

The Haven, 1878-1930

A Toronto Charity's Transition from a Religious to a Professional Ethos

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The Haven, a Toronto charity for women, was established in 1878 by evangelically-inspired members of the city's economic and political elite. In the early 1890s, religious impulses began to wane and were replaced, in the post-World War I period, by a professional ethos. Several principles of social casework were adopted in the 1920s. By the early 1930s, the organization was well on its way to working with a one-client population, the so-called "mentally retarded". Thus, religiously-motivated volunteers had been replaced by professionals trained in secular social work practice.

« The Haven », une société de bienfaisance pour les femmes de Toronto, fut fondée en 1878 par des membres d'orientation évangéliste de l'élite économique et politique de la ville. Les motivations religieuses, en déclin au début des années 1890, ont fait place progressivement à une éthique professionnelle, après la Première Guerre mondiale. Plusieurs principes d'action ont été adoptés durant la décennie suivante, et à la fin des années 1930, l'institution axait de plus en plus nettement ses activités sur une clientèle unique, les déficients mentaux. Les bénévoles à motivation religieuse avaient alors cédé la place à des professionnels formés à la pratique du travail social.

Canadian historiography has interpreted the motivations behind late nineteenth and early twentieth-century charitable activity in various ways. During the 1970s, some historians perceived Victorian pioneers of charity as part of a broader phenomenon of class domination.¹ More recent writing has

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1. See Judith Fingard, "The Relief of the Unemployed Poor in Saint John, Halifax, and St. John's, 1815-1860", *Acadiensis*, Vol. V, no. 1 (Autumn, 1975), pp. 32-53; Susan Houston, "Victorian Origins of Juvenile Delinquency: A Canadian Experience" in Michael B. Katz and Paul H. Mattingly, eds., *Education and Social Change: Themes from Ontario's Past* (New York: New York University Press, 1975), pp. 83-109; Susan E. Houston, "The 'Waifs and Strays' of a Late Victorian City: Juvenile Delinquents in Toronto" in Joy Parr, ed., *Childhood and Family in Canadian History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), pp. 129-142; Joey Noble, "Class-ifying the Poor: Toronto Charities, 1850-1880", *Studies in Political Economy*, Vol. II, no. 1 (Autumn 1979), pp. 109-128.

expanded the scope of analysis to include the benevolent² and religious³ intentions of social reformers, as well as the impact of professional accreditation⁴ and gender⁵ in the helping process. This analysis of The Haven,⁶ a Toronto charity for women, argues that evangelical Protestantism was the principal driving force during the organization's formative years, from its establishment in 1878 until the early 1890s. Thereafter, religious impulses waned and were replaced, in the post-World War I era, by an ethos of professional social work practice.

I

The rise of The Haven mirrored the extraordinary expansion of Canada's second largest city. Toronto's population rose dramatically from 56,092 in 1871 to 208,040 in 1901, and to 631,207 in 1931.⁷ In the process, it became the hub of an extensive transcontinental railway network, the nation's financial capital, and a leading commercial and industrial centre presiding over a vast hinterland.⁸ Dynamic growth, however, exacted a price in the form of a new realm of social problems to which a growing number of benevolent organizations responded. These charities, which were for the most part

2. See Paul W. Bennett, "Taming 'Bad Boys' of the 'Dangerous Class': Child Rescue and Restraint at the Victoria Industrial School, 1887-1935", *Histoire sociale — Social History*, Vol. XXI, no. 41 (May 1988), pp. 71-96; and Paul W. Bennett, "Turning 'Bad Boys' Into 'Good Citizens': The Reforming Impulse of Toronto's Industrial Schools Movement, 1883 to the 1920s", *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXVIII, no. 3 (September 1986), pp. 209-232.

3. See Diana Pedersen, "The Young Women's Christian Association in Canada, 1870-1920: 'A Movement to Meet a Spiritual, Civic, and National Need'" (Ph.D. dissertation, Carleton University, 1987).

4. See Paul A. Bator, "'The Struggle to Raise the Lower Classes': Public Health Reform and the Problem of Poverty in Toronto, 1910-1921", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. XIV, no. 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 43-49; Heather MacDougall, *Activists and Advocates: Toronto's Health Department, 1883-1983* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990); and James Pitsula, "The Emergence of Social Work in Toronto", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. XIV, no. 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 35-42.

5. See Sharon Anne Cook, "A Quiet Place...to Die: Ottawa's First Protestant Old Age Homes for Women and Men", *Ontario History*, Vol. LXXXI, no. 1 (March 1989), pp. 25-40; Patricia T. Rooke and R.L. Schnell, "The Rise and Decline of British North American Protestant Orphans' Homes as Woman's Domain, 1850-1930", *Atlantis*, Vol. VII, no. 2 (Spring 1982), pp. 21-35.

6. Its official name was "The Prison Gate Mission and 'The Haven'". From 1893 until 1926, it was known as "The Toronto Haven and Prison Gate Mission", and thereafter as "The Haven". See Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living "Declaration of Incorporation", April 14, 1893, Seal Clerk of Peace Co., York, T.H. Bull, Filed, Blake, Lash, and Cassels; "Change of Name of The Toronto Haven and Prison Gate Mission to The Haven", Signed, F. Costello, Deputy Provincial Registrar, Provincial Secretary's Office, Toronto, Ontario, February 20, 1926.

7. J.M.S. Careless, *Toronto to 1918* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1984), p. 201; James Lemon, *Toronto Since 1918* (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1985), p. 194.

8. Careless, *Toronto to 1918*, pp. 81, 83-86, 107.

religiously-motivated, included the Protestant Orphans' Home, founded in 1851, the Working Boys' Home (1867), the Newsboys' Home (1868), the Infants' Home for unwed mothers (1877), and the Nursing-at-Home Mission and Dispensary for women (1885).⁹

As one of several emerging Toronto charities, The Haven initially had been intended as a shelter for Toronto women released from prison. The year after it opened, however, its mandate was considerably expanded; need and gender became the only criteria for services.¹⁰ Over the next half century, The Haven accordingly responded to a broad range of social misfortune, providing shelter, emotional support, counselling, or employment training to any woman who required it. Most admissions were either self-referrals or came by way of the courts, clergy, concerned friends or families, or other charities. Inmates included the so-called "feeble-minded", mothers and their children, unmarried expectant women, prostitutes, so-called "drunkards", the elderly, the unemployed, and infirm women.

The extension of its services corresponded with a significant growth in facilities and resources. When it opened its doors on Berkeley Street, between Dundas and Queen in 1878, The Haven had a capacity of about 8 beds, an annual revenue of \$271.80, and provided assistance to a total of 178 women. By the late 1880s, it had moved into new facilities at 320 Seaton Street, where it remained for over 40 years. The construction of a new wing in 1893 increased overall capacity to close to 75 beds, and a record number of 741 inmates were admitted into residence over the course of the following year.¹¹ Revenues increased during these years, jumping from \$1,390 in 1880 to \$8,000 in 1900, to over \$18,000 in 1916, and to about \$33,000 in 1929-1930.¹²

9. Stephen A. Speisman, "Munificent Parsons and Municipal Parsimony: Voluntary vs. Public Poor Relief in Nineteenth Century Toronto", *Ontario History*, Vol. LXV, no. 1 (March 1973), pp. 41-43.

10. Save for their young sons, only women were admitted into residence.

11. Ontario Public Archives, Add. MS 561, Toronto Women's Christian Association *Annual Report* (hereafter WCA AR), 1878, pp. 17-23. Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living and Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, *The Haven Annual Report* (hereafter AR), 1893, p. 3. *Ontario Sessional Papers*, 1895, Vol. XXVII, no. 3, 12, pp. 83-84. In 1907, the addition of a new section to one of the building's wings further increased The Haven's capacity to a little under 100 residents (AR, 1907-1908, pp. 8-9). It should be noted that annual numbers of total admissions gradually decreased after the mid-1890s reaching an all-time low of 176 in 1930, reflecting the tendency to admit residents for longer periods of time.

12. For more on the organization's finances, see John R. Graham, "The Haven: A Toronto Charity for Women, 1878-1930" (M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1990), pp. 226-236.

The Haven was an off-shoot of the Toronto branch of the Women's Christian Association (WCA),¹³ having been established as part of the WCA's Gaol Committee. This should not imply complete harmony, however; from the very beginning, WCA-Haven relations were not what they might have been. The Haven's mandate to help so-called "degenerate" women was carefully contrasted with the work of its parent organization. As the 1890 *Annual Report* noted, in order to avoid offending "some of the older ladies of the [WCA] Board of Directresses", the WCA publicly and explicitly distinguished its different programmes, noting that rescue and relief initiatives at The Haven and elsewhere were run under different boards of management and were "entirely separate" from the WCA's work "for respectable young women who are earning a living for themselves in Toronto."¹⁴ The final break came in 1891, when The Haven officially severed its connection with the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), as it was henceforth known, and set out on its own.

It seems surprising, at first glance, that The Haven's organizing Committee members should become a renegade splinter-group within the WCA. They were, after all, men and women who were more revered for their success in Canadian business and politics and their prominence in Toronto high society than for pioneering charitable activities for some of Toronto's most marginalized citizens.¹⁵ The organization's male founding members included Clarke Gamble, a railway promoter and former city solicitor;¹⁶ John Macdonald, proprietor of a large wholesale importing house and reputedly one of the wealthiest men in Toronto;¹⁷ Samuel Hume Blake, a prominent Toronto barrister and vice-chancellor of the province of Ontario (whose brother Edward had been the province's premier, and was later the national leader of the Liberal Party);¹⁸ and W.H. Howland, lawyer, insurance executive, former president of the Toronto Board of Trade, Toronto's reformist mayor in 1886

13. The Toronto WCA, owing to the presence of older women on its founding board, did not change its name to the YWCA until late 1889. For a broader discussion, see Pedersen, "The Young Women's Christian Association in Canada, 1870-1920." It should be noted that several of The Haven's founding members may not have been affiliated with the WCA. According to a Canadian Church of England evangelical periodical, for example, The Haven was established by members of the WCA as well as "other benevolent ladies and gentlemen" who were presumably not associated with the WCA (*The Evangelical Churchman* [hereafter EC], 2, February 7, 1878, p. 616).

14. Ontario Public Archives, Add. MS 561, Toronto YWCA *Annual Report*, 1890, p. 9.

15. This was not an unusual phenomenon. In late nineteenth-century America, for example, wealthy urban residents turned their attention to the salvation of needy women. See Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums* (Meetuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977), pp. 20-21.

16. F.H. Armstrong, ed., *Toronto of Old by Henry Scadding* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 365.

17. George MacLean Rose, ed., *A Cyclopaedia of Canadian Biography*, Vol. II, (Toronto: Rose Publishing, 1888), pp. 579-581.

18. Henry J. Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), p. 111.

and 1887, and the son of wealthy grain trader and "Father of Confederation" Sir William Pierce Howland.¹⁹

Women dominated the Administrative Committee from its inception, accounting for 24 of the 32 founding members. Like their male counterparts, women members belonged to prominent Toronto families which were closely linked by family ties, friendships, and business and political connections.²⁰ These included Harriet (Mrs. Clarke) Gamble, Lady Susanna Julia (Mrs. William Pierce) Howland, her daughter-in-law Matilda Howland,²¹ Anne Margaret Kerr (sister of Samuel Hume Blake and wife of J.K. Kerr, a prominent Toronto lawyer and later a Canadian Senator),²² Mary Louise Gooderham (daughter-in-law of William Gooderham, founder of Gooderham and Worts Distilling Company and one of the city's most successful nineteenth-century merchants),²³ and Georgiana McMurrich (wife of William B., who was a prominent lawyer, railway promoter, and mayor of Toronto in 1881 and 1882).²⁴

Several of The Haven volunteers also tended to epitomize religiously-inspired service to church and community. W.H. Howland, for instance, was a fervent evangelical Anglican who undertook several personal crusades on behalf of the temperance movement, establishing coffee houses to keep working men from strong drink, conducting house-to-house visits in St. John's Ward (then one of the city's most destitute areas), and providing direct relief in the form of cash and kind. As one tribute noted, Howland "made practical philanthropy his chief business in life...He was loyal to what he believed to be the truth of God's Word, and the will of Christ, and carrying out in everyday life the teachings of Christianity."²⁵

Another Committee member, Elizabeth J. Harvie, was associated with The Haven from its inception until her death in 1929, and was its president for 17 years. Her involvement with the Presbyterian Church's foreign missionary work was well known. As Secretary to the Women's Board of Missions for a

19. Victor Russell, *Mayors of Toronto*, Vol. I (Erindale, Ont.: Boston Mills Press, 1982), pp. 113-114.

20. For more on the upper-class background of Canadian women charity pioneers, see Sharon Anne Cook, "'A Helping Hand and Shelter': Anglo Protestant Social Service Agencies in Ottawa, 1880-1910" (M.A. thesis, Carleton University, 1987), p. 70.

21. Sidney Lee, ed., *Dictionary of National Biography*, Second Supplement, Vol. II (London: Smith, Elder, and Company, 1912), p. 312.

22. Jesse E. Middleton, ed., *The Municipality of Toronto*, Vol. II, Part 4, "Biographical Sketches" (Toronto: Dominion Publishing Company, 1923), p. 28; Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 1912, p. 609; Joseph Schull, *Edward Blake* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), p. 25.

23. Edward Marion Chadwick, *Ontario Families; Genealogies of United Empire Loyalist and Other Pioneer Families of Upper Canada*, Vol. I, (Belleville, Ont.: Mika Silk Screening Limited, 1972 Reprint), p. 158; Dianne Newell, "William Gooderham" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. XI (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), pp. 358-360.

24. Russell, *Mayors of Toronto*, Vol. I, pp. 105-106.

25. *Jubilee Volume of Wycliffe College* (Toronto: Wycliffe College, 1927), p. 71.

20-year period, she had travelled overseas to observe missionary activity. A founding member of the Ontario Women's Christian Temperance Union and of the Women's Medical College in Toronto, Harvie was also a one-time president of the Ladies' Committee at the Hospital for Sick Children, and in 1896, she assisted J.J. Kelso in his work with the Children's Aid Societies in this province.²⁶

Although never a formal Committee member, William Lyon Mackenzie King, future prime minister of Canada was, as an undergraduate student in political economy at the University of Toronto in the early 1890s, a volunteer associated with The Haven, taking a personal interest in saving so-called "fallen" women. Much, of course, has been written on King's charitable undertakings.²⁷ His personal diary provided fairly conclusive evidence that King was a religiously-inspired Presbyterian whose activities were part of a short-lived interest in entering the ministry.²⁸ Suffice it to say that The Haven Committee members such as Harvie and Howland, and occasional volunteers such as King, were not afraid to involve themselves directly in helping some of the city's most needy people. They had (to use William James' words) "knowledge about" the city's marginalized population based upon the concrete experience of helping rather than simply abstract "acquaintance with" social problems.

As such activity was motivated by personal beliefs, religious enthusiasm was the natural and central premise behind The Haven's work. Most of its volunteers were Protestant, evangelical laypeople, and members of a variety of sects. A considerable number predictably belonged to the Church of England, which was Toronto's largest denomination throughout the nineteenth century; among them were the evangelicals S.M. Blake, W.H. Howland, the Gambles, and the Reverend and Mrs. Richard Greene.²⁹ Other Protestant denominations, however, were also represented. Mary Agnes Hoskin was

26. Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 1912, pp. 511-512.

27. See C.P. Stacey, *A Very Double Life* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976).

28. Before, during, and after his association with The Haven, King's diary made numerous references to his earnest desire to love and serve God. "I am going to seek to know more of Christ and to live a better life", he noted. "I want to give my whole life to Him...I am learning more of our Saviour every day...I must become more earnest in my work for the Master, it will not do to be half-hearted. I hope I can do more and more every day to lift up the fallen, I hope that my life may be a pure and holy one devoted to Christ alone" (Public Archives of Canada, *The Mackenzie King Diary* [hereafter MKD], MG 26 J13, October 15, 1893; November 5, 1893; November 7, 1893; December 11, 1893; December 13, 1893; December 16, 1893; January 11, 1894.) Indeed, in late 1893, he wrote that he had "made up [his] mind decidedly to go into the ministry" (MKD, December 15, 1893.) Earlier, he had "thoughts of entering the ministry" (November 7, 1893) and soon became "fully determined" to do the same (November 12, 1893). This determination did not last, however, and by December 31, 1895, he had decided that he wanted "to be connected with a university as a professor of Political Economy, or Social Science."

29. *Jubilee Volume of Wycliffe College*, p. 14; Donald C. Masters, *The Rise of Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1947), p. 157; Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 1912, p. 111.

married to a leading Plymouth Brethren.³⁰ Elizabeth J. Harvie was the daughter of a Methodist minister and the wife of a prominent Presbyterian.³¹ Other Presbyterians, as well as at least one Baptist, had also joined the Committee by 1881.³²

The evangelical impulse was manifest in almost every aspect of work from the late 1870s to the early 1890s. Even the social conditions which the organization sought to improve were conceived in religious terms. The 1879 *Annual Report*, for example, recognized the unprecedented proportion of social and spiritual problems which were brought about by massive urbanization. An “undercurrent of vice” rushed “madly through every large centre of population”. “Never in the world’s history”, the report continued, “was such a glamour thrown around sin; never was vice presented in such a multitudinous of forms.”³³

Religious terminology was often used to describe a resident’s plight. In 1878, for example, The Haven volunteer Harriet Gamble urged young women to “avoid evil” lest they “be swallowed up in the vortex of sin.”³⁴ The organization’s services were also conceptualized in religious terms. As that year’s *Annual Report* noted, all work undertaken by its volunteers was meant to glorify God, as well as to save sinners:

The Divine Master has taught us that one soul exceeds in the value [of] the whole world, and we know that within the casket of these sin-stained, sin-marred bodies, there lives, dwarfed and depraved though it may be, an immortal and redeemed spirit, and we are willing to labour a lifetime that, even one of these priceless gems may be laid at the feet of Jesus.³⁵

Moreover, The Haven’s personnel, and indeed, any followers of Christ — working with The Haven, with other organizations, or by themselves — had the moral imperative to “bring deliverance” to those held “captive” by sin and to “forgive” them and “restore” them “to righteousness and peace...in the name of Christ...and to the eternal joy in earth and Heaven.”³⁶

Evangelization was a major if not the most important underlying justification for the organization’s existence in its early years. The Haven’s ministries to the community, for instance, were entirely inspired by the

30. Morgan, *The Canadian Men and Women of the Time*, 1912, p. 548.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 511-512.

32. For example, Mrs. William B. McMurrich, who joined the board in 1881, was married to a prominent Elder at Knox Presbyterian Church (Russell, *Mayors of Toronto*, Vol. I, p. 106). Mrs. R.W. Laird was with The Haven from its inception. She and her husband were long-time members of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church; her husband would eventually be appointed a deacon of the congregation (Canada Baptist Archives, McMaster University, Hamilton, *Ontario Directories of the Jarvis Street Baptist Church, 1856-1899*).

33. WCA AR, 1879, pp. 18-19.

34. EC, August 15, 1878, p. 219.

35. WCA AR, 1878, p. 21.

36. EC, February 7, 1878, p. 616; December 9, 1880, p. 488; WCA AR, 1879, p. 19.

Christian imperative to rescue sinful women. As the 1879 *Annual Report* proclaimed:

Followers of Christ must seek out the wanderers; must pursue them with fleet footsteps over the dark mountains of sin; must watch for them at the midnight hour, under the glare of the gas-light, or at the early dawn; and when one has been found she must be taken up rejoicingly — joy in earth and Heaven — in the strong arms of love and faith and carried to a place of safety.³⁷

Conversions at The Haven, or at other places visited by its volunteers where would-be residents could be found, such as the Toronto Jail, the Mercer Reformatory, the General Hospital, or downtown brothels, were a *sine qua non*. An example of the evangelization efforts of one of The Haven's volunteers visiting the General Hospital was cited in the 1881 *Annual Report*:

The visitor, while engaged in reading the Scriptures to the unfortunate girls under treatment in this ward [the locked ward] observed a young woman who seemed particularly attentive, and, as the reading proceeded, apparently much affected. The visitor spoke very kindly to her, and before leaving urged her to come to The Haven; the girl did so, remained some few weeks, and was eventually placed in a good situation in the family of an earnest Christian lady.³⁸

Like so much of the organization's work, religious experience preceded improvement in a resident's social situation. This was so, an annual report noted, because only the redeeming powers of Jesus Christ could transform sinful, degenerate people from "the ranks of the criminal and the pauper" to "the number of the self-supporting working class":

Time and again we have seen lodgers enter The Haven with bitter and revengeful feelings, but in a few hours, under the persuasive and softening influences of a love and sympathy inspired by the nearness to Christ, the incarnation of love, these have been melted into tenderness.³⁹

Conversion experiences were also known to be effective. One example cited in the Anglican journal, *The Evangelical Churchman*, described a former inmate of The Haven, "with tears in her eyes [saying] that 'she did so wish to be saved and forgiven.'"⁴⁰ Laypeople and clergy from different denominations, including Mary Louise Gooderham, a Presbyterian; the Reverend Doctor John Carroll, a Methodist; the Reverend S. Boddy, an Anglican; and the Reverend E. Payson Hammond, an evangelist, conducted regular services at The Haven, sometimes with significant results. One example of the spiritual benefit derived from these meetings was noted in a letter written in 1880:

Dear Sir — I am very glad to have the opportunity of writing to you, to thank you for your kindness in coming to see us at The Haven, and for the beautiful lessons you taught us. But I want to speak of myself. I did not know anything of the peace which passeth understanding, until last Thursday night; for about

37. WCA AR, 1879, p. 19.

38. AR, 1881, p. 15.

39. WCA AR, 1880, p. 29; AR, 1881, pp. 15-16.

40. EC, December 9, 1880, p. 488.

three weeks I had been very miserable, and could find no rest. So I spoke to the gentleman who came to preach to us on Thursday night, and he talked to me. After he went away...I thought how blind I had been, so I just prayed to God to give me that witness in my soul, and from that moment I have been a new creature in Christ Jesus. I have been an awful sinner, but Christ has saved me. Respectfully yours, K.B.⁴¹

II

This religious approach to helping had other implications as well. Because programmes at The Haven were rooted so deeply in the Christian sensitivity to human need, the organization operated with enormous breadth and consistency. Rather than being preoccupied with one type of resident group (as they would once the organization became secular and professional), The Haven personnel, in the 1880s and 1890s, responded to a religious imperative which required them to embrace disadvantaged persons of all types. As one of its annual reports put it, The Haven admitted “the odds and ends of humanity”: anyone who required shelter, which frequently included those who had been refused admission to other charitable institutions.⁴² In the process, as the 1881 *Annual Report* noted, the organization had become “not a permanent, but a transferring Home”. Its “main design”, the report continued, was “to supplement the work of existing charities.” The Haven, then, acted as a clearinghouse for Toronto’s down-and-out women, providing temporary accommodation while they waited to be admitted to other institutions, to the care of friends or relatives, or to the homes of families who provided employment.⁴³

According to the 1829 *Annual Report*, all residents who did not have friends to care for them and who were “incapable of employment” were transferred to other institutions as soon as there were openings. The very old and infirm were referred, as a matter of course, to “charitable institutions” in Toronto and “elsewhere”. A small number of residents who were “in any respect considered untrustworthy” or who, “by long continued habits”, had “contracted vices difficult to eradicate” were “urged to enter, immediately, the ‘Industrial House of Refuge’ at Yorkville.”⁴⁴

For those who were employable, hard work was considered the most effective means of rehabilitation. In the tradition of the English Poor Laws, popular wisdom held that the only way to transform sinful, “degenerate”

41. AR, 1881, p. 14.

42. AR, 1885, p. 14. Indeed, in 1881, a heterogeneous clientele became an explicitly-declared hallmark of The Haven’s services. “No other institution in the city”, that year’s *Annual Report* stated, “makes provision for all classes and grades of fallen women...The doors of The Haven always stand open to receive any poor, homeless, friendless, miserable wanderer, the only difficulty being limited accommodation. No question is asked save the simple one: ‘Do you wish to do better?’, and when the answer is in the affirmative, the Lady Superintendent admits until the house is full” (AR, 1881, p. 11).

43. AR, 1881, pp. 10, 12.

44. WCA AR, 1879, pp. 18-20.

people from the ranks of the criminal and the pauper was to make them part of the self-supporting working class. After a few weeks of “kindly treatment and religious instruction received in The Haven”, many young girls were helped to obtain “honourable positions”.⁴⁵ There were few options open to women, and almost all of these were low paying. Many of The Haven residents pursued careers as house servants, nursery matrons, or seamstresses. House servants were in particular demand, and it was common practice until the early 1890s to refer young residents to work in the households of Toronto and its surrounding areas. Indeed, as one report noted, a glut of “Christian families in town and country...not only in Toronto but in many of the towns and villages of the province” were “willing, nay anxious, to receive our lodgers into their homes as servants.”⁴⁶

By the early 1890s, however, The Haven had begun to turn inward, and the practice of referring inmates to work as domestics virtually disappeared. In its place, residents worked in the organization’s laundry, ironing, and sewing rooms. This so-called industrial activity, which was introduced in 1885, quickly transformed The Haven from being primarily a transferring home to becoming something of a self-sustaining operation, with a reliable and steady labour pool and a solid clientele.⁴⁷ Indeed, as early as 1891, all but five inmates were employed,⁴⁸ and industrial work generated an increasing amount of capital, accounting for about 50 percent of overall revenue by 1918.⁴⁹

In the process, The Haven’s ambience became as much that of an industrious and regimented institution as that of a household. Residents rose every day at 6:00 a.m., ate breakfast at 7:30 a.m., dinner at 12:00 p.m., and tea at 6:00 p.m. Household and industrial work was undertaken during the morning and afternoon. Compulsory prayers were said at 8:15 a.m. and at 7:30 p.m. Attendance was also mandatory at special services on the Sabbath and on week nights. Girls were to turn in at 9:00 p.m. Smoking or profane language was forbidden, and no inmates under the influence of alcohol were admitted into the building.⁵⁰ House rules were followed quite closely, sometimes to the detriment of residents’ privacy; the Superintendent read all inmates’ mail before passing it on to them.⁵¹

The Haven’s inmates, as noted above, consisted of women who had fallen prey to various forms of “vice” or misfortune. Some of the most

45. WCA AR, 1880, pp. 24-25.

46. AR, 1881, pp. 11-12.

47. AR, 1885, p. 10.

48. Those not working were described as either invalids or as “incorrigible”.

49. They dropped steadily thereafter, accounting for about 25% of total revenues by 1929 (AR, 1929-1930, p. 20).

50. AR, 1887, pp. 30-32.

51. The Metropolitan Toronto Association for Community Living, *The Haven Superintendent Camilla B. Sanderson 600-Page Letterbook, 1895-1899* (hereafter *Letters*), January 12, 1898, p. 353.

unfortunate were considered to be unwed mothers or women abandoned by their husbands. By the early 1890s, the plight of fatherless families had become one of the organization's major social concerns:

Christian effort for the restoration of the lost and wandering often brings the worker face to face with difficulties of a nature that no wisdom of man, or precept of the world can solve. What law can society formulate that will enable justice to be done in a case where two persons sin equally — but where one, and the weaker one, alone bears the consequence of that dual sin? Think of it, in one year, one institution alone can show that nearly one hundred women, some under the age of sixteen, have had to become responsible for the support of their infants, while the fathers of these infants, who are able to earn a far greater wage do nothing for them whatever.⁵²

Although it may not have been enforced in every case,⁵³ the officially-stated policy was to insist that a pregnant resident of The Haven “return to her own municipality” if she were not a Toronto native and could not pay the fees for hospital and medical care.⁵⁴ Because of the city's more rigid enforcement of residency requirements for hospital services, The Haven's Superintendent wrote to fathers and fathers-in-waiting on behalf of The Haven maternity cases. In one letter, written in 1898, the Superintendent suggested that the man in question marry the woman he had made pregnant or, at the very least, agree to provide financial support for mother and child:

We do not wish to be hard on you, but we think that any manly sort of man would be glad to help bear at least a part of the burden which presses so heavily on the unfortunate object of his passion.⁵⁵

Other correspondence was not nearly as polite. After numerous worthless assurances that a man residing in Berlin, Ontario, would pay for a young pregnant girl's board and hospital fees, The Haven's Superintendent, in early 1896, had clearly lost all patience:

I shall send Louise back to Berlin on a pass from the Mayor, or write at once to your municipal authorities stating the facts of the case and asking them to send money for the poor girl's fees for the Hospital and for her board. I know no words to express what I think of you for getting the girl into such trouble, and then sending her off among strangers without money. Had you been half a man you could not have done it, and so I shall not hesitate to let the Berlin authorities know what you are.⁵⁶

52. AR, 1891, p. 5.

53. As The Haven's Superintendent wrote in a letter, “while we never turn a girl away because she has no means, we do not propose to keep any girl for nothing when she can and should pay her way” (Letters, February 29, 1896, p. 162).

54. AR, 1893, p. 5. While sometimes offering to waive the cost of board, The Haven officials rarely agreed to pay for hospital fees — a prerogative which they felt belonged to municipal governments. *See* Letters, June 19, 1895, p. 14, offering to “wave our charge of \$2.00 per week for board”, but not the hospital fees for a young pregnant girl from Owen Sound, Ontario.

55. Letters, February 9, 1898, p. 369.

56. Letters, January 29, 1896, p. 132.

In the case of all inmates, as a letter from the Superintendent noted in 1895, “the rules of [the] institution” did “not permit” The Haven personnel “to keep a girl hidden from her family”, even if the girl did not want her family to know about her trouble.⁵⁷ Thus, the Superintendent frequently wrote to inmates’ parents telling them of their daughters’ plight. A typical letter described “the sorrow and disgrace” one of The Haven’s resident had brought on the family, and The Haven’s willingness to help her.⁵⁸ Many letters to families of girls from out-of-town also requested financial assistance for board payments.⁵⁹

The Haven was considered a last resort only to be utilized if family or friends did not supply the appropriate support and/or financial assistance for any woman in need. Personnel were critical of those family members who did not contribute to the *per diem* costs of room and board. One letter, written to a school teacher, an inmate’s sister, was a case in point:

When I look at your unfortunate sister, knowing that she is not able to take care of herself and earn her own living, and then read your note, so cool and indifferent, I am filled with a feeling of righteous indignation.⁶⁰

Once a resident had given birth, three options were open to her. One was to put the baby up for adoption. The second was to “take a situation” with the child — which usually meant working as a live-in domestic. The third was to stay at the Infants’ Home, a Toronto charity which provided post-natal accommodation.⁶¹

Although no numbers were cited, adoptions were encouraged in some cases. These had to be approved by The Haven’s Board of Management,⁶² which in this matter always proceeded with caution. As the Superintendent stated, the organization’s personnel were “not prepared to use anything but persuasion in trying to induce these poor girls to part with their babies.”⁶³ In one unusual case, a woman’s sister was to adopt the baby and “raise it as if it were her own.”⁶⁴ In the early 1890s and thereafter, babies were usually sent for adoption to J.J. Kelso of the Toronto Children’s Aid Society (CAS) or, during the early and mid-1890s, to a Reverend Watch, residing in Brighton,

57. Letters, June 14, 1895, p. 11.

58. See *Ibid.*

59. Letters were written to families in Canada, the United States and Britain. For example, one letter was written to a family in Rochester, New York (Letters, January 18, 1896, p. 125). Others were written to London, England, Stirling, Ontario (Letters, March 5, 1896), Peterborough, Ontario (Letters, May 11, 1898, p. 416), and elsewhere.

60. Letters, June 11, 1896, p. 231.

61. For more on the Home, see Elspeth A. Latimer, “Methods of Child Care as Reflected in the Infants’ Home of Toronto, 1875-1920” (M.S.W. thesis, University of Toronto, 1953).

62. This term, as well as the earlier term “Committee”, is used interchangeably.

63. Letters, November 26, 1895, p. 91.

64. Letters, July 1, 1895, p. 25.

Ontario.⁶⁵ By the late 1890s, provincial legislation made it mandatory that the CAS approve all adoptions conducted by provincial maternity homes.⁶⁶ The evidence notes a range of ages of adopted children — from newly-born to three years old. The fact that older children were put up for adoption suggests that, in several cases, mothers had resorted to this option after exhausting every other available alternative, having tried to provide for their children under very difficult social or economic circumstances.

The Haven's preference, however, was to keep the mother and child together. As the 1891 *Annual Report* stated, "every effort" was made "to prevent the farming [out] of infants...The experience of years, during which many hundreds of maternity cases have been dealt with, is that the future welfare of mother and child depends upon their not being separated."⁶⁷ As a result, the responsibilities of motherhood were treated with the utmost gravity. Every maternity case had to vow to perform the duties of motherhood; this promise was given in the presence of the Board of Management and was entered into its Minutes.⁶⁸

The Haven also housed prostitutes. In the early years, the organization's volunteers periodically held late-night and midnight services outside downtown brothels. Their occupants, who at this late hour were sure to be in the vicinity, were likely encouraged to join in the worship, with the ultimate objective of personal salvation.⁶⁹ The more common approach, however, was to provide shelter for prostitutes. The organization did not consider sufficiently the economic reasons for this social problem; that many may have turned to this way of life because of the relatively unattractive nature of alternative job opportunities. Partly because so many young prostitutes came to The Haven, its personnel tended to look instead to familial causes, attributing blame to "those Christian mothers" who did not instill in their daughters "a proper sense of morality" and conduct. Personnel, thus, stepped in as proxy-mothers to young former prostitutes, making The Haven their foster home. It was imperative to influence them early in their careers, and to avoid their "drift away" from mainstream life, and any consequent "feeling that they [were] under the ban of society, that they carr[ied] a mark upon their foreheads." In the absence of The Haven's rescue, moreover, a young prostitute would "sink down into sin and degradation and, in the end, become the most hardened and vicious of women", presumably incapable of deliverance.⁷⁰

65. For examples of those sent to Mr. Kelso, see Letters, October 21, 1895, p. 76; June 10, 1895, p. 5. For others sent to the Reverend Mister Watch, see Letters, June 19, 1895, p. 16.

66. *An Act to Regulate Maternity Boarding Homes and for the Protection of Infant Children*, 1897, 60 Vic (Ont). C 52. Quoted in Latimer, "Methods of Child Care as Reflected in the Infants' Home of Toronto, 1875-1920", p. 42.

67. AR, 1891, p. 5.

68. *Ibid.*

69. WCA AR, 1880, p. 30.

70. *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

During the 1880s, The Haven was virtually the only city charity which responded to the social problem of venereal diseases (VD). As a couple of annual reports commented, there was no other “place in the city where penniless girls” of this class could be “sheltered or treated”.⁷¹ The treatment of these “miserable, wretched beings” likely offended the Victorian sensibilities of many Toronto residents.⁷² Yet the organization did not submit to public pressure. In response to repeated queries, The Haven publicly declared the spiritual, social, and humanitarian grounds for helping women with VD. The organization “loved their souls” and wished to help this class of women. There were explanations based on “morality and humanity”, and also social reasons, since treatment was in “the best interests of cleanliness” and “order”.⁷³ “Is The Haven fostering vice?”, the *Annual Report* asked in 1884:

We say emphatically, No. First, because hardness and severity is not God’s plan of dealing with sinners...We say again, emphatically No, because the results of our work prove conclusively that gentleness and love do win, even the depraved sinner, to our loving Saviour.⁷⁴

Another group of “sinners”, so-called “inebriates”, often required longer-term residential care. As the 1887 *Annual Report* noted, “it has been proven...that months, and even years, of discipline are necessary” for their reform.⁷⁵ The number of this class of women plummeted from 251 in 1896 to 48 in 1911, with few references after 1914.⁷⁶ The growing specialization of Toronto’s network of charitable institutions was one major reason for the declining admissions of drinking women. Many alcoholics who otherwise would have gone to The Haven were referred to the Women’s Industrial Farm for Inebriates, to which the *Annual Report* first referred in 1914.⁷⁷

As other agencies of the child welfare movement, such as the CAS and the Infants Home of Toronto, and other social movements, such as the temperance crusade, gathered more impetus and public sympathy by the end of the nineteenth century, The Haven increasingly focused its attention on the constituency whose cause still lacked advocacy. The *Annual Report* of 1910 noted a “crying need for the protection and custodial care” of the city’s “feble-minded” population. “The value of” The Haven’s work with the “feble-minded”, the Report continued, “could scarcely be overestimated”. These women, who were described as “perpetual children” with “a mentality of six or eight years”, were also “in charge of an adult physique.”⁷⁸ Indeed, as

71. AR, 1885, p. 14.

72. AR, 1884, p. 10.

73. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

74. AR, 1884, p. 12.

75. AR, 1887, p. 4.

76. AR, 1905-1906, p. 8; 1911-1912, p. 7.

77. That year’s *Annual Report* noted that “the inebriates like to go to the ‘Women’s Industrial Farm’, as they enjoy a certain amount of freedom there” (AR, 1914-1915, p. 7).

78. AR, 1910-1911, p. 7.

the 1917 *Annual Report* noted, most were “young girls from fourteen to twenty-one years of age”.⁷⁹ Many “feeble-minded” women were particularly vulnerable, another report claimed, to “the horrible dangers and pitfalls” of modern urban life.

The organization’s anxiety, particularly focused on women’s sexual morality, was influenced by the sometimes exaggerated response, throughout many parts of North America and Europe, to urban prostitution and the so-called white slave trade.⁸⁰ Nonetheless, there was, at The Haven as elsewhere, some basis for concern. The 1916 *Annual Report* referred to several young residents who had been “the victims of vicious and lustful men”.⁸¹ One girl, who later turned to prostitution, had been repeatedly raped by her stepfather before she finally ran away from home. Another prostitute, a “poor girl from the backwoods of the north”, purportedly had “her throat and vocal organs permanently injured by the force with which she was choked into submission by captors.”⁸² “Feeble-mindedness” in itself was the source of considerable vulnerability. One resident, “a girl belonging to a decent family”, was “so feeble-minded as to be unable to tell her own name.” She was at The Haven, the Report continued, “with her second child...She is now shielded and she is now happy.”⁸³ Another feeble-minded former prostitute had been subjected to “beasts of prey” who, the organization claimed, “prowl[ed] about after just such weak minded women.” The Superintendent was typically sympathetic of such misfortune: “My heart aches for such. They seem to be so helpless, not wicked, only very weak.”⁸⁴

The Haven personnel, then, felt a pressing need to shelter this population from the sexual, social, and economic hazards of everyday life in the community. Residence at The Haven was far more desirable, a report noted, than living on the street and “being a menace to society” or “continually

79. AR, 1917-1918, p. 9.

80. See, for example, Ruth Rosen, *The Lost Sisterhood: Prostitution in America, 1900-1918* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982); Mariana Valverde, *The Age of Light, Soap, and Water: Moral Reform in English Canada, 1885-1925* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), pp. 77-103; and Judith R. Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class, and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

81. AR, 1916-1917, p. 8.

82. AR, 1910-1911, p. 9.

83. AR, 1908-1909, p. 9.

84. Letters, September 14, 1895, p. 56.

increasing the criminal and imbecile population of our own country.”⁸⁵ “Feeble-minded” residents, instead, were to be provided with “love...food and shelter from the horrible pitfalls” of urban life. Programmes of “mental and moral development” ultimately were to provide some opportunity for The Haven inmates “to take their share in the world’s work” and to live as independently and productively as possible.⁸⁶

The *Annual Report* of 1919 noted that over one-half of inmates staying at The Haven were “feeble-minded”,⁸⁷ and the 1925 *Annual Report* confirmed that “the work of The Haven” was “gradually changing to specialized work with the mental defectives needing special care.”⁸⁸ This imperative to care for a neglected group in society was the spark which ignited the organization’s work, and ensured that it maintained a definite sense of relevance and direction. The Haven, consequently, retained concrete objectives when fundamental changes — involving the final stages of transition from a religious to a secular organization — otherwise might have created sufficient instability to threaten the organization’s very survival.

This commitment to the “feeble-minded” was a thread which connected the evangelical period of the nineteenth century to the emergent professional ethos of the 1920s and the decades which followed.⁸⁹ Indeed, the earnestness with which The Haven personnel wrote of the needs of the “feeble-minded” in the era of World War I was reminiscent of the passionate, religious convictions of the organization’s founding members some 30 years previously:

The pathos of this side of the work gets into one’s very soul, living with these perpetual children, and especially knowing the pitiful and horrible stories of their poor lives. The more deficient among them are exposed to cruelty and vice unspeakable — being unable to protect themselves. One poor weak gentle soul, no trouble at all in the Home, but a perfect plague spot when at large, came to us with her third illegitimate child — a poor little degenerate,

85. AR, 1907-1908, p. 12; 1908-1909, pp. 8-9. Most Torontonians — and even “experts” of the time — viewed the “feeble-minded”, regardless of gender, as a major cause of social problems. Thus, The Haven was hardly out-of-step with popular and professional perceptions. The Toronto Bureau of Municipal Research, an educational body dedicated to urban reform, argued in 1915 that the “feeble-minded” formed “a large proportion of the unemployed, the unemployable, the dependents, the ‘ne’er-do-wells,’ the paupers, the prostitutes, the criminals” (Cyril Greenland, “The Treatment of the Mentally Retarded in Ontario: An Historical Note”, *Canadian Psychiatric Journal*, Vol. VIII, no. 5, [October 1963], p. 334). Writing in 1918, Doctor C.M. Hincks, the Associate Medical Director of the newly-established National Committee on Mental Hygiene, noted that “25% of all our adult chronic offenders against the law are mentally deficient and...unsupervised mentally deficient children account for 40% of the cases in our juvenile courts” (C.M. Hincks, “Feeble-mindedness in Canada a Serious National Problem”, *Social Welfare*, Vol. I, no. 1, [November, 1918], p. 29).

86. AR, 1907-1908, p. 12.

87. AR, 1919-1920, p. 9.

88. AR, 1925-1926, p. 10.

89. The organization continued to serve the needs of the mentally retarded, and finally ceased operation, as Lorimer Lodge, in 1987. See Graham, “The Haven, 1878-1930: A Toronto Charity for Women”, pp. 208-212.

defective, both in mind and body. This poor creature had been the victim and the tool of the loafers in the backyard of a low hotel — most of these in turn to be pitied because of degenerate birth. When found she was only clad in one thin cotton garment, and that hanging in tatters. She wants to be allowed to stay with us — because they “will not let her alone” outside.⁹⁰

III

Accompanying the rise in the number of residents and the altered focus of The Haven's activity were changes in administration. By the 1890s, The Haven Committee was in a state of transition, as old guard evangelically-inspired members were passing away or otherwise terminating formal connection with the organization. In 1895, for example, only two of twenty-three Committee members had served since the foundation stage (1878-1881). Like The Haven's founders, many new members belonged to the city's socio-economic elite. Henry O'Brien, for instance, who became an Advisory Committee member in 1893, was a prominent Toronto-area barrister.⁹¹ George A. Cox, who also, in 1893, was the President of the Canadian Bank of Commerce.⁹² Elmina Atkinson, Board member from 1910 to 1924, was the wife of Joseph Atkinson, publisher of *The Toronto Daily Star*.⁹³ There were also a growing number of Committee members who were not part of Toronto's elite. Mrs. A.R. Bain, who served on the Committee in 1901, was the wife of a Professor of Classics at Victoria College.⁹⁴ Mrs. W.D. Robbins, a member of the board after 1929, was married to an official of the Toronto Railway Employees Union.⁹⁵

This changing Committee membership had important financial consequences. In its early years, The Haven relied heavily upon personal donations canvassed by voluntary Committee members. In 1890, for the first time in the organization's history, personal donations constituted less than 50 percent of total income; within ten years this figure was down to 15 percent, and the decline continued to less than one percent in the 1920s. Municipal and provincial government grants increased markedly during this period, reaching a little over 40 percent of total revenues by 1900 (up from 18 percent in 1880). Another 40 percent of the organization's funding in 1900 came from its industrial services.

Because of the growing importance of so-called industrial activity, increasing numbers of paid personnel were hired to assist the Superintendent, a position which had been created in the organization's second year of

90. AR, 1910-1911, p. 9.

91. Henry J. Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of Their Time* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898), p. 776.

92. *Toronto City Directory*, 1896, p. 593.

93. Charles G.D. Roberts and Arthur Leonard Tunnell, eds., *The Canadian Who's Who*, Vol. II (Toronto: Murray Printing, 1936), p. 37.

94. *Toronto City Directory*, 1901, p. 279.

95. *Toronto City Directory*, 1929, p. 1085.

operation.⁹⁶ By the early 1890s, there were several new employees: a housekeeper, a Sewing Room Matron, an Assistant Superintendent, and a Nursery Matron. Committee members, increasingly delegated responsibilities to paid staff, and the Superintendent became the most important individual in The Haven's daily and ongoing operations. As the *Annual Report* of 1901 noted, she was to "take charge of the household...receiving visitors wishing to inspect the institution, interview[ing] all applicants for admission and friends of inmates...and control[ing] the behaviour of the inmates", as well as being the person to whom all paid personnel were answerable.⁹⁷

Consequential to the rise of industrial services and the departure of the founding Committee membership, the daily interactions between inmates and The Haven staff did not convey the evangelical enthusiasm of the 1870s and 1880s. The organization's Superintendent, Camilla Sanderson, noted in a private letter in 1898 that "the womanly, Christian influence in the daily performance of duty" still characterized paid staff. Yet even if they were considered "earnest Christians", personnel were no longer religious "extremists along any line", a suggestive reference to past evangelical practices.⁹⁸ Sanderson was implicitly criticizing the religious enthusiasm of the organization's former members. In like manner, The Haven was no longer closely connected to the churches to which its Protestant founders had belonged. A passage from the 1903 *Annual Report* captured this transition. The organization's Superintendent, the Report noted, had been asked to speak to several church groups about the work of The Haven. Having long since lost their direct links with the organization, "the City churches", it was hoped, would "become better acquainted with our work."⁹⁹

Not surprisingly, The Haven's annual reports increasingly made reference to secular and more systematic ways of helping. Borrowing from developments in other institutions, the organization for the first time referred to classification in 1885; inmates were separated on the basis of identified problems.¹⁰⁰ "Special attention will be given", that year's *Annual Report* noted, "to classification, our more youthful cases being kept as far as possible separate, except when attending the religious services", from the bad influences of the older, "more hardened and depraved" inmates.¹⁰¹ Ten years later, further separation of The Haven residents took place. A maternity wing was established, entirely removed from other parts of the facility, presumably so that the babies would not be disturbed by the industrial work, and vice versa.

96. WCA AR, 1879, p. 21.

97. AR, 1901-1902, p. 17.

98. Letters, May 25, 1898, p. 428.

99. AR, 1903-1904, p. 7.

100. For discussion of classification in corrections, see Donald Grant Wetherell, "To Discipline and Train: Adult Rehabilitation Programs in Ontario Prisons, 1874-1900", *Histoire sociale — Social History*, Vol. XII, no. 23 (May 1979), pp. 145-165.

101. AR, 1885, p. 14.

A distinct prison gate wing was also added.¹⁰² The rationale was similar to the principles of classification introduced ten years earlier. As the Ontario government's Inspector of Prisons and Charities noted approvingly in 1891, The Haven's inmates were "divided into two classes, the more degraded and shameless ones being kept in the old building, and the others in the new building."¹⁰³

The increasing number of professionally trained personnel may have helped to spur on this more refined, secular approach to helping. The first of the professions to be introduced to The Haven was nursing. Reference to the new position of Nursery Matron was made in late 1898, and for the next 30 years, until the organization's infant care services were terminated in late 1931, a professionally trained nurse was on staff.¹⁰⁴ The 1911 *Annual Report* made first mention of another professional, "a public school teacher", who instructed Haven inmates "once a week...in elementary English."¹⁰⁵

The appointment of Lucy Brooking as Superintendent in 1907 reflected the organization's growing specialization. An authority on the purportedly growing white slave trade in the city of Toronto, she argued in *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls, Or the War on the White Slave Trade* (1911)¹⁰⁶ that white slavery was invariably connected with the problem of feeble-mindedness. An important symbol of an emerging sense of professionalism, Brooking left The Haven in 1911 and eventually became a part-time lecturer at the University of Toronto's Department of Social Service, later named the School of Social Work.¹⁰⁷

The emergence of social casework greatly influenced The Haven's services. In 1914, the Department of Social Service had been established at the University of Toronto, and it supplied a growing number of prospective graduates whom organizations such as The Haven could employ.¹⁰⁸ At the same time, there appeared an emergent body of professional theory; for instance, the American social work pioneer Mary Richmond published *The Social Diagnosis* in 1917 and *What Is Social Casework?* in 1922).¹⁰⁹

102. AR, 1895, p. 18.

103. *Ontario Sessional Papers*, 1891, Vol. XXIII, no. 3, 11, p. 57.

104. Letters, May 25, 1898, p. 428; May 28, 1898, p. 430; July 8, 1898, p. 442.

105. AR, 1911-1912, p. 6.

106. Lucy W. Brooking, Superintendent of The Haven and Prison Gate Mission, Toronto, Canada, "Conditions in Toronto" (London: Entered at Stationer's Hall, Copyright by L.H. Walter, 1911) in Ernest A. Bell, ed., *Fighting the Traffic in Young Girls, Or the War on the White Slave Trade* (Chicago: G.S. Ball, 1910).

107. Lorna F. Hurl, "Building a Profession: The Origin and Development of the Department of Social Service in the University of Toronto, 1914-1928", Working Papers on Social Welfare in Canada Series, Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, 1983, p. 20.

108. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52, 54.

109. Mary Richmond, *The Social Diagnosis* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1917); Mary Richmond, *What Is Social Case Work?* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1922).

But The Haven's greatest incentive to accept social work's ultimate ascendancy came from the Federation for Community Services, a formal associative arrangement of Toronto charities, to which The Haven belonged after 1918. The Federation, which strongly encouraged the hiring of a professionally-trained social worker, influenced every aspect of The Haven's operation. It had relieved Haven volunteers of the burden, which they had had since the organization was founded, of "general collecting" door-to-door.¹¹⁰ More importantly, it provided an increasing proportion of the organization's overall revenues, accounting for over 40 percent of The Haven's total income by 1930. With increasing financial clout, the Federation was able to encourage considerable modifications to The Haven's programmes.

Much of this change was foreshadowed by cryptic references, in the Reports of 1918-1920, to the length of residence of some The Haven inmates.¹¹¹ Revenues garnered from inmates comprised almost 25 percent of all income by 1918 (the laundry accounted for almost 50 percent, and board payments for 25 percent). As the 1919 *Annual Report* stated, however, Committee members absolutely rejected any accusation that "the Board keeps some inmates longer than is necessary because they need their help in the workroom or in the Home."¹¹² The interest "of the individual and the community outside The Haven", the Report continued, were "always considered first". Those inmates in question had to be deemed "mentally fit" by "the Hospital Clinic". "If the Board and staff thinks she can be trusted morally, she is given the chance" to go out on her own in the community.¹¹³ (It was "a real grief to all connected with The Haven", the 1918 Report noted, "that more cannot be trusted in this way."¹¹⁴) Every effort was made, the 1919 Report assured its readers, to see to it that the homes to which released inmates were sent (presumably as domestics) would "help the girls in every way." After release, moreover, "the careers of the girls" were "closely followed". Former inmates were "always encouraged to come to The Haven as Home", and were "always welcome on Sunday" and on such holidays as Christmas.¹¹⁵

Although it is unclear whether The Haven was responding to the concerns of the Federation, the Toronto public, or both, these were still serious insinuations. A 1924 survey of all of the Federation's member organizations proposed fundamental changes to The Haven's programmes. One was "to at once engage a suitably trained social service worker, so that each case

110. AR, 1918-1919, p. 7.

111. AR, 1918-1919, pp. 6-7; 1919-1920, p. 6; 1920-1921, p. 6.

112. There can be little doubt of the primacy of industrial and house work in The Haven's programmes for its residents. In AR, 1918-1919, p. 6, it is noted that in a typical month, all residents were engaged in one form of in-house work. Forty did the laundry, 16 helped the nurse with caring for the resident infants, 8 were in the kitchen and dining room, 10 did the "sweeping, dusting, and cleaning" of the house, and the remainder worked in the sewing room.

113. AR, 1919-1920, p. 6.

114. AR, 1918-1919, p. 7.

115. AR, 1919-1920, p. 6.

admitted should be thoroughly investigated." In addition, The Haven's present population was to be "studied and trained", presumably so that programmes could be tailored to their needs. All cases were to be carefully monitored, and "full records" were to be prepared of all residents.¹¹⁶ The organization's first social service worker, a Mrs. Abbott, left after four months of employment in 1925.¹¹⁷ The Federation for Community Services, however, managed to secure a new worker, Miss Effie Chesnut. "Since then", The Haven's 1926 *Annual Report* noted, "she has accomplished an enormous amount...and has given the Board the joy of realizing how we can cooperate more fully with other institutions and charitable organizations of the city."¹¹⁸

The Federation proposed four principles of social work practice to be incorporated into The Haven's programmes. First, as recommended in the Federation's 1924 survey, the helping process was divided into several stages, all of which were standardized following the precepts of social casework. This included "social investigations" to determine applicants' eligibility for residence, and the nature of helping strategies. Each inmate had "a separate folder", which was "to contain a report of their physical condition, their mental condition, their social history, and a record of the case work done" while they were in residence.¹¹⁹ Follow-up work for released inmates was equally systematic. "Plans [were] made", according to the 1925 Report, "while the girl is in The Haven and either the social worker of The Haven or the social worker of another organization" helped the inmate "to carry out the plans" and to "keep in touch with her."¹²⁰

The second principle stressed, according to the 1927 *Annual Report*, "re-education for community life and helping our girls to find out what kind of work they can do."¹²¹ No longer were inmates to be treated primarily as employees in the various industrial facilities within the organization. (Indeed, in June 1931, the laundry facilities were permanently closed.¹²²) The interests of individual inmates instead were to take precedence over the financial needs of the organization. Corresponding with the concept of re-education for community life were classes in occupational therapy, given twice weekly by "a teacher supplied by the Department".¹²³ Similar classes in Home Nursing were arranged by the Red Cross.¹²⁴ Recreational programmes, which were intended to foster residents' self-confidence and autonomy, were also

116. AR, 1924-1925, p. 5.

117. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

118. AR, 1925-1926, p. 5.

119. AR, 1925-1926, p. 12.

120. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

121. AR, 1927-1928, p. 8.

122. AR, 1930-1931, p. 11.

123. AR, 1927-1928, pp. 10-11. It is unclear to which department this quotation refers. In all likelihood, it is the city's Department of Public Health.

124. *Ibid.*

initiated.¹²⁵ A weekly “Well Babies Clinic”, run at The Haven by the city Department of Health, was introduced in 1925. Mothers were taught basic methods of child care, and children routinely were examined.¹²⁶

The third principle, the classification of inmates according to their mental age, was introduced in 1925. Psychiatrists employed by the city of Toronto’s Department of Health diagnosed The Haven’s “feble-minded” residents, thereby helping The Haven’s social worker to “know what kind of work they are capable of doing to succeed.”¹²⁷ Although annual reports made no explicit references to improved psychiatric assessments, psychiatrists visiting the organization probably made use of the remarkable advances, in the World War I era, in the diagnosis and treatment of mental retardation.¹²⁸

The fourth principle was keeping abreast of current developments in the field of social work and in work with the “feble-minded”. In 1927, The Haven’s Superintendent, herself a professionally-trained social worker, attended the first Social Service Conference of Canada, which was held in Montreal.¹²⁹ Two years later, she visited “several institutions of the feble-minded in the United States”, and took note of the way in which inmates were placed “in colonies [small homes] in the country.”¹³⁰

Professional social work, therefore, had been firmly instilled at The Haven and the last vestiges of the benevolent philanthropy of the nineteenth century were abandoned. A growing sense of professional identity moreover demanded a strict delineation between the social worker and the social agency volunteer.¹³¹ Differentiating the former from the latter was a scientific knowledge base and specialized skills which were the social worker’s alone. The Haven volunteer, whose importance to the organization’s programmes had started to wane with the declining numbers of evangelical Committee members in the 1890s, began to be relegated further to relative insignificance by the forces of professionalism.

125. A Talent Club was mentioned in AR, 1927-1928, p. 11. A dance class and seminars given by the Girl Guides were discussed in AR, 1929-1930, p. 12.

126. AR, 1925-1926, p. 7.

127. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

128. See Harvey G. Simmons, *From Asylum to Welfare* (Downsview, Ont.: National Institute on Mental Retardation, 1982).

129. AR, 1927-1928, p. 16. Chesnut, who was appointed Superintendent in 1926, was the first to have professional training in social work.

130. AR, 1929-1930, p. 17. It should be noted that the colony house approach would be adopted by The Haven in the 1930s, and refined in the mid-1940s. See AR, 1930-1931, 1936; A. Mildred Jeffrey, “A Follow-Up Study on the Re-Establishment of Mentally Defective Girls in Domestic Science in an Urban Centre Under Colony House Supervision”, *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, Vol. XLVIII, no. 1 (July 1943), pp. 96-100; E.P. Lewis and A. Mildred Jeffrey, “Ross Cottage — A Special Foster Home”, *American Journal of Mental Deficiency*, Vol. XLIX, no. 3 (January 1945), pp. 377-382.

131. This argument is made in Roy Lubove, *The Professional Altruist; The Emergence of Social Work as a Career, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 20.

The organization's entire administrative structure was reorganized in 1926 to include three distinct divisions under the supervision of the Superintendent. The first, financial work, was performed by a bookkeeper. The daily running of the house, or institutional work, was the second division. Under the House Supervisor were five matrons in charge of the following departments: the sewing room, the nursery, the laundry room, the kitchen, and house-keeping. The third division, social work, was the responsibility of a trained professional.¹³² There continued to be other professionals, a day nurse and a night nurse who were in charge of the infants, a teacher who conducted evening classes and another in charge of young pre-school children, but it was not stated in the 1926 or subsequent annual reports to which division they belonged.¹³³

Further modifications took place at the onset of the Great Depression. The laundry facilities were closed in June 1931 and the nursery three months later.¹³⁴ The organization also moved out of its 320 Seaton Street location and opened two new facilities.¹³⁵ The first, Lorimer Lodge (named after a recently-deceased long-time Committee member), located at 137 Havelock Street, was a residence for so-called "mental defectives" released from the Ontario Hospital at Orillia, Ontario. The second, at 614 Church Street, provided temporary shelter and, as the 1930 *Annual Report* noted, was "really [intended for] the same class of girls that we had been admitting at 320 Seaton Street"; that is, women who needed to be rescued from the pitfalls of the street.¹³⁶

These changes consolidated, according to the 1930 Report, the trend towards specialization which had been taking place over the past several decades. The old practice of "handling eight distinct types of problems besides running an industry from which they [Haven officials] were supposed to acquire part of their funds" had ended. "In reality", The Haven had been "running eight different institutions in one building", an arrangement which a growing number of people perceived as "unfair to the girls admitted, and also to the staff and executive".¹³⁷ The Haven made the final break from its religious past in 1937 when it decided to confine its mandate to working

132. AR, 1926-1927, p. 7.

133. *Ibid.*

134. AR, 1930-1931, p. 11.

135. The reason given for this move was that the Toronto Fire Department had insisted that the organization's fire escapes were unsafe (AR, 1930-1931, pp. 5, 7). There had been plans, in 1927, to move the facilities to the outskirts of town "with several acres of land suitable for recreation and for growing fruit and vegetables" (AR, 1927-1928, p. 5). With the advent of the Great Depression, however, these plans were abandoned, and for the remainder of The Haven's history, it would continue to be located in downtown Toronto. Whether the organization moved out of the 320 Seaton Street for financial reasons is unknown, although it is known that the building's mortgage had been paid off by 1914 (AR, 1913-1914, p. 6).

136. AR, 1930-1931, pp. 8-9.

137. AR, 1930-1931, p. 8. The number "eight" is somewhat arbitrary and is likely used for rhetorical purposes, demonstrating that there had been a wide variety of residents. Annual reports had not and would not explicitly identify the number of resident classes as eight.

exclusively with the so-called “mentally retarded”.¹³⁸ It subsequently became, in every sense, a specialized, professional social work agency.

IV

As American historian James Leiby has commented, the Christian tradition was most important in the development of nineteenth-century institutions of charity and corrections. Above all else, it “furnished a cosmic drama — the story of creation, sin, judgment, and salvation — in which human suffering had meaning, [as did] efforts to relieve it.” The personal interaction between those providing help and those receiving it “counted for a great deal in the structure of the universe.”¹³⁹ This was salvation, an imperative which, in the realm of charity, went hand in glove with charismatic leadership, individual incentive, benevolent spontaneity, and village neighbourliness. The social agencies of a modern urban-industrial society, however, demanded the secular initiative of the professional social caseworker. Whereas charity had been a humanitarian crusade to bring salvation and comfort to society’s less fortunate individuals, social work was a systematic approach to a complex web of social problems, among them mental retardation. For The Haven, this transition meant, above all else, that the pioneering, religious zeal of the volunteer had to give way to the secular expertise of the trained professional. But as the years wore on, this relinquishment of responsibilities ultimately restricted the compassionate impulses of the volunteers.

138. As the 1937 *Annual Report* noted, the organization’s two objectives were: “1. To care and supervise mentally retarded girls and women with a view to fitting them for life in the community; 2. To study the problem presented by the mentally retarded in the community, the way in which it is being met, and by experiment, to demonstrate possible improvement” (AR, 1937, p. 1).

139. James Leiby, *A History of Social Welfare and Social Work in the United States* (New York: Columbia University, 1978), p. 21.