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Glimpses of Heartache, and Stories of Survival
By GLENN COLLINS

The letters, more than a hundred years later, are heartbreaking. Many are just rough notes, bearing pinholes where they had been attached to swaddling clothes. Here is a scribe that says, "My name is Rose — I am baptized — 1 year old." Another mother has dashed off, "Guard this little one and if things turn out as I hope I shall repay you for your trouble."

A more operatic missive dates from 1874: "I am a poor woman and have been deceived under the promise of marriage. I am without means and without relatives to nurse my baby. Therefore I beg you for God's sake to take my child and keep it. I remain your humble servant."

The notes arrived with abandoned infants, many of them left in a plain wicker basket at the entrance to what is now known as the New York Foundling, the 137-year-old family services agency in Manhattan. Now, the entire collection — a trove of documents, photographs and memorabilia that sheds new light on a dark chapter of the New York that was — is going public for the first time.

"The archive is teaching us about our past," said Sister Carol Barnes, a director of the Foundling, sponsored by the Sisters of Charity of New York, which also co-sponsors St. Vincent Catholic Medical Centers. But the collection, called the Foundling Archives, "is also telling us much about ourselves," she said. "It is a heritage that is very much alive because the human needs remain the same."

The New York Foundling Asylum was created in an era of minimal child welfare bureaucracies, when newborns were routinely abandoned on the mean streets, in church entrances or on the doorsteps of the wealthy. It was a time when an estimated 30,000 homeless children populated the city.

In 1870, a year after the Foundling began, the State Legislature deemed the agency's work so crucial that it appropriated $100,000 for construction of a larger building. The Foundling began boarding babies with volunteer families almost immediately and initiated adoptions in 1873. For decades, it sheltered unmarried expectant mothers and their babies, and it established a pediatric hospital in 1881. By 1910, 27,779 children had passed through its doors.

The need has hardly evaporated. "At the turn of the century, the problem was poverty and, to a certain extent, alcohol," said William F. Baccaglini, the Foundling's executive director. "But now we are seeing children suffering from a complex of other problems as well — substance abuse, mental health issues, developmental disability."

Research in the Foundling's archives has been entrusted to Richard Reilly, 67, a retired management consultant and history maven. Since December, he has been reviewing and organizing the archive as a member of the Ignatian Volunteer Corps, a Jesuit-run program dedicated to service and spirituality. The Foundling intends to create an archival center and put all of the materials on its Web site in time for its 140th anniversary in 2009.

Steven H. Jaffe, an independent historian and curator who incorporated some of the Foundling's memorabilia in an exhibition at the New-York Historical Society four years ago, said the archive was important in tracing early child welfare reform efforts, when religious denominations took partial responsibility for orphans in the absence of a public safety net. Although the poorly coordinated system was later deemed Dickensian, it was a vast improvement over utter abandonment, he said.

On a recent afternoon, Mr. Reilly cracked open a ledger book that documented 2,457 babies who were dropped off at the Foundling from October 1869 to November 1871 — many of them left in the legendary cradle that was placed outside its brownstone on East 12th Street off Fifth Avenue. "Infanticide," Mr. Reilly said, shaking his head, "was a widespread practice then."

New discoveries in the collection include an 1869 leather-bound ledger, with entries in the spidery black penmanship of Sister Mary Irene Fitzgibbons, the founder of the institution. The ledger details the agency's minutes, fund-raising and construction plans, including drawings. More mundane items, like an 1891 electric bill for $100.16, have also emerged.

The archive includes admissions registers, annual reports, newspaper clippings dating to 1869, dozens of scrapbooks and hundreds of books and videotapes.

Especially poignant is the collection of baby ledgers, in which abandoned children's arrivals were noted in precise script. The Foundling's first baby, Sarah Kinsley, was left with the sisters on Oct. 12, 1869.

But it is the notes and letters — scraps of paper and bits of cloth, many pinned to the babies' blankets — that evoke the power of stories untold.

On a note from 1873 is written, "This child name is Marie John Dunn — 5 days old." Penciled the same year is a cryptic message, haunting for its brevity, "Child of Mary E. Farmer."

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/03/nyregion/03foundling.html?_r=1&oref=...
Pauloosie Keyootak Survived The Arctic When He Was 62 Years Old. Photo credit: OutdoorHub. In early 2016, Pauloosie Keyootak and two family members had planned a snowmobile trip from Iqaluit to the neighboring town of Pangnirtung. This was the closest town to their home, and it was separated by 300 kilometers (190 mi) of frozen wilderness. A snowstorm threw them off track.


10 Glimpses is a collection of poetry and prose that will allow you to take a look at the memoirs of past love, excerpts from books that will not be written, snapshots of broken. poetry. Since when is McCain a survival story? He attempted suicide â€“ the others all fought to survive. mccaret on July 12, 2009 4:55 am.

Aron Ralston is probably one of the most awe-inspiring stories of perseverance Iâ€™ve ever heard of. I think it teaches us all something about how to think and operate in the face of fear. When we are in that â€œfight or flightâ€ mode, the limbic system of our brain (the â€œlizard brainâ€) overrules our cerebrum, which is the system capable of rational thought and problem solving. The research points to the astonishing 96 per cent survival rate of the 45 sporting stars who have contested the Wimbledon final since 1960 - only two have died. If tennis players lived the same number of years as an average male, more than a third of that number would have died by now. The longevity of Wimbledon champions suggests the game is key to living longer, a new study has revealed. Among a raft of 90-something former tennis players is 97-year-olds Vic Seixas, the oldest surviving grand slam champion, and Budge Patty, his younger by six months. Elite tennis players are expected to live.