end. The Annual Report from 1911 includes both titled and untitled samples. I cite the latter by using numbers that correspond to the order in which they are presented in the Report.

<sup>62</sup> Repplier, *Strangers within our Gates*, p. 2. TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 6. Orin Baker, "Philanthropic Effort to Save 50,000 a Year," *New York Times*, 27 Oct. 1912, p. X8.

<sup>63</sup> "Mann Act of 1910," in Engs, *The Progressive Era's Health Reform*, p. 210. After 1917, the law was increasingly applied to noncommercial and consensual sexual relationships. See Langum, *Crossing Over the Line*, Chs. 4-7.

Lucy approached a TA worker in the station and asked to be directed to a nearby boarding house because she was meeting her “brother” the next day. The agent was immediately suspicious of the girl due to her appearance: “It was evident she was not accustomed to long dresses and that her large ill-fitting brown suit had been hurriedly purchased.” She was clearly “masquerading” as a “grown woman” and thus probably a runaway. In order to teach Lucy a lesson, the agent accompanied her to the train station the following day to meet the “brother.” Under the agent’s close watch, Lucy approached the man and only then did she discover “his evil motive.”<sup>64</sup>

Another common site where fraud began was on board a train or steamer. In these cases, a well-dressed and charming man would strike up a conversation with an unsuspecting traveler, usually a foreigner with little knowledge of English. After a while, the man would offer to help the woman with the next leg of her journey. To avoid suspicion, the traveler was instructed to tell any interested parties, such as the TAS or Immigration officials, that the man was a family member, usually an uncle or cousin. Some women were willing participants in this drama and others went along reluctantly. Baker relates a story of a young Danish woman who had previously escaped from an attempted assault in a hotel room. She had met a man who had boarded her train in Nevada. They bonded during the long journey and he promised to look after her in Chicago, while she waited for a connecting train. In Chicago, he convinced her to go to a hotel with him. After obtaining a room for her, the man abruptly entered and “bolted the door.” She was able to quickly unlock it and then fled the room screaming.<sup>65</sup>

The TAS hoped to prevent events like the above from happening. However, even after a successful intervention, the ordeal was not necessarily over. Thwarted men are often presented

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<sup>64</sup> “Oh! I Want my Father!,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 32.

<sup>65</sup> “A Narrow Escape,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 29.

as very persistent, loitering near TAS headquarters for hours or days in an attempt to pry young women away from their protectors. For example, two men who had met a seventeen year old girl on a steamer refused to concede her after she was taken to TAS headquarters. The younger of the two men came to the Travelers Aid Society and claimed to have money for the girl. The older man (the “uncle”) also appeared and declared that he had been charged by the girl’s “aunt” to care for her. Upon further questioning, the “uncle,” who was drunk, admitted that he had only just met the girl. The two men proceeded to make themselves at home in the neighborhood in order to stake out TAS headquarters, hoping to catch the girl coming or going. Through some trickery of their own, agents snuck the girl out of the building and delivered her to a “fast train in Newark” bound for Chicago.<sup>66</sup>

Lastly, women faced moral danger when they exited their ocean liner or train and had to negotiate the often chaotic stations and piers. On board a train or liner, the courtship between man and woman developed over time, but on the ground women were often faced with quick decisions about whether or not to trust strange men offering assistance. At the Coney Island terminal in Brooklyn, an agent observed “four men in eager conversation with a young girl.” She had come to the Island with a girlfriend, but had since become separated from her. The men were proposing to escort the girl home if she would first spend the remainder of the evening with them at the amusement park. The girl appeared to be struggling with her decision, so the TA agent intervened by taking over for the missing companion and accompanying the girl home.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> “Whatever You Do, Get that Girl,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 18.

<sup>67</sup> “Coney Island,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 21. As a precaution against unwanted advances from men, young women often traveled in pairs or groups to Coney Island. Peiss, *Cheap Amusements*, p. 127. See Peiss’ Ch. 5 for more on working women and the Coney Island experience.

The reports also reveal overeager cabmen and hotel runners at stations and piers looking to exploit women at every turn. In a case from 1912, a foreign traveler who had been receiving assistance from the Travelers Aid Society decided to go off on her own. She left the pier and was picked up by a nearby cabby. The agent, realizing that her client was gone, went to the street and daringly stopped the taxi. The driver said that the woman was his legitimate fare, but the agent pulled the girl from the taxi anyway. Later, at a train station, a strange man who spoke the woman's language almost walked off with her suitcase. Once again, the agent intervened; this time threatening police action if this man did not "put down the valise immediately."<sup>68</sup> At transportation centers, travelers were not only threatened by strange men, but corrupt women as well. A woman who owned a disreputable boarding house was known to canvass the piers with an outdated letter of recommendation in search of future residents.<sup>69</sup>

With this vision of urban crime in mind, it is worth asking how much we can learn from it about actual white slavery or, at the very least, about the extent of criminal activity onboard trains and steamships, as well as in the vicinity of New York's train stations and piers. The extent of white slavery in New York and nationally is a debated topic amongst scholars. All admit that it certainly did not exist on the scale that anti-prostitution activists believed it did during the Progressive Era. Some believe that it was a "myth" invoked by moral crusaders to explain complex social problems and to justify simple solutions to them.<sup>70</sup> Scholars are also interested in how white slave narratives and the related Mann Act were used as tools to police

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<sup>68</sup> "Not Careful About Trusting Herself With Strangers," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> "Apparently Good Credentials," in *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>70</sup> Jo Doezema, "Loose Women or Lost Women? The Re-emergence of the Myth of White Slavery in Contemporary Discourses of Trafficking in Women," *Gender Issues* 18:1 (Winter 2000), pp. 23-30. Mark Connelly, *The Response to Prostitution in the Progressive Era* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1980), Ch. 6. Gilfoyle, *City of Eros*, pp. 274-5.

racial boundaries between white women and black men.<sup>71</sup> Others, most prominently Ruth Rosen, have acknowledged the exaggerations and symbolic value of white slave claims, but contend that coerced prostitution was a social fact and should not be overlooked in histories of women and prostitution.<sup>72</sup> When read critically, nothing approaching George Kibbe Turner's notion of a centrally organized international cartel nor, for that matter, any type of large-scale traffic in women can be gleaned from the Records of the Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the TAS sample cases do not preclude the existence of a limited, decentralized traffic in women during the 1910s.

There are five cases from the 1911-1916 Annual Reports that speak directly about prostitution, kidnapping, and missing women. In each instance, the reader is meant to assume that white slavery has occurred. One describes an "Italian girl" who was "taken to a disreputable house" after arriving at her destination. Earlier, the TAS had arranged for her transportation out of New York so that she could meet a female friend. The friend worked as a servant and had promised the young woman a similar job. Things did not go as planned and somehow the young woman ended up as a prostitute, who was eventually "rescued" by the local Immigrant Protective League. In this case, the words "taken" and "rescued" are meant to imply coercion and that the woman was held against her will. Furthermore, her friend is described as an "unsafe protector"

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<sup>71</sup> Langum, *Crossing Over the Line*. Donovan, *White Slave Crusades*.

<sup>72</sup> Rosen estimates that nearly ten percent of prostitutes in the United States entered the trade through some form of "extreme coercion." Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), pp. 114-16, 133. Barbara Hobson, *Uneasy Virtue: The Politics of Prostitution and the American Reform Tradition* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1987), pp. 7, 141-6. For Hobson, the term white slavery best describes "a prostitutes growing dependence [in the early twentieth century] on a manager/pimp and her loss of freedom to move in and out of prostitution." Entering into prostitution was largely voluntary, but once involved, women were subject to significant coercion and violence.

<sup>73</sup> Turner, "The City of Chicago: A Study of the Great Immoralities," *McClure's* 28 (April 1907), pp. 575-92. Turner, "Daughters of the Poor: A Plain Story of the Development of New York City as Leading Center of the White Slave Trade of the World, Under Tammany Hall," *McClure's* 34 (Nov. 1909), pp. 45-61.

who lived in a bad location, which suggests that the friend may have been part of a scheme to lure her into prostitution by the false promise of a job.<sup>74</sup> Another less sensational possibility is that both the Immigrant Protective League and Travelers' Aid Society read too much into the young woman's situation. Perhaps, through no fault of the friend, the promised job never materialized or paid too little, thus leading the woman to voluntarily enter a nearby brothel in an attempt to make ends meet.

In another instance, a Polish traveler at Grand Central Station anxiously explained to a TAS agent how her sister had gone missing for four months after allowing a "strange man" to escort her to a train station. To avoid her sister's fate, the Polish woman offered the agent two dollars in exchange for assistance.<sup>75</sup> For Baker, the sister is an example of a "girl that [sic] disappears" into white slavery.<sup>76</sup> However, white slavery is not the only possible explanation for the sister's long absence; the man, whatever his motives, may have simply abandoned the girl, who then had difficulty making contact with her relatives.

An additional disappearance is reported in 1912. It involves a girl who had first been taken advantage of by a male passenger onboard a steamer. She was subsequently found with no money, baggage, or ticket on West Street near Pier 54. When met by TA agents, she refused help and insisted on continuing her journey to the "West," where she was to be married. According to Baker's summary, that was the last anyone ever heard from the girl and he assumed the worst. If only the girl had accepted "advice and guidance" from the TAS, he concludes,

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<sup>74</sup> Case 6 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 17.

<sup>75</sup> "Anxious for Protection," in *Ibid.*, p. 30. Also reprinted in O'Connell, "Travelers' Aid for Polish Immigrant Women," p. 18.

<sup>76</sup> Ex-New York City Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham popularized the phrase "girl that disappears" in an article and subsequent book. Bingham, "The Girl that Disappears," *Hampton's Magazine* 25:5 (Nov. 1910): 559-73 and Bingham, *The Girl that Disappears*.



“There would have been no thrilling story – just a girl saved.”<sup>77</sup> Given the young woman’s trying circumstances, it is not out of the question that she encountered serious difficulties on the second leg of her journey. Yet, it is a bold move to conclude that because the TAS could not determine the girl’s whereabouts, she was missing for good, either dead or a prostitute.

Two cases already profiled above involve potential attempts at kidnapping: that of the woman whose hotel door was bolted from the inside by a train acquaintance and the young girl who had crossed into New York ahead of a man in an attempt to circumvent the Mann Act.<sup>78</sup> In the latter case, the man in question may well have intended to traffic the girl. Or, his intention to avoid the Mann Act might have been more benign. He may have anticipated that traveling with such a young girl, even if they were involved in a legitimate relationship, would raise the suspicions of those charged with enforcing the law. As it turned out, the TAS acted as the *de facto* authorities and managed to separate the pair. In the former case, the man’s reason for bolting the door is not obvious. Perhaps it was a kidnap attempt for the purpose of trafficking her. Or, maybe, he was involved in a plot similar to one reported by the Bureau of Industries and Immigration in which two immigrant girls were lured to a “den,” not for the purposes of being sold into prostitution, but to be sexually assaulted and robbed.<sup>79</sup>

These five cases of prostitution, kidnapping, and missing women are all ambiguous in terms of the conclusions that can be drawn. The Travelers’ Aid Society presented them to their supporters as proof that traveling women were in serious sexual and moral danger. Reading

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<sup>77</sup> “Our Feelings Are Stirred By a Story Like This,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 5.

<sup>78</sup> “A Narrow Escape,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 29. “Oh! I Want my Father!,” in *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 32.

<sup>79</sup> The BII case, reported in 1912, was a deliberate and well executed job undertaken by three perpetrators. By comparison, the man above seems to be an amateur. Bureau of Industries and Immigration, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 5.

against the grain reveals alternative explanations for the serious predicaments that some travelers encountered. The forcing of women into prostitution is not precluded, but becomes just one of the various potential risks faced by traveling women.<sup>80</sup> We can draw a similar conclusion from the cases presented next, which do not reference prostitution and kidnapping as directly as those preceding but, nonetheless, feature strange schemes initiated by men.

We have already discussed one of these schemes, that of the two men who staked out TAS headquarters in an attempt to win back a girl they had met on a steamship. The older of the two men used the common trick of claiming to be related to the girl, albeit to no avail. Similarly, in 1912, a Dutch girl was turned over to the TAS by an unnamed official because he had observed her in the presence of a suspicious man. The young woman had met the man on shipboard and, upon debarking, he followed her to a train station. When the TA agent approached the pair, he fled. The agent brought the girl to headquarters and the TAS proceeded to communicate with her family in South Dakota over the next two days. The man, however, would not give up his interest in the girl and made his presence known to the TAS throughout their investigation, claiming he was looking out for her on behalf of her “cousin.”<sup>81</sup> In another case from 1912, a young man badgered a TAS agent for the name of a nineteen year old woman who he had become obsessed with during an overseas journey. The agent refused to reveal the young woman’s name and the man retreated. He later returned and pleaded, “Is there no way I could find out what becomes of this girl?” Begrudgingly, the agent handed him a TAS business

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<sup>80</sup> In contrast to the ambiguous evidence provided by the TAS-NY, Richard Phillips claims that the station records of the London TAS show strong evidence of prostitution and white slavery in and around railway stations, especially for the 1930s. Phillips, “Unsexy Geographies,” pp. 177-9.

<sup>81</sup> “Strangely Concerned,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 17.

card. The young man proceeded to write two letters to the Society requesting the girl's name and address with the explanation that he was "interested in sociological questions."<sup>82</sup>

The stories the men concocted and their persistence in pursuing the young women raises the possibility that their motives were criminal. Is it possible that they were involved with white slavery? Their behavior does resemble the actions of "cadets." According to former New York City Police Commissioner Theodore Bingham, cadets typically scouted local neighborhoods and department stores for girls to supply to white slave traders or directly to brothels.<sup>83</sup> For the men encountered by the TAS, their targets were not neighborhood girls, but young women on ocean liners to be pursued across the Atlantic and into New York City. The extensive amount of time committed to such a pursuit would explain why these "cadets" had a hard time admitting defeat when confronted by TAS agents. The men's bizarre behavior may also have been for the purposes of something other than white slavery and, like some of the prior cases, involved kidnapping, assault, and/or robbery. The fact that significant effort was expended with limited results suggests that these men, whether they were cadets or not, were low on the city's criminal hierarchy. Near the top were professional pickpockets, who in a matter of seconds (not days) could silently steal traveler's money and luggage. Pickpockets who concentrated exclusively on women were known as "moll-buzzers" or "'flies' that 'buzz' around women." Their calm and collected behavior, which was described as an "art," stood in contrast to the bumbling and often desperate actions of the "petty" criminals encountered by the Travelers' Aid Society.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> "A Steamship Acquaintance," in *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>83</sup> Bingham, "The Girl that Disappears," p. 567.

<sup>84</sup> On pickpockets, see Gilfoyle, *A Pickpocket's Tale*, pp. 60-7. For a portrait of the New York underworld, see Luc Sante, *Lowlife: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1991).

It is a distinct possibility that, contrary to TAS belief, some of these strangers aimed to legitimately help travelers and/or were seeking real companionship with them. It also was not unusual for women to willingly accompany strangers. For example, while being escorted to TAS headquarters, a young woman “slipped away” to be with a man she had become involved with at sea. The agent, anticipating trouble, had earlier taken the man’s hotel address from the ship’s records. When the woman fled, the agent went to the hotel and, despite the woman’s protests, ultimately prevented the couple from entering.<sup>85</sup> And, in 1916, a confused woman accepted a stranger’s help negotiating a train station. The on duty TA agent observed that they were new acquaintances and subsequently offered her services to the young woman. The man was outraged at the interference and insisted that his “right to ‘befriend’ the girl” had been violated.<sup>86</sup>

Female travelers also encountered men whose intentions blurred the line between criminal and legitimate business activity. These instances involved men who worked as hotel runners, expressmen, and cab-drivers at or in the vicinity of train stations and piers. Hotel runners, operating on a commission basis, brought travelers to immigrant hotels, which were used as temporary quarters when travelers had to wait for a connecting steamer or train. Runners looked for travelers with pre-existing reservations, as well as those who were “unconsigned,” with no plans to stay in a hotel. Expressmen and porters took charge of passengers’ luggage and delivered it from station to pier, or vice versa. In order to be profitable, these positions required the movement of large volumes of travelers and involved a tremendous amount of competition. There was little municipal regulation and what regulation there was could easily be skirted for

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<sup>85</sup> “Protected Against Her Will,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 29. The agent probably believed that she had encountered a “love diplomat,” a man who flirts with women in transit for some criminal or immoral purpose. On love diplomats and their presence on trains, see Richter, *Home on the Rails*, pp. 38-9.

<sup>86</sup> “Value of Headquarters,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 23.

the purpose of “petty exploitation.” Frances Kellor’s Bureau of Industries and Immigration (BII) saw these workers as among the greatest threats to immigrant travelers, both male and female. By overcharging new immigrants and mishandling their luggage (often their only worldly possessions), runners, expressmen, and cabmen could immediately derail immigrants’ new lives in the United States, a situation that jeopardized their future Americanization.<sup>87</sup>

The TAS’s vision was similar to the BII’s, yet it was more gendered and focused on threats to morality. By falling victim to overcharging and outright theft at the hands of runners and cabmen, young female travelers could find themselves adrift with little to no money, making them vulnerable to the entreaties of corrupt strangers. Prostitution was a likely result of their predicament which, for immigrants and native-born alike, meant an end to any chance of assimilating into their new communities.<sup>88</sup> In this scenario, the army of men who worked the stations and docks indirectly enabled women’s descent into prostitution.<sup>89</sup>

TAS records from 1913 show two cases involving hotel runners who boldly approached agents in attempts to take their clients from them. One runner explained to an agent that he was taking her client’s “cousin,” along with other relatives, to a hotel and he wanted the client to come with him. According to Baker’s summary, the “relatives” proved to be a ruse; they were steamship passengers unrelated to the client. Thus, the “young girl” had no reason to go to a hotel, especially since her train was scheduled to leave in less than two hours. Had she gone, she

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<sup>87</sup> Bureau of Industries and Immigration, *Annual Report, 1911*, pp. 44-9, 52, 55-6. *Annual Report, 1912*, pp. 7-8. *Annual Report, 1913*, pp. 33-7. On Kellor, Americanization, and the BII, see Ziegler-McPherson, *Americanization in the States*, pp. 20-9 and Fitzpatrick, *Endless Crusade*, pp. 140-4.

<sup>88</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 10. *Annual Report, 1912*, pp. 5-6, 16. *Annual Report, 1913*, pp. 6, 10.

<sup>89</sup> At least one taxi company, the Yellow Taxicab, responded to TAS criticism by printing an advertisement that quoted Orin Baker on the dangers that cabmen posed, which included overcharging and “the taking of people to the wrong places.” The ad then ensured potential customers that Yellow Taxicab drivers were “supervised” and “thoroughly investigated.” In their hands, men could rest assured that their wives, daughters, and property were safe. “In the Evening World...,” Advertisement in *New York Times*, 5 Dec. 1913, p. 8.

would have wasted her money by paying a “runner’s fee” and the hotel’s rates.<sup>90</sup> In these situations, the TAS preferred to take charge of the traveler, either by waiting with them at the station or pier, or by housing them for free at headquarters.

Another runner employed similar tactics in order to gain access to a TAS client. This man claimed that a young woman’s “brother” was going to his hotel and, as in the prior case, the woman should accompany them. The agent asked to meet the brother, whom the runner could not initially produce. He later returned with a man who he introduced as the brother, but was probably a fellow runner or someone the runner bribed. The brother was identified as an imposter and Travelers’ Aid kept the young woman on the pier.<sup>91</sup> The hotel runners in the above cases probably had no serious ill intentions; rather they were pulling out all the stops to win a fare amidst “the free market chaos” of the city’s transportation system.<sup>92</sup> The Travelers’ Aid Society rarely reported bothersome runners to the police, so they probably felt that they had nothing to lose. Though one wonders if the fake relative trick was worth the effort, seeing that the TAS was well aware of this scheme.<sup>93</sup>

Taxicab-men made up another group of potential exploiters. I have already described the dramatic episode in which a TA worker stopped a cab and pulled her client out. The “young girl” had willingly entered the cab, which she intended to take to a train station. Not surprisingly, the driver was outraged at TAS intrusion into what he believed was his legitimate fare. The agent believed the girl was ripe for manipulation because she did not speak English,

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<sup>90</sup> “Travelers’ Aid Saved Her Financial Exploitation,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 26.

<sup>91</sup> “An Imposter,” in *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>92</sup> Ziegler-McPherson, *Americanization in the States*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>93</sup> The Philadelphia Travelers’ Aid Society encountered the fake relative trick as well. See the opening of Horan’s dissertation, “Trafficking in Danger,” pp. 1-2.

though the driver claimed she easily conveyed the station name to him. In the end, the TA worker won out and successfully delivered the girl to the train station herself. The free escort undoubtedly saved the traveler some valuable money, though whether the cab driver sought to over-charge her or deliver her to a dangerous address is unknown. Interestingly, the agent's aggressiveness may have unintentionally led to another risky situation for the girl. Upon delivering her to the station, a strange man attempted to walk off with her luggage, which the agent only secured after threatening to call the police.<sup>94</sup> Had the taxi taken the girl to the station, she may never have encountered this man.

In addition to being vulnerable to aggressive runners and cabbies, travelers also had to contend with con-men who posed as runners, porters, and expressmen or who impersonated officials from railroad lines and steamship companies. Though they may have lied to get customers and overcharged for services, runners and cabmen practiced a legitimate trade. Impersonators, on the contrary, were involved in "outright fraud."<sup>95</sup> The TAS reported an instance of a Scottish girl who had earlier turned over all her money to a man claiming to represent the "Steamship Company." The fraud resulted in her having to abandon her plans to travel abroad and, instead, return to Philadelphia to re-earn her "passage money."<sup>96</sup> Similarly, in 1911, a German man and his two cousins paid \$50 each to an "official-looking person" who threatened deportation if they did not pay their "landing fees." The imposter promptly disappeared with the Germans' money.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> "Not Careful About Trusting Herself With Strangers," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 10.

<sup>95</sup> Ziegler-McPherson, *Americanization in the States*, p. 28.

<sup>96</sup> "Previously Defrauded," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 19.

<sup>97</sup> Case 3 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, pp. 11-12.

TAS cases also show men posing as more ordinary workers, such as porters and expressmen, who casually pick up women's luggage as if it was their job. They then beckon the women to follow them out of the station or pier. A case from 1913 describes a young woman at a train station who had her suitcase taken by a man. The man made for the station's exit and the woman gave chase. When she got close, the man told her to come with him. A TA agent noticed the unfolding events and approached the man. Instead of provoking a conflict, the agent "thanked him skillfully and tactfully for carrying the suitcase," then promptly took it from him. The man, having been caught in the act, hopped on a passing street car.<sup>98</sup>

To conclude, the narratives of sexual danger presented here - part Orin Baker's editorial comments, part details pulled from agents' reports - are contradictory when it comes to the Travelers' Aid Society's signature issue, white slavery. While the organization was claiming that white slavery was everywhere, it was providing evidence that suggested otherwise. Its sample cases exhibit no clear-cut cases of women being taken by men against their will to be sold into prostitution. However, they do bring to light the criminal milieu that existed onboard trains and ocean liners and that surrounded the city's transportation centers. Numerous examples are described in case records of men behaving strangely around women - stalking them aboard steamships and on land; scheming to bring them to the city for some mysterious purpose; or pestering them to hand over their luggage and go to a hotel. Within this milieu, I have argued, there is space for a small-scale, decentralized white slave traffic, in which the main participants were small-time criminals who pursued women aboard steamships and trains and on into New York City. The criminal element also included those intent on sexual assault and/or robbery. And, workers like hotel runners and expressmen, and those who impersonated them,

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<sup>98</sup> "Tactful Assistance," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, pp. 28-9. Also see "Not Careful About Trusting Herself With Strangers," in *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 10.



aggressively pursued potential customers, resulting in various degrees of economic exploitation. The Travelers' Aid Society also encountered consensual and potentially harmless relationships which, because they involved strangers who the traveler had only just met, troubled the organization nonetheless.

Corresponding to the increase in cases involving strange men was also a marked increase in the level of discipline and surveillance used by the agents of the Travelers' Aid Society. This could be outright, as in the instance when an agent prevented a young couple from entering their hotel.<sup>99</sup> Or it could be more subtle as in a case from 1911, which shows a TA worker eavesdropping on a shabbily dressed young woman who was accompanied by a "well dressed" man. Whenever there was a noticeable difference in appearance between a man and woman, agents took notice. In this instance, the worker positioned herself just close enough so that she could hear what was going on. She learned that the man was trying to convince the woman to take a taxi with him since her brother had failed to meet her at the station. The woman held her ground and insisted on sitting down until her brother arrived. The worker moved to a seat near her, while the man continued his harassment. Baker reports that just when the agent was set to intervene, "the brother arrived and the man hurried away without ceremony." Baker continues, "Had the brother failed to come, the girl was being guarded unknown to herself or her dangerous companion."<sup>100</sup> The TAS also increasingly used their headquarters as a temporary holding station while they undertook comprehensive investigations into their clients' backgrounds and

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<sup>99</sup> See the description of this case above. "Protected Against Her Will," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 29.

<sup>100</sup> Case 1 in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 10.

travel plans. At headquarters, travelers could be monitored closely while agents worked on their cases.

In at least one category of cases, those involving runaway girls, the TAS deemphasized discipline in favor of client agency. As a women's organization (1907-1910), the TAS's approach to runaways was that they were better off living in their home in spite of the conditions that drove them to leave. The Society took every effort to contact runaways' families and see to it that they were reunited with their children. From 1911-1916, on the contrary, there appears to be more of a willingness to listen to the runaways' own stories of why they left home and seriously consider where they would be better off, in the city or at home. Forty percent of all cases (4 of 10) involving either runaway girls or, relatedly, girls who had been "turned out" of their homes resulted in the traveler being kept in the city, with the TAS or a similar party assisting with their transition.

In 1912, an agent met a sixteen year old American girl at one of the rail terminals in New York City. According to the girl, she had left home because she had been a victim of "frequent punishments." She was on her way to an address in Camden, New Jersey, which a friend had given her. Believing the girl's story, the agent decided to help her get started in her new life. She investigated the Camden address and discovered that it did not exist, so the girl was kept at headquarters until a job could be found for her.<sup>101</sup> Another case from the following year describes a young woman explaining to agents that she was "turned out of her home owing to the domestic difficulties of her father and step-mother." She was told to "never return, and that they did not care what became of her." Trusting the woman's version of events, agents brought her to TAS headquarters, where she was "counseled and encouraged until her interest and courage to

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<sup>101</sup> "Adrift," in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 20.

face the world alone returned.” The option of sending her back home was never seriously considered and, in order to assist her in becoming self-supporting, the Travelers’ Aid Society found her a job.<sup>102</sup>

Harsh punishment, parental negligence, and/or an overall “unfit” home were cause to keep a traveler away from her family and in the city.<sup>103</sup> If these conditions were not met, then the TAS still preferred to have the traveler reconcile with her family and ultimately return to the comforts of home. Typical was a case from 1911. In this instance, a nineteen year old American was expelled from her father’s house after getting into an argument over cooking responsibilities. The father had made the young woman undertake the bulk of the household chores and she resented this arrangement. After being thrown out, she came to New York and initiated contact with the Travelers’ Aid Society. Contrary to what occurred in the previous cases, the TAS quickly reached out to the girl’s father. It judged the situation a minor family squabble and not something more serious. Also in contrast to the above cases, the young woman herself appeared homesick and not frightened to return. The TAS helped facilitate her apology to her father and she ultimately returned home. No indication is given that the father intended to lessen his daughter’s share of the housework and she likely returned to more domestic drudgery.<sup>104</sup>

Even in instances where runaways or expellees remained in the city, discipline was not absent. If in need of employment, the TAS preferred to find travelers domestic service work, the environment of which could be strict and the hours all-consuming. Though in these cases, there

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<sup>102</sup> “Travelers’ Aid Cared What Became of Her,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 26.

<sup>103</sup> Two children were encountered one night at train station after being “turned out” of their home in 1916. The TAS investigated their situation and discovered “improper” and “unfit” home conditions. “Improper Home Conditions,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 24.

<sup>104</sup> “A Runaway Girl,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1912*, p. 11. Also see “Runaway Girls,” in *Annual Report, 1910-11*, p. 29.

was the possibility of achieving a degree of economic independence and social mobility in the long run.<sup>105</sup> If the traveler was in need of more assistance than the TAS was prepared to give, as was the case with young children, they were turned over to the “proper authorities” or “responsible guardians,” which meant the police, a children’s aid society, or orphanage, thus entering them into a potentially endless maze of organizations and adults intervening in their subsequent development.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> On the potential for servants to improve their lives, see Margaret Lynch-Brennan, *The Irish Bridget: Irish Immigrant Women in Domestic Service in America, 1840-1930* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2009). The Irish servants who Lynch-Brennan profiles benefitted from the food and lodging provided by their employers, which enabled them to save money for themselves and their families abroad. The American runaways, above, had no such obligation to their families and would have been able to save more of their wages for themselves.

<sup>106</sup> On children being turned over to authorities and guardians, see “Two Little Runaways,” in TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1913*, p. 27 and “Improper Home Conditions,” in *Annual Report, 1916*, p. 24.

## Epilogue

During World War I, which the United States entered in 1917, moral protection remained essential to the Travelers' Aid Society's mission. Its work with immigrant women at the piers decreased, while it saw an increase in women entering the city at train stations. Some new arrivals came looking for work in war-related industries. Others felt compelled to leave their small towns due to a condition described as "nervous excitement." This phenomenon, according to the TAS-NY, entailed women making impulsive decisions to come to the city in search of soldiers and sailors who were stationed at nearby camps. In some cases, women wanted to see, perhaps for one last time, their European bound male relatives or friends. In others, women were in pursuit of leisure opportunities with soldiers near their camps or at locations such as Brooklyn's Coney Island. Such cases of "nervous excitement" represented a significant threat to women's morality.<sup>1</sup> However, in the midst of war, there was even more at stake than women's purity – officials and service providers believed that the health of the nation's fighting force was placed at risk by encounters between women and the troops.

Consequently, the TAS saw a significant increase in work among men during World War I, especially those soldiers and sailors who were traveling to the city to begin their training. To service these men, as well as the women arriving near the camps, the TAS coordinated its work with two agencies of the U.S. War Department: the Commission on Training Camp Activities (CTCA) and the War Camp Community Service (WCCS). The CTCA launched a massive

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<sup>1</sup> On "nervous excitement," see TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1917*, pp. 4, 12; "Report of the General Secretary" (Exhibit D), 8 January 1918, p. 3, in TAS Executive Committee, Minutes, 8 Jan. 1918, Records of the TAS-NY, Box 1, Folder 1; "General Secretary Report," 12 March 1918, p. 4 in TAS Executive Committee, Minutes, 12 March 1918, Box 1 Folder 1.

propaganda campaign to alert U.S. soldiers to the risks that vice and venereal disease posed to their virility. Its social work arm, the WCCS, was placed in charge of coordinating chaste recreational alternatives for the troops. The War Department's agencies primarily focused on preventing contact between soldiers and prostitutes, while travelers' aid monitored the relationship between draftees and young single women.<sup>2</sup>

At wars end, the TAS-NY still conceived of itself as a moral protective agency for female travelers and sought to return to its pre-war roots. However, its work was fundamentally changed by the war. Throughout the 1920s, men remained a significant clientele of the society. It helped thousands each year (over 3,000 in 1921 alone), where previously it encountered only a few hundred.<sup>3</sup> The TAS met not only white men, but African Americans as well who had begun coming north for work during the war. The homeless unemployed, including tramps (i.e. hoboes), were also an increasing presence well before the start of the Great Depression.

Not unrelated to the increase in male clients, the emphasis on moral protection gradually declined in favor of an approach to social work that utilized the "casework" method.<sup>4</sup> Casework entailed agents making individualized diagnoses of conditions that afflicted travelers. For example, agents now regularly cited mental disability, drug addiction, unemployment, truancy, "known sex irregularity," and juvenile delinquency as justifications for providing TA. By the mid-1920s, the TAS was even providing psychiatric services to travelers. Subsequently, the TAS's reform agenda that concentrated on ending white slavery and protecting women from strangers increasingly became irrelevant.

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<sup>2</sup> On the CTCA and WCCS, see Brandt, *No Magic Bullet*, pp. 66-71.

<sup>3</sup> TAS-NY, *Annual Report, 1921*, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup> In the 1920s, workers received casework training at the New York School for Social Work, formally the New York School of Philanthropy.

The Great Depression further pushed the Travelers' Aid Society away from its pre-war base of female clients and toward a mixed-sex clientele. The waves of unemployed transient men and women who were entering New York demanded attention from both private and public agencies. At the national level, the Federal Transient Program was created in Washington and had branches throughout the country. In New York, the Federal Transient Program used TAS headquarters and workers to establish a registration bureau for homeless women. McCall, in her history of national travelers' aid, writes "So it happened in city after city: the equipment of the local Travelers Aid Society was turned to the use of the [public] program for transients."<sup>5</sup> Travelers' aid societies, like the TAS-NY, also ran their own parallel programs that provided TA to "the individual man, the family, [and] the young person" on a smaller scale than the "mass relief" offered by the state.<sup>6</sup>

When the United States entered World War II, the National Travelers' Aid Society partnered with the Federal Government and joined with five other national welfare organizations (YMCA, YWCA, Salvation Army, Jewish Welfare Board, National Catholic Welfare Organizations) to form the United Services Organization for National Defense (USO). Travelers' aid's role in the USO was to facilitate the movement of troops throughout the country. In New York, the TAS reoriented its work toward providing information and social services (including psychiatry) to soldiers and sailors in transit.<sup>7</sup> It also opened hospitality rooms, called Service Men's Lounges, in Grand Central Station and Pennsylvania Station.

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<sup>5</sup> McCall, *History of National Travelers Aid*, p. 102.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> For an introduction to travelers' aid work during World War II, see J.C. Furnas, "Lady at the Lamp: Travelers Aid Adds the Army and the Navy to the Nation's Bleeding Hearts," *Saturday Evening Post*, 27 Sept. 1941, p. 12.

Post World War II, the TAS-NY began to service two transportation centers that would become signature New York institutions: the Port Authority Bus Terminal in Times Square and Idlewild Airport (now named John F. Kennedy International). In the Times Square location, runaway youths, many of whom were part of the burgeoning Hippie culture of the 1960s, increasingly received TA. Reminiscent of how the TAS previously saw young women as susceptible to urban vices, the TAS described aspiring hippies as ill-prepared to negotiate the city's experimental youth culture. This culture's emphasis on sex and drugs threatened the health and productivity of the nation's young people, and the TAS attempted to send them home before they could immerse themselves in the counterculture or, if it was too late, to connect them with rehabilitation services.

In the 1980s, work with gay male teenagers in the vicinity of Times Square became commonplace. Arriving with little money, the TAS perceived these teenagers as vulnerable to a variety of forms of prostitution.<sup>8</sup> Travelers' aid reached out to them through its "streetwork" program, while also conducting a landmark study that shed light on the plight of homeless gay youth.<sup>9</sup> The Times Square office also entered into a two hundred thousand dollar contract with the city to run a program called Homeward Bound that entailed returning homeless men and women to their families outside of New York.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The photographer and filmmaker Larry Clark photographed the gay teenage prostitutes of Times Square for his book *Teenage Lust* (1983).

<sup>9</sup> Victim Services/Travelers' Aid, "Streetwork Project Study," 1991.

<sup>10</sup> David Kirby, "Travelers Aid Seeking Aid," *New York Times*, 17 Jan. 1999, p. CY7. Homeward Bound echoed the Travelers' Aid Society's preference in the 1910s for returning runaways to their homes instead of keeping them in the city. The city's practice of paying for the homeless to leave New York continued into the 2000s. In 2009, for example, New York City spent \$500,000 to return the homeless to their families. Julie Bosman, "City Aids Homeless with One-Way Tickets Home," *New York Times*, 29 July 2009, p. A1.



Due to a shortage of funds, in 1982 the Travelers' Aid Society merged with a similar city organization, Victim Services Agency, to form the Metropolitan Assistance Corporation (MAC). This marked the first time in its history that the TAS-NY was not an independent organization. It functioned as a "division" of the MAC until it lost its city contract for the Homeward Bound program in 1999 and folded as a result.<sup>11</sup> At present, travelers' aid can only be found in New York City at Kennedy Airport as part of the Travelers' Aid International Network. TA at Kennedy Airport is less a social work organization and more of a "customer service" arm of the Port Authority of New York. Its staff of mostly volunteers distributes basic information about the airport, city, and tourism, and assists travelers in reaching their final destination. If an airline passenger is in crisis, Travelers' Aid will provide some counseling and attempt to connect the traveler with the appropriate social service agency.<sup>12</sup>

### **From White Slavery to Sex Trafficking**

In the early twenty-first century, coerced prostitution remains a social problem and there is no shortage of organizations dedicated to ending it. What activists and governments called "white slavery" in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries is now referred to as "sex trafficking."<sup>13</sup> It is generally categorized under the larger phenomenon of "trafficking in persons," which entails "the movement of persons across international boundaries [and within

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<sup>11</sup> Lucy Friedman and Helene Lauffer, who were involved with travelers' aid at the MAC, discussed TA in the 1980s and 90s during an interview on 12 May 2010. Notes on the interview are in the author's possession.

<sup>12</sup> On Travelers' Aid International, see <http://www.travelersaid.org/>. On TA at Kennedy Airport, see <http://jfk.travelersaid.org/>. Newark International Airport in New Jersey also has a travelers' aid office (See Linda Lynwander, "When Travelers Need Help, Revitalized Agency is Ready," *New York Times*, 4 Dec. 1994, Section 13, p. 1).

<sup>13</sup> The transition away from the term "white slavery" began in 1921 when participants at a League of Nations' conference in Geneva agreed to abandon "white slavery" in favor of "traffic in women and children." They intended for the latter term to end the "confusion and misuse" associated with the former. Kathleen Barry, *Female Sexual Slavery*, 1979 (New York: New York University Press, 1984), p. 32.

domestic borders] for a variety of forms of exploitation,” including forced labor, prostitution, and slavery.<sup>14</sup> The U.S. State Department has consistently put the number of internationally trafficked persons between 600,000 and 900,000 a year.<sup>15</sup> The sociologist and activist Kevin Bales has estimated that 10,000 women and girls are trafficked into the United States each year for the purposes of commercial sex and that, at any given time, there may be between 30,000 to 80,000 “sex slaves” in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Instead of “white slaves” from Europe and the United States, the new victims of sex trafficking are primarily from “developing” nations in Latin America and Asia, as well as from former Soviet Bloc countries in Eastern Europe.<sup>17</sup> Victims are often smuggled through Mexico or Canada and into the United States. Eastern European women, it is reported, are first flown from airports in cities such as Paris, London, or Amsterdam to Mexico City from which they proceed with their captors to enter the U.S.<sup>18</sup>

With the exception of the victim’s race, which is often “non-white,” the typical profile of a sex trafficking victim closely resembles that of a “white slave.” Much like one hundred years ago, trafficking victims are described as young women (“innocents”) who are “abducted, lured,

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<sup>14</sup> Jennifer Goodson, “Sex Trafficking Threatens the United States,” in *Prostitution and Sex Trafficking*, ed. Louise Gerdes (New York: Thomson Gale, 2006), pp. 24-5. Kevin Bales and Jody Sarich, “Anti-Slavery and the Redefining of Justice,” in *Global Civil Society 2011: Globality and the Absence of Justice*, eds. Martin Albrow and Hakan Seckinelgin (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 68.

<sup>15</sup> Jack Shafer, “The Problem of Sex Trafficking in the United States is Overstated,” in *Prostitution and Sex Trafficking*, ed. Gerdes, p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> Bales in Peter Landesman, “The Girls Next Door,” *New York Times Magazine* (January 25, 2004), p. 32.

<sup>17</sup> Doezema, “Loose Women or Lost Women?,” p. 31. For a recent exposé on sex trafficking in Moldova, an ex-Soviet republic, see William Finnegan, “The Countertraffickers: Rescuing the Victims of the Global Sex Trade,” *The New Yorker* (May 5, 2008), online at [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/05/05/080505fa\\_fact\\_finnegan?currentPage=1](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2008/05/05/080505fa_fact_finnegan?currentPage=1) (accessed 5/28/2012).

<sup>18</sup> Landesman, “The Girls Next Door,” p. 36. Kimberly McCabe, “Sex Trafficking in the United States,” in *Sex Trafficking: A Global Perspective*, eds. Kimberly McCabe and Sabita Manian (New York: Lexington Books, 2010), p. 148.

or deceived” by false promises of employment or marriage.<sup>19</sup> Some may know that prostitution is a possibility, but are unaware of the dire conditions to which they will be subjected. For eastern European women, relates Donna Hughes, “Their idea of prostitution is [the American film] ‘Pretty Woman,’... They’re thinking, This may not be so bad.”<sup>20</sup> However, once in the grips of traffickers or pimps, victims are “broken-in” through imprisonment, violence, and psychological abuse. Then, they are continually forced to prostitute themselves and to forfeit one hundred percent of their earnings.

Similar to Turner’s early twentieth century notion of a centralized cartel, criminal networks of various sizes are believed to be at the center of sex trafficking. Domestic trafficking rings are described as “small units” of up to five men “who identify, transport, house, and prostitute victims.” Internationally they are larger, involving fifty or more people.<sup>21</sup> Relying on the testimony of an officer with the Mexican federal preventive police, Landesmann has profiled crime families (“Los Lenones”) that function as “tightly organized associations of pimps.” His description of their tactics bears some resemblance to how white slave cartels were believed to function:

“Like the Sicilian mafia, Los Lenones are based on family hierarchies... The father controls the organization and the money, while the sons and their male cousins hunt, kidnap and entrap victims. The boys leave school at age 12 and are given one or two girls their age to rape and pimp out to begin their training, which emphasizes the arts of kidnapping and seduction. Throughout the rural and suburban towns from southern Mexico to the U.S. border, the agents of Los Lenones troll bus stations and factories and school dances where under-age girls gather, work, and socialize. They first ply the girls like prospective lovers, buying them meals and desserts, promising affection and then marriage. Then the men describe rumors they’ve heard about America, about the

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<sup>19</sup> Doezeza, “Loose Women or Lost Women?,” pp. 34-5.

<sup>20</sup> Hughes in Landesman, “The Girls Next Door,” pp. 33, 36. Also see Finnegan, “The Countertraffickers,” p. 4.

<sup>21</sup> McCabe, “Sex Trafficking in the United States,” pp. 148, 151.

promise of jobs and schools... But the theater often ends as soon as the agent has the girl alone, when he beats her, drugs her or simply forces her into a waiting car.”<sup>22</sup>

The BBC has reported that trafficked Mexicans are often prostituted in a section of western Queens, New York along Roosevelt Avenue that has become the “new” Times Square. On Roosevelt Avenue, men muttering the phrase “chica, chica” hand out “chica cards” which contain images of scantily clad women and telephone numbers that Johns can call.<sup>23</sup> Once the Johns place their order, taxi drivers pick-up the prostitute and shuttle her to the caller’s location. The BBC report claims that the women of Roosevelt Avenue work ten hour shifts and service dozens of men per day.<sup>24</sup>

Printed materials like chica cards are not the only option for advertising commercial sex. Recent news stories have focused on how internet websites, most notably Craigslist.org and Backpage.com, are used to facilitate sex trafficking. In 2012, *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof called for Backpage, owned by Village Voice Media, to drop its prostitution advertising, claiming that the site had become a haven for pimps trafficking in under-aged girls and coerced women. Kristof publically singled out the bank Goldman Sachs, already in hot water for its role in the financial crises of 2008, for holding a 16% stake in Village Voice Media and turning a blind eye to its connections to trafficking. Backpage became a leader in

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<sup>22</sup> Landesman, “The Girls Next Door,” p. 36. Los Lenones operate out of Tenancingo, a town that according to a source cited by the BBC contains 1,000 sex traffickers out of a total of 10,000 inhabitants. “Trafficked: Sex Slaves Seduced and Sold,” *BBC Network*, 22 May 2012, online at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-18144333> (accessed 5/27/2012). On similar Eastern European “mafias” and their connections to trafficking, see Finnegan, “The Countertraffickers,” p. 2.

<sup>23</sup> To avoid detection, some cards are more discreet and claim to advertise something other than prostitution.

<sup>24</sup> “Trafficked: Sex Slaves Seduced and Sold,” *BBC Network*. See also Vivian Yee, “City Plans to Target Cabdrivers Who Join In Sex Trafficking,” *New York Times*, 13 June 2012, p. A24. This dissertation’s author lives near the section of Roosevelt Avenue profiled above and has frequently noticed what appear to be chica cards strewn on the sidewalk.

prostitution advertising only after Craigslist shut down its “adult services” section when it too faced harsh criticism from media and public officials in 2010.<sup>25</sup>

The contemporary discourse on sex-trafficking has not gone unchallenged. In 2000, Jo Doezema claimed that it does the same work as the older white slavery narratives, functioning as a convenient myth to avoid dealing with the more complicated, and morally ambiguous, problem of violence and coercion directed at consenting migrant prostitutes. According to Doezema, the portrayal of prostitutes as young, innocent victims who must be set free does nothing to advance the urgent agenda of enhancing sex workers’ legal rights, which is the real key to ending sexual exploitation.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, Phelim McAleer has claimed that the ubiquitous Eastern European sex slave is a myth, arguing that Eastern European women involved in international commercial sex have made a very practical decision to become prostitutes because it makes good economic sense. They are not “idiots” who are easily duped by false promises of traffickers and oblivious to the widespread media coverage of sex trafficking in their home countries.<sup>27</sup>

More recently, law enforcement officials and women’s health advocates, among others, have criticized Kristof’s campaign to eliminate prostitution ads from Backpage.com, arguing that removing such ads only pushes trafficking and prostitution further underground. For police involved in enforcing anti-trafficking laws, closing Backpage would make it harder for them to monitor sex trafficking and to apprehend perpetrators. While for consenting prostitutes, they

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<sup>25</sup> Nicholas Kristof, “Where Pimps Peddle Their Goods,” *New York Times*, 18 March 2012, p. SR1. Kristof, “Financiers and Sex Trafficking,” *New York Times*, 1 April 2012, p. SR13.

<sup>26</sup> Doezema, “Loose Women or Lost Women?,” pp. 44-7.

<sup>27</sup> McAleer, “The Problem of Eastern European Sex Slavery is Exaggerated,” in *Prostitution and Sex Trafficking*, ed. Gerdes, pp. 43-5, 47. For a counterpoint to McAleer, see Finnegan, “The Countertraffickers,” pp. 2-5.

would lose a public forum in which to advertise and thus be more likely to work in “dark and hidden places” where their health and safety is jeopardized.<sup>28</sup>

Presently, there are numerous organizations that are working to combat sex trafficking, usually as part of an overall program of anti-human trafficking or anti-slavery.<sup>29</sup> Some work at the international level, others at the national and local level. Whereas the TAS-NY stressed prevention over both rescue work and legislative action, these new groups concentrate on empowering victims and lobbying governments to enact and enforce anti-trafficking laws. Some combine their victim services with preventative work among women deemed vulnerable to traffickers. More commonly though, efforts at prevention are now delegated to existing social welfare providers that, for instance, maintain programs for the homeless or abused women.

In New York City, Safe Horizons provides services to survivors of sex and labor trafficking, such as “intensive case management and legal advocacy,” so that victims may transition from “crises to confidence.” It also conducts anti-trafficking training and education programs for community organizations, “government entities,” and law enforcement. For example, Safe Horizons trained the first workers in the State of New York’s Response to Human Trafficking Program.<sup>30</sup> The organization also runs a separate Streetwork Project for homeless

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<sup>28</sup> Kate Hinman and Melia Patria, “Girls Sold for Sex Online, Backpage Defends Decision to Keep Ads Up,” *ABC News*, 24 April 2012, online at <http://abcnews.go.com/US/girls-sold-sex-online-backpage-defends-decision-ads/story?id=16193220#.T7KBZ-uJfhc> (accessed 5/15/2012). Aziza Ahmed, “The Unintended Consequences of Nick Kristof’s Anti-sex Trafficking Crusade,” *The Guardian*, 26 March 2012, online at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/mar/26/nick-kristof-anti-sex-trafficking-crusade> (accessed 5/15/2012). Sex Workers Outreach Project-New York and Sex Workers Action New York, “What Will Closing Backpage.com *Actually* Do?,” pamphlet available online at <http://nyatn.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/bp-flier-05-25.pdf> (accessed 5/27/2012).

<sup>29</sup> Though the Travelers’ Aid Society of New York had long since dropped its emphasis on coerced prostitution, its work in the 1980s and 90s did bring it into contact with victims of labor trafficking. And, some of the gay male prostitutes that it encountered on the streets may have been coerced by pimps.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.safehorizon.org/index/what-we-do-2/anti-trafficking-program-13.html> (accessed 5/16/2012).

youth, which indirectly acts as a trafficking prevention program.<sup>31</sup> FAIR Girls, based in Washington D.C., more directly connects its preventative and its victim services. Its mission is to empower and educate at-risk girls *and* victims of exploitation to ensure that they “become confident, happy, healthy young women.”<sup>32</sup> For victims, it runs a program called Emergency Response for Trafficking Victims and for at-risk teenagers, it has two programs: Tell Your Friends and Project Prepare. Tell Your Friends is described as follows:

“Using video, drawing, and song, the curriculum is an interactive age-appropriate curriculum that defines what human trafficking is, identifies risk factors teen girls and boys face toward human trafficking, talks about healthy and unhealthy relationships, draws links between intimate partner violence and human trafficking, and provides a citywide resource guide to students that helps them reach us and our 35 community-based partners across the D.C. area.”<sup>33</sup>

FAIR Girls is also a proponent of closing Backpage.com, on which one of its clients was recently advertised and trafficked.<sup>34</sup>

In 2002, Safe Horizons co-founded the New York Anti-Trafficking Network (NYATN), which is an alliance of over ninety service providers and advocates working to end human trafficking and to “coordinate resources for trafficked persons.”<sup>35</sup> Whereas Safe Horizons focuses primarily on client services and training, the Anti-Trafficking Network also fosters policy and legislative action. According to its website, the NYATN played a role in the “passage of the New York Anti-Trafficking Law as well as the reauthorization of the Federal Trafficking

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.safehorizon.org/index/what-we-do-2/helping-youth-14/streetwork-project-141.html> (accessed 5/16/2012).

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.fairgirls.org/about> (accessed 5/16/12). FAIR stands for “Free, Aware, Inspired, and Restored.”

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.fairgirls.org/page/tell-your-friends> (accessed 5/16/12).

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.fairgirls.org/page/backpage-campaign> (accessed 5/16/12).

<sup>35</sup> The NYATN claims to be the “first in New York to promote the rights of survivors of human trafficking.” See <http://nyatn.wordpress.com/nyatn-steering-committee-members/> and NYATN, “New York Anti-Trafficking Network Fact Sheet,” p. 1, online at <http://nyatn.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/nyatn-fact-sheet-final.pdf> (accessed 5/16/12).

Victims Protection Act.” It further explains, “We continually advocate for legislation that promotes the rights of trafficked persons at the state and federal levels.”<sup>36</sup>

The Urban Justice Center, a member of the NYATN, advocates for the enhanced legal rights of sex workers, which it ties to the eventual decline of sex trafficking.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, the national Freedom Network (USA) argues that “protecting the rights of all sex workers, promoting their health and safety, and teaching them about human trafficking are some ways to prevent human trafficking.”<sup>38</sup> The emphasis that anti-trafficking organizations place on victim empowerment and that some place on sex-workers’ rights reveals that, twelve years after Doezema issued her critique, segments of the anti-trafficking milieu have heeded her call. However, there are some exceptions.

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women, founded by the “neo-abolitionist” Kathleen Barry in Amherst, Massachusetts, combines its anti-trafficking work with an anti-prostitution agenda. It defines all prostitution, “regardless of consent,” as exploitation. In its view, trafficking cannot be stopped unless the demand for prostitutes is eliminated. To this end, it argues for the decriminalization of women in prostitution and the criminalization of their male clients.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to the anti-trafficking initiatives of private organizations, the United States government has recently enacted strong anti-trafficking laws. In 2000, the Trafficking Victims

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<sup>36</sup> <http://nyatn.wordpress.com/nyatn-steering-committee-members/> and NYATN, “New York Anti-Trafficking Network Fact Sheet,” p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.urbanjustice.org/ujc/projects/sex.html> (accessed 6/14/2012).

<sup>38</sup> Freedom Network (USA), “Human Trafficking and Sex Workers’ Rights,” p. 1, online at [http://www.freedomnetworkusa.org/files/Human\\_Trafficking\\_and\\_Sex\\_Worker\\_s\\_Rights\\_September\\_2012\\_finala.pdf](http://www.freedomnetworkusa.org/files/Human_Trafficking_and_Sex_Worker_s_Rights_September_2012_finala.pdf) (accessed 6/14/2012).

<sup>39</sup> <http://www.catwinternational.org/about/index.php> (accessed 5/16/12). Doezema, “Loose Women or Lost Women?,” p. 33. The Coalition’s founder, Barry, is the author of the influential *Female Sexual Slavery* (1979).



Protection Act (TVPA) was signed. It mandated assistance for victims of human trafficking, defined new crimes and penalties to be enforced by the Department of Justice, and encouraged other countries to enact tough anti-trafficking laws similar to those of the United States. In order to goad other countries into adopting anti-trafficking standards consistent with the TVPA, the law established a tiered ranking system. Countries in Tier 1 are fully compliant with TVPA standards; Tier 2 countries are lacking in anti-trafficking protections, but are making efforts to develop them; and Tier 3 countries have made no effort to stop trafficking.<sup>40</sup>

President George W. Bush in 2003 signed the TVPA Reauthorization Act, which bolstered the original act by delegating “responsibilities and duties” to specific federal agencies, such as the Departments of State, Labor, and Health and Human Services. For example, Health and Human Services provides “medical services, shelter, and counseling” to trafficking victims, while the State Department has funded 200 international anti-trafficking programs. Additionally, the Departments of Health and Human Services and Labor have written brochures that describe how to identify cases of trafficking.<sup>41</sup>

This is not the first time that the United States government has attempted to combat coerced prostitution through an act of Congress. In 1910, the Mann Act made it illegal to transport a woman of any age across state lines for commercial purposes deemed “immoral.” The Mann Act has subsequently been criticized for how broadly it was applied, most notably to break up interracial relationships between consenting black men and young white women. Similarly, the TVPA and the related Bush-era National Security Directive have also come under

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<sup>40</sup> Kimberly McCabe and Sabita Manian, “Introduction: Defining Sex Trafficking,” in *Sex Trafficking*, eds McCabe and Manian, p. 3. McCabe, “Sex Trafficking in the United States,” pp. 153-4. Eartha Melzer, “U.S. Policies Promote Sex Trafficking,” in *Prostitution and Sex Trafficking*, ed. Gerdes, p. 179.

<sup>41</sup> McCabe, “Sex Trafficking in the United States,” pp. 154-5.

scrutiny for being applied too broadly. As part of its anti-trafficking efforts, the United States only provides financial support to national and international anti-trafficking organizations that take an abolitionist stance toward all prostitution.<sup>42</sup> Thus, the TVPA has been used to advance not only an anti-sex trafficking agenda, but a broader anti-prostitution one as well.

The TVPA has been politicized in other ways as well. Eartha Melzer has argued that countries classified by the United States as Tier 3 have earned that status not because they have made little progress in combatting trafficking, but because the United States has a political score to settle, as is the case with Cuba and Venezuela. Relatedly, a Christian non-governmental organization, the International Justice Mission, has called the rankings meaningless because of India's and Thailand's inclusion as Tier 2 nations, when the evidence points to their status as Tier 3.<sup>43</sup>

At the state level, New York enacted the New York Anti-Trafficking Law in 2007, largely in response to the lobbying of groups such as the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition and the New York Anti-Trafficking Network. Commenting on its passage, the feminist Gloria Steinem wrote that "New York State at last has a law to fight this industry based on profit and pain. I am proud that New York's model legislation both rescues the victims and penalizes those who made victimization profitable."<sup>44</sup> The law defines and criminalizes both "labor trafficking" and "sex trafficking," with the latter treated as the more serious crime. Sex trafficking is labeled a Class B felony punishable by up to twenty five years in jail, while labor

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<sup>42</sup> Melzer, "U.S. Policies Promote Sex Trafficking," p. 180.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 182.

<sup>44</sup> "The New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition Celebrates Passage of Strong Anti-Trafficking Law in New York," Press Release, 6 June 2007, online at <http://www.equalitynow.org/new-york-state-anti-trafficking-coalition-celebrates-passage-strong-anti-trafficking-law-new-york> (accessed 5/24/2012). In 2007, Steinem was the chair of the Advisory Council of the New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition, which also included former governor Mario Cuomo and the actress Meryl Streep as members.

trafficking is a Class D felony with the defendant facing up to seven years imprisonment. The law's definition of sex trafficking is broad and does not require a woman to be transported across borders. Instead it focuses on a range of coercive methods that pimps use to control prostitutes, such as forcing them to take drugs or destroying their immigration documents. The law ensures that the trafficking victim cannot be punished by stating that she is *not* an "accomplice" to the trafficker. It also declares that victims are eligible for a range of services, such as health care, job training, and immigration protection.<sup>45</sup>

Possibly to the consternation of the sex workers' right organizations who are members of the above coalitions, the New York Anti-Trafficking Law continues to define prostitution as a crime, though it mandates punishment for patrons, not prostitutes.<sup>46</sup> In a recent case, the *New York Times* reported that two men, a father and son, were charged with sex trafficking, while fourteen other men were charged with patronizing prostitutes. No charges were brought against the prostitutes, which the piece noted was rare in such a case. The Manhattan district attorney's office chose to declare the women victims of trafficking due to the level of coercion involved, which included branding to mark them as the father's and son's property. Before the 2007 Anti-Trafficking Law, these women would have been identified as consenting prostitutes and faced prosecution.<sup>47</sup>

The *Times* also observed that the city's approach to combatting prostitution in general seems to be shifting away from criminalizing prostitutes and toward harsher penalties for clients. This "paradigm shift" can be viewed as a victory of sorts in that, if it continues, prostitutes will

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<sup>45</sup> NYATN, "New York State Anti-Trafficking Law," pp. 1-3, 5, online at <http://nyatn.files.wordpress.com/2011/10/nys-anti-trafficking-law-2007.pdf> (accessed 5/24/2012). "The New York State Anti-Trafficking Coalition Celebrates," Press Release. Russ Buettner, "Prosecutors Shift Focus On Charges In Sex Cases," *New York Times*, 3 May 2012, p. A27.

<sup>46</sup> NYATN, "New York State Anti-Trafficking Law," p. 2.

<sup>47</sup> Buettner, "Prosecutors Shift Focus," p. A27.

face fewer penalties and be offered social services. However, as sex workers' rights groups would argue, the new law only protects prostitutes who are "victims" and fails to acknowledge the agency of those who have *not* been coerced.

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