

**THE BOSTON Y.M.C.A.
AND COMMUNITY
NEED; A CENTURY'S
EVOLUTION, 1851-1951**

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The Boston Y.M.C.A. and community need; a century's evolution, 1851-1951 by William B. Whiteside

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WILLIAM B. WHITESIDE

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ARTHUR R. S. JOHNSON

THE BOSTON Y. M. C. A.
and COMMUNITY NEED

A Century's Evolution, 1851-1951

WILLIAM B. WHITESIDE

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DEDICATION

To Arthur S. Johnson, member of the Board of Directors of the Boston Young Men's Christian Association since 1888, President from 1897 to 1927, now Honorary Chairman of the Board of Directors, who symbolizes the high level of leadership given to the Association by its presidents through the century, this history is respectfully dedicated.

Preface

THIS history of the first Young Men's Christian Association formed in the United States is a case study in one of the most highly significant topics in the history of the past century: the development of the social welfare programs of private agencies. It relates the evolution of the Boston "Y" to two important trends: the world-wide Association movement, as an effort to meet the needs of young people during a period of urbanization and industrialization; and the growth in particular of the Boston community, with its own problems and needs. I have sought to analyze the forces which brought the Y.M.C.A. to Boston, to explain the organization's changing emphases, and to evaluate the effectiveness of its service to the community.

The Association awarded a two-year fellowship which made it possible for me to undertake the study. I hereby record my deep gratitude to the Boston Y.M.C.A. for making this generous grant, for providing office space and equipment, for meeting many of the expenses incurred in preparing the manuscript, and for arranging for its publication.

The History Department of Harvard University supervised the research and writing of the history, which I submitted as my doctoral dissertation in American History. Bound copies of the original manuscript, which is more fully documented and which treats some topics in greater detail, are available at the Harvard College Library and at the Boston Y.M.C.A.

Many Association leaders gave freely of their time, and I cannot acknowledge all favors. Dr. Ray Johns, general secretary of the Boston Y.M.C.A., placed all records at my disposal, took a deep interest in the study, and drew upon his own rich experience as a social worker and writer to offer many stimulating

suggestions. I particularly appreciate his help in preparing the manuscript for publication.

Miss J. Grace Lamont, assistant treasurer, gave invaluable aid in finding elusive historical materials and initiated me into the mysteries of the Association's financial statistics. President Robert T. P. Storer added to my understanding of recent Association history, as did these staff members: Mr. Roland F. Adams, Mr. Lester W. Dearborn, Mr. Alden Eberly, Mr. Chester A. Hall, Mr. Edwin C. Johnson, Mr. A. Karl Roehrig, and Mr. William G. Wilkinson. Four former staff members, Mr. Clarence C. Beasley, Mr. Gilbert H. Roehrig, Mr. Frederick A. Watson, and Mr. Norman H. Ludlow, were extremely helpful on the Association's development between World Wars. President Carl S. Ell and Vice-President Everett A. Churchill of Northeastern University gave valuable assistance on the changing relationship between the Association and the University.

An advisory committee worked with Dr. Johns in giving general direction to the project. Mr. Thomas M. Hennessey, Dr. Ernest R. Caverly, and Professor Kirtley F. Mather served on this committee.

The close co-operation of "Y" personnel has not, however, made this an official history. I accepted many though not all of the suggestions offered. The interpretations are my own, and for them I bear full responsibility.

I am grateful to Mrs. Arthur W. Burnham of Waban, Massachusetts, for permitting me to consult her collection of the papers of Captain Thomas V. Sullivan, founder of the Boston Y.M.C.A., and to Mrs. Frank Palmer Speare for making available her husband's manuscripts.

Miss Mary P. Thorpe of the Y.M.C.A. Historical Library in New York gave much assistance during my research there; she also responded to a number of written appeals for information. Miss Doris M. Fletcher permitted me to use the resources of the Springfield College Library.

Dr. Charles Howard Hopkins offered many suggestions and permitted me to read in manuscript several chapters of his history of the North American Y.M.C.A. Movement.

Professor Arthur M. Schlesinger read the manuscript and made a number of helpful suggestions.