

The Orphan Trains:  
Media & The New York Children's Aid Society  
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## Introduction

“Under the heading ‘Just one of God’s Children,’ one of the morning newspapers told the story last winter of a newsboy at the Brooklyn Bridge, who fell in a fit with his bundle of papers under his arm and was carried into the waiting-room by the bridge police. They sent for an ambulance, but before it came the boy was out selling papers again. The reporters asked the little dark-eyed woman at the bridge entrance which boy it was.

‘Little Maher it was,’ she answered.

‘Who takes care of him?’

‘Oh, no one but God,’ said she, ‘and he is too busy with other folks to give him much attention (Riis, 1892, preface).’”

Due to urbanization, industrialization and a growing number of immigrants, there were thousands of children just like little Maher living on New York’s city streets in the mid-1800s through the early 1900s. The children begged, fought, sold newspapers—and even their own bodies—to survive. Some were orphaned or intentionally abandoned, others had been separated from their immigrating families as they passed through the city. The only available resources for them were orphanages and almshouses. However, neither promised any kind of hope for their future. Many of the children were like rabid animals. Police referred to them as “street rats.” Young law breakers were locked in cells infested with disease, even children as young as five-years-old (Hansan, 2011).

In 1853, Charles Loring Brace, a Congregational minister, felt called to save the children. So, he and a few other clergymen and social reformers founded the New York Children’s Aid Society (CAS). They opened schools and attempted to teach street children a trade, but Brace believed that what the children really needed was fresh clean country air and a family. The other

society founders agreed that would be of greater benefit to children—and society—than just putting them in orphanages (Chiodo & Meliza, 2014). The men came up with a plan. They gathered placeable children, gave them a bath, clean clothes, and a Bible. Then, the children boarded westbound trains, accompanied by an adult agent. The hope was that farmers in the West, who needed extra hands, would take the young travelers into their families, and treat them as one of their own. And it worked. Because many of the children traveled by trains to their new homes, the CAS' program, as well as those of other organizations, which later followed suit, are remembered as the Orphan Train Movement. This paper's focus is the CAS' program.

### **Research Question**

What part did media play in the successful Children's Aid Society program that placed New York City street children in country homes, by way of westward bound trains, from 1853 to 1929? While there has been a great deal of study about the Society's placing out program, there is not much written about the part that media played, which makes the topic ripe for original research. Such research is a worthwhile endeavor, in that the CAS' program was the start of child welfare reforms and provided the foundation for what would eventually become the U.S. foster care system.

### **Literature Review**

The project began with viewing the PBS documentary *The Orphan Trains*. The program included interviews with adults who were placed out during the Orphan Train Movement. Watching the film served as an excellent way to put the research question in context. It also provided the vocabulary needed for further research.

By far, the most helpful resource was *Children West: A History of the Placing out System of the New York Children's Aid Society 1853-1890*. It was written by Miriam Z. Langsam,

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former history professor at Indiana University. The book contains information about the forming of the society, its philosophy, the placing out system, its financial affairs, and even criticisms against the CAS' program. Sprinkled throughout the book is information about the media's role in the Society's work.

Another scholarly source chock-full of useful information was "A History of Placing Out: The Orphan Trains" by Jeanne F. Cook in *Child Welfare*. The journal focuses on children's issues. It provided information about how the placing out strategy played out in the print media and how it was a bit of a "darling" in the press because it did not depend on public funding. The author's list of resources served as an aid for further research.

"Orphan Trains: Teaching about an Early Twentieth-Century Social Experiment," in *The Social Studies* journal, contained much of the same information as Langsam's book, but also had sections about the arrival of trains, how CAS' agents prepared towns for the event, follow up correspondence after placement, the society's annual reports, and how newspaper articles informed public opinion concerning the trains.

Historian and University of Kansas professor Marilyn Irvin Holt's book, *The Orphan Trains: Placing out in America*, was especially invaluable. Based on records, photographs, newspaper articles and oral histories, it provided secondary access to many items, particularly newspaper articles that are not available online.

A secondary source, found on the University of Oregon's Adoption History Project page, was the text of a presentation by the Rev. Hastings H. Hart at the National Conference of Charities and Corrections in St. Louis. This was another important find because many other sources referred to it. Hastings' address countered criticisms against the Society.

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*The Life of Charles Loring Brace*, which was edited by his daughter Emma Brace, included portions of the elder Brace's letters written on behalf of the Society and himself. The book provided a unique look at the man and his mission.

Another crucial bit of information was the text of Charles Loring Brace's article, "The Life of the Street Rats," published in 1872. The writing is important because it aptly describes the lives of New York street children.

Other secondary sources included articles describing former Orphan Train riders' success in finding information about their history, with the aid of public and private media records generated by CAS and others. Those articles included Jennie Zeitler's "Records Fill in Orphan Train Riders' Stories," published in *The Morrison County Record*, as well as Mark Bromberg's "Our Orphan Train Lady," in *Mountain Home Magazine*. Lastly, the CAS' website provided information about the number of children placed out and the number of states that received them.

### **Methodology**

It was not possible to physically examine primary sources, so confirming their authenticity and the validity of each was accomplished by looking at where source was obtained from and determining if it was a trustworthy source. Sources were also compared to others from the same period to check for similar wording, typesetting, dress, etc. Another consideration was whether the content of a text was consistent, at least in part, with other sources.

The copy of *The Children of the Poor* consulted for this paper was an online reprint of the book on Project Gutenberg's website. The project is a volunteer effort, so the reliability of the source's text is questionable. However, portions used for this paper were compared to excerpts in other sources that predated Gutenberg's digital posting and the text was found to be consistent with those.

Many primary sources were digitally retrieved from CAS' archives on Flickr, under the direction of Paul Clarke, an archivist at CAS. Those items included the handbill, *Homes Wanted for Children*; photograph prints mounted on boards, which picture children and agents; an agent's notice sent to an Idaho city announcing a company of children's expected arrival date; a pamphlet designed to persuade people to take in a child; a photograph of an illustration featured in the society's annual reports from 1873 to 1886; a copy of the society's first annual report; and 65 pages from a child placing agent's personal journal. The wording on the documents and clothing worn by the children in the photographs is consistent with the period being researched. Because the historical society and CAS are trustworthy sources of media related to the placing out of children, these are solid primary sources.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) 1973 reprint of *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work Among Them*, by Charles Loring Brace, is identical to a digital file of the original book online. Therefore, it was determined that the reprint is true to the original.

*The Daily Oregon Journal's* 1909 article, "When the Waif is Given a Chance," is from the University of Oregon's library archives in Eugene, Oregon, which is a credible source.

"An Extraordinary Story," in the *Northern Ohio Journal*, and "Supplement to St. Nicholas for June 1880," in the farming publication *The Florida Agriculturalist*, were both retrieved from the Library of Congress website, which is a trustworthy source.

"Children Sent West by the Children's Aid Society," published in the *St. Cloud Journal* in 1873, was retrieved from the Minnesota Historical Society's digital newspaper hub, which is a trustworthy source. The digital file contained the entire page the article was on, which was consistent in language and appearance with other publications in that era.

“Seventy Years of Children’s Aid” and Brace’s “Emigrants and Emigrants’ Children” were retrieved from *The New York Times* online archive, which is a trustworthy source.

The broadside, *Children Without Homes*, was retrieved from the New-York Historical Society’s museum and library, which determined it was authentic.

ProQuest Historical Newspapers digital archive. accessed through Linfield University’s library, was the source for *The New York Times*’ article “New-York Child Saving.” The archive is commonly used by researchers and considered a reliable source.

*Maquoketa Excelsior-Record*’s article, “Make a Choice of an Orphan,” was received as a digital file in an email from Jackson County Historic Preservation Commissioner and historian Don Wentworth at the Clinton Engines Museum in Maquoketa. The museum and historic preservation are both trustworthy sources.

### **Original Research/Evidence**

There was an incredible amount of discoverable primary sources in digitalized format and that provided evidence relevant to the topic of media and its role in the CAS’ placing out of children.

Brace’s article, “Emigrants and Emigrants’ Children,” in his column “Walks Among the New-York Poor,” painted a picture of the dismal life that many children endured on the city’s streets. Likewise, Jacob Riis’ 1892 book, *The Children of the Poor*, does the same.

The journal entries of CAS’ agent Henry Friedgen, which covered the period from January 1, 1858 to December 7, 1859, contain the report of his interactions with those living on the streets, such as a street beggar’s request that he find a home for her child. The journal was an important piece of evidence because it documented the placing out of children.

Another document used in research for this paper was *Don't You Want One Like This?* The pamphlet features an adorable little girl on its cover. It is an example of how media was used to play on the sympathies of readers.

*Homes Wanted for Children*, a small handbill passed out prior to the arrival of a train full of street children, demonstrated yet another way media was used to find homes for children. This item contained information about the terms of accepting a child, providing written proof that the children placed were not to be used as servants.

The broadside, *Children Without Homes*, announced there were still children in need of homes. It is a helpful piece of evidence because it shows media was used to recruit homes for children who were not immediately taken when the train arrived.

“Make a Choice of an Orphan” informed readers that children were arriving by train that day. It mentioned a letter an agent had sent to the paper, referenced 500 circulars sent out that week and provided the names and ages of the children on the train. This provided further evidence of how media played a part in placing out children.

A digital copy of a promotional letter on the Society's stationary, which was sent to those in Rock Rapids, Iowa, announced the upcoming arrival of children and directed interested parties to a local committee selected to oversee the placement of the children. It also stated the terms of placement, which included taking the child in as a family member, not a as a servant. This source is evidence of CAS' strategy use of media.

Several photographs from CAS' archives featured groups of children shortly before their train's departure. The back of the photographs noted the company's destination city, the name of the adult with the children, and case file numbers. The photos are evidence of how the society used media to document its activities.



Another excellent find was a large drawing that was used as a frontispiece in annual reports from 1873 to 1886. It contains five scenes, each portraying a part of a child's journey from life on the streets to a lovely home in the country. This shows media was used to convey messages without words.

*The First Annual Report of the Children's Aid Society* boasted about its success in placing 164 boys and 32 girls in its first year. The report is an example of how CAS used media to keep its supporters and others updated on its activities.

"New-York Child Saving," in *The New York Times*, provided evidence that the newspaper kept abreast of what the Society was up to. "Seventy Years of Children's Aid," written by Charles Loring Brace, Jr., the son of the elder Brace, provided evidence that the newspaper's media coverage continued throughout the society's placing out years.

*The Florida Agriculturalist's* "Supplement to St. Nicholas for June 1880" was an example of a farming magazine's coverage of the Orphan Train Movement. The article is a review about the June issue of *St. Nicholas*. It included a long excerpt filled with glowing words about CAS. This is further evidence that the Society benefited from free media coverage. "Children Sent West by the Children's Aid Society," in the *St. Cloud Journal*, is another example of that. The flowery article was a reprint from *Harper's Magazine*. Both demonstrate CAS' activities were well publicized in rural areas.

"An Extraordinary Story," published in the *Northern Ohio Journal*, tells of one child's adjustment to her new home. Again, the content of the story was taken from another publication. The newspaper's header touts it as a family newspaper, devoted to literature, science, agriculture, and general news, but the article is more literature than anything else (An Extraordinary Story,

1872). The article, even if a reprint, is a valuable primary source in that it represents the romantic way the placing out system was sometimes presented to readers.

“When the Waif is Given a Chance,” in *The Oregon Daily Journal* in 1909, gave a West Coast account of the Society’s work. The front-page article includes drawings of children, including a baby, and photographs of two placed out boys who grew up to be governors. The article, which is written in magazine style, includes the history of CAS and is a rich source of stories about children.

Finally, *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years’ Work Among Them* is the closest that one can get to a conversation with Brace. His chapter “Providing Country Homes” presented a first-hand look at his thoughts in developing the placing out system. The book also contains a written account of his rebuttal to Catholic opposition.

### **Analysis**

As a formally trained minister, 26-year-old Charles Loring Brace believed God called him to save the children languishing on the streets of New York City. He found people that were willing to join him in doing just that and they created the CAS. But rescuing the children would take far more than Brace’s religious training. To successfully fulfill its mission, the Society would need to use effective communication techniques, like those Edward Bernays, “the father of public relations,” later examined in his classic book, *Propaganda*. They would need to clearly communicate their vision to the public. “This practice of creating circumstances and creating pictures in the minds of millions of persons is very common,” Bernays wrote. “Virtually no important undertaking is now carried on without it,” he said (Bernays, 1928, p. 25). CAS effectively created images through the power of media to gain acceptance of its message and accomplish its mission.

In a semi-annual police report in 1849, New York City Chief of Police George W. Matsell wrote that there was a constantly increasing number of idle and vicious children on the streets. He said the children infested the streets and were destined to a life of crime (Langsam, 1964). In his 1872 essay, "The Life of the Street Rats," Brace described the street children, "...they were too quick and cunning to be often caught in their petty plunderings, so they gnaw away at the foundations of society undisturbed (Brace, 1872)." This indicates that Brace took to heart the words of the report, as did others, including the editor of the *New York Daily Tribune*, who said that neither press nor pulpit of the city would allow such a travesty to remain unnoticed (Langsam, 1964).

Brace knew the power of the press. He had been writing a column, "Walks Among the New-York Poor," for *The New York Times* since 1851. In 1853, the year CAS was founded, he wrote about children who had become engaged in every sort of evil while living on the streets. He lamented that their life might have been different if they had only escaped the city a few years before. He told about one boy that CAS had bathed, dressed, and sent to a home in Delaware, who was doing well (Brace, 1853). Brace effectively stirred up the emotions of those in his target audience and continually kept the importance of the Society's mission before them. In 1872, he wrote that there were thousands and thousands of children that had no home and "'flit' from attic to attic, and cellar to cellar... thousands connected with criminal enterprises...tens of thousands, poor, hard-pressed... swarming in tenement-houses (Brace, 1872)." It was his connection with the press that made it possible for him to keep the needs of the unfortunate children before those more fortunate, wrote his daughter (Brace, C. & Brace E., 1894).

Such writings framed the way the public perceived children on the streets, underscoring the need for intervention. Nothing can replace the individual care and love that a family can, Brace wrote (Brace 1872). The way the media described the children as “born into sin” and likely to grow up to be “ulcers of society,” filled readers with pity and fear, which solicited their responses (Cook, 1995).

After CAS’ placing out program began, there were other groups that developed similar programs. However, while the New York press provided some coverage for those, it particularly favored CAS because it did its work without public funding (Cook, 1995). The Society benefited from such earned press. The newspapers could also be depended upon to cover Brace’s speeches. For example, *The New York Times* reported on one, saying, “The Problems of Child Saving in New-York City” was the theme of the opening paper at the Conference of Charities and Corrections (“New-York Child Saving,” 1895). Coverage in *The New York Times* was important, because the newspaper, which began publication as a penny paper in 1851, targeted readers who were cultured and intellectual, the type of people who served as opinion leaders in the community. It was also important because it helped sell the CAS’ vision for saving children to those who could contribute financially. And that was part of its success.

After the end of the program’s first year, CAS reported, “We have thus far sent off to homes in the country, or to places where they could earn an honest living, 164 boys and 32 girls... (CAS, 1854). The Society recognized the potential to draw more people to its cause through media. From 1873-1886, each year’s report included a drawing as its frontispiece, which featured five scenes. Each portrayed part of a child’s journey from the city streets to a lovely country home. This kept a picture of the society’s mission before the eyes of its publics (CAS, 1873).

The modern-day equivalent to press releases and story pitches got word out and prompted publications to write stories about upcoming CAS' events. A letter from agent Clara B. Comstock announced the date children would arrive in Rock Rapids, Iowa. It encouraged residents to open their home to a child (Comstock, n.d.). Prior to that, Comstock set up a local committee to screen potential parents. Such appointees generally included the local newspaper editor (Chiodo & Meliza, 2014). Therefore, such letters were even more likely to generate a news story. "Make a Choice of an Orphan," printed in another Iowa town's newspaper, bid readers to stop by a local church to select a child. It reported 500 circulars were sent out. It mentioned Comstock by name, so the article was most likely the result of the circulars, a letter, or a pitch from her. The article even included names and ages of each of the children ("Make a Choice of an Orphan," 1919).

While much of the media coverage the organization benefited from was accurate, there were also fanciful stories that brought attention to its cause. For example, in 1872, the *Northern Ohio Journal* published "An Extraordinary Story," which told about one young girl who was placed out. It reads almost like a fairy tale. While it was probably not entirely true, it and other stories like it, softened people's heart to the plight of street children in need of a home.

The society used boatloads of owned media over the years. A pamphlet from the early 1900s, *Don't You Want One Like This*, featured a fair-skinned blond-haired girl in ringlets (CAS, n.d.b). A handbill, signed by agent Robert N. Brace, son of Charles Brace, announced that a company of children were set to arrive in Decatur, Texas. It assured readers that the children gave promise of becoming respectable persons and a credit to the kind people who took them in (Brace, R., 1906). A broadside, signed by another agent, was used to let community members know that there were still several children available from a recently arrived train (Friedgen, n.d.).

News of CAS' Orphan Trains began to spread across the country. An article in a farming magazine brags, "All over the great West can be found to-day, honorable, hardworking young men who were taken from city docks and streets (Codrington, 1886). Another article, reprinted in a handful of newspapers, was attributed to the August 1873 issue of *Harper's Magazine*. It featured the drawing, "Work of the Children's Aid Society," the same one featured in CAS' annual report in following years. Using flowing, descriptive words, it romanticized taking in a child and was clearly targeted at women (*The St. Cloud Journal*, 1873).

Not all media was public. Some was used for record keeping purposes. The Society took photographs of children before they left on their journey. On the back of each photo, they recorded the names of the children and the agent accompanying them, what town the party was going to, and the corresponding case numbers. In one typical photo, the children are well-dressed, the boys stand erect, with hair neatly combed, and the girls, wearing bonnets, smile at the camera (CAS, 1909). Journals were another common piece of media. One agent, schoolteacher Anna Laura, who accompanied 160 groups of children during her lifetime, kept meticulous records of each trip (Bromberg, 2020). Henry Friedgen wrote in his journal about one poor mother's request that her child be placed in a country home (Friedgen, 1859). Another item used were contracts, signed by agents and those who took them in (Chiodo & Meliza, 2014). Such media artifacts and others proved to be invaluable years later. Riders and their families have accessed entire files, many belonging to CAS, in the search for answers about their histories (Zeitler, 2013). Zeitler reported one woman learned about her mother's journey by researching a small piece of paper, which read "L west 83." It was pinned inside her mother's coat the day she rode the train. Copies of letters adoptive parents sent to agents following up on a child's placement are another valuable media artifact.

While the New York Children's Aid Society program was successful, it was not without its bumps, critics—and even some bad press along the way. Catholic publications said the Society's purpose was to convert Papist children to Christianity (Langsam, 1964). Brace turned to media to counter that charge. In *The Dangerous Classes of New York and Twenty Years' Work Among Them*, Brace argued committees frequently included Roman Catholics (Brace, 1973). There were reports that the children being placed were juvenile delinquents. Others charged children were being abused and that agents were not following up on placements. CAS conducted in-house studies, but opponents did not trust the findings. So, Hastings Hornell Hart, a leader in progressive childcare, investigated (Holt, 1992). He focused on placements in Minnesota. His report absolved CAS for the most part. His findings were that children 12 and under did well and advised that CAS discontinue placing children older than that. His report said under those conditions, Minnesota was willing to take their full share of children (Hart, 1884). Such a report would have been noted by other states as well.

By 1909, media coverage of the CAS' placing out program had spread all the way from New York to the Pacific Coast. A full front-page article in the Sunday edition of *The Oregon Daily Journal* featured photographs of two governors who were placed out as children. It also included the stories of other children on the Orphan Trains who had gone on to live productive lives ("When the Waif is Given a Chance" 1909). Such stories stirred the hearts of people in the farthest states west to take children in, just as media coverage of the CAS program had done elsewhere. Throughout its years of placing out children, CAS continued to be a media "darling" in *The New York Times*, evidenced by its 1923 culminating article "Seventy Years of Children's Aid (Brace, 1923)."

## Conclusion

A great deal of evidence about the use of media regarding CAS' placing out of children has been presented here. And now the question presented at the beginning of this paper can finally be addressed. What part did media play in the successful Children's Aid Society program that placed New York City street children in country homes, by way of westward bound trains, from 1853 to 1929? The findings show that it played a vital role. Media was used to educate people about the plight of street children. Media presented the public with an answer to the problem through the writings of Charles Loring Brace and others. CAS further promoted the idea through owned media. Letters mailed, handbills distributed, and broadsides posted got the word out to the target audience, which included donors, potential donors and people who could be persuaded to take in a child. Earned media reported on the program and its successes, which helped the society reach a larger audience than it could on its own. Photographs, contracts, and agents' journals documented the process of placing out children. And in the end, the various types of media generated promoted CAS' cause, which resulted in 120,000 inner city children, with little hope for their futures, being successfully placed in homes. In addition, media artifacts left behind provided records that have helped riders and their descendants learn more about their family's history.

“The story of the Orphan Train is an important part of the history of the ‘Progressive Era’ (Chiodo & Meliza, 2014, p.145).” It helps us understand the social problems that came about during the industrial expansion (Chiodo & Meliza, 2014). Ultimately, the history of CAS' placing out program is significant in media history because it provided the foundation for modern foster care in the U.S.



In closing, it must be noted that this project is the result of careful and thorough study. The researcher had limited access to physical documents but was able to ascertain the authenticity of sources by examining where each was obtained from and whether it was a trustworthy source. Wording, photos, and styles were compared to other sources to determine if they were consistent with the period. The result of the thorough document analysis done in researching this topic is a faithful retelling of the facts based on evidence as interpreted by the historian. “Ours is an age of facts. It wants facts, not theories, and facts I have endeavored to set down in these pages. The reader may differ with me as to the application of them... But we shall not quarrel as to the facts themselves, I think. A false prophet in our day could do less harm than a careless reporter. That name I hope I shall not deserve (Riis, 1892, p. 246).”

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### **Final Project: Part 1: The Research Proposal**

The approach I have selected for my final project is the research paper option. My topic is the Orphan Train Movement during the mid-19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, which involved transporting street children from New York City to the countryside by way of trains, in hopes that farmers there would want to adopt them. Though my research is not based on a family artifact, it is based on a topic close to my heart, which is older child adoptions, meaning toddler age and older adoptees. My youngest daughter was nearly 12 when she joined our family. And my beloved father-in-law and his four siblings were raised by families in their communities who took them in when they lost both their parents, which had always amazed me, because, while it seems to have been quite common back then, such things rarely happen today. During the scholarly journal analysis for my last required journal entry, which focused on little magazines used to encourage people to adopt in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, I was reminded of a timeline I created on adoption several years ago that included the Orphan Train Movement, which happened about the same time, though I did not know much about it. However, the little research I did on the trains has had me curious about the movement ever since. So, it seems only fitting that for my final project I would focus on this historical event and seize the opportunity to dig into a topic I want to learn more about.

The research question I will be answering concerns what part media played in the placement of more than 120,000 older children in foster and adoptive homes in the U.S. and Canada by way of the New York Children's Aid Society's Orphan Train Movement from 1853 to 1929. While there are a lot of articles out there about adoption and about Orphan Trains, there does not seem to be much on the part that the media played, making the topic ripe for original

research. And such research has historical significance because the event marked the start of child welfare reforms and what would eventually become the U.S. foster care system.

I have already found a number of secondary sources for my research, including a documentary, a scholarly article and two print books. All appear to contain helpful information. Finding primary sources proved to be a bit more difficult, but I did find a few over the weekend including newspaper articles, a poster, and a photograph from the time period I will be examining. After a Zoom meeting with Maureen Barney, the Linfield University librarian who visited our class on March 22, I understand how to search the Library of Congress and the digital collection of the New York Public Library, so I am confident I will find ample resources to conduct thorough research and find the answer to my research question.

### Annotated List of Resources

Brace, C. L. (1932, March 4). Seventy years of children's aid by the sec of the Children's Aid Society. *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1923/02/04/105845585.html?pageNumber=157>

This article, published in the *New York Times*, was written by Charles Loring Brace, the secretary of the Children's Aid Society during the Orphan Train Movement. His writing appeared regularly in the newspaper in his column, Walks Among the New-York Poor; in Letters to the Editor; and, in this case, a bylined story. Originally a penny newspaper, its intended audience in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century was intellectuals rather than the masses. This source relates to my topic in that it puts Orphan Trains in context to the Children's Aid Society's many other activities.

Children Without Homes. (n.d.). [poster] Retrieved from <https://historydetectives.nyhistory.org/2018/07/separating-families-in-american-history-the-orphan-trains/>

The creator of this poster is not listed. However, this New-York Historical Society's Museum and Library website article reports the poster is located in the Children's Aid Society archives at the New-York Historical Society Library. The poster's target audience was merchants, farmers and others living along the route that the Orphan Train planned to stop at. It is a great example of one type of media used to publicize such events.

Cook, J. F. (1995). A history of placing-out: The orphan trains. *Child Welfare*, 74(1), 181. Retrieved from <https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy.linfield.edu/scholarly-journals/history-placing-out-orphan-trains/docview/213811300/se-2?accountid=12106>

Jeanne F. Cook is the author of this journal entry in *Child Welfare*, a peer-reviewed journal with a focus on children's issues. This article includes a section on how the media contributed to the public's understanding of Orphan Trains. Its bibliography points to 11 primary sources pertaining to media, which will be helpful in my research.

Found 605 Orphan Homes Last Year. (1912, November 27). *New York Times*. Retrieved from [https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1912/11/27/100383222.pdf?pdf\\_redirect=true&ip=0](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1912/11/27/100383222.pdf?pdf_redirect=true&ip=0)

There is no byline for this *New York Times*' article. The newspaper's primary audience in 1912 was intellectuals. For this article that would include Children's Aid Society donors, since it contains a summary of the organization's 60<sup>th</sup> annual report. This source relates to my research question in that it shows how the media was quick to publish the activities of the society, which include the Orphan Train Movement.

Gray, E. (1995). *The Orphan Trains*. [video] Retrieved from <https://crls.kanopy.com/video/american-experience-orphan-trains>



*The Orphan Trains* is a documentary produced by PBS. It includes interviews with people who rode on the trains to their new adoptive homes. The film provides a great deal of background information. It familiarizes viewers with vocabulary surrounding the topic, providing key words needed to launch a successful search about the trains.

Grossman, R. (2018, July 19). The orphan train: A noble idea that went off the rails. *Chicago Tribune*. [photo from Kansas State Historical Society] Retrieved from <https://www.chicagotribune.com/opinion/commentary/ct-perspec-flashback-orphan-train-children-separated-immigrants-0722-20180718-story.html>

Ron Grossman's article in the *Chicago Tribune* contains a photograph of children in front of a train. The photographer is unnamed. The original picture is housed at the Kansas State Historical Society, Grossman said. The article is critical of Orphan Trains and says children were available for indentured service. This is attributed to an unpictured flyer. If true, it would indicate the media did not always shine a positive light on the movement, which I will need to look into.

Holt, M. I. (1992). *The Orphan Trains: Placing out in America*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Marilyn Irvin Holt, the author of this book, is a historian that has served as a consultant for PBS. She worked at the Kansas State Historical Society as its director of publications in the past. The book is not available at the college library, so I put in a request for it through Summit on March 21. It looks like a helpful resource based on oral histories, newspaper articles and other records.

Langsam, M. Z. (1964). *Children West: A History of the Placing-out System of the New York Children's Aid Society, 1853-1890*. Madison, WI: State Historical Society of Wisconsin for Department of History, University of Wisconsin.

This historical book was written by Miriam Z. Langsam, a former professor of history at Indiana University. The description for it on the college website said it includes information about Charles Brace and the Children's Aid Society, so there is likely to be a plethora of useful information inside its covers. I put in a request for it through Summit on March 20.

NEW-YORK CHILD SAVING: Many Serious Problems Are Necessarily Involved. INFLUENCE OF THE TENEMENT HOUSE Mr. Brace Discusses the Subject Before the Conference of Charities and Corrections at New-Haven. (1895, May 26). *New York Times*. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.linfield.edu/hnpnewyorktimes/docview/95240357/fulltextPDF/3D1216EDD1F14283PQ/1?accountid=12106>

This *New York Times* report covers a conference that Charles L. Brace spoke at on behalf of the Children's Aid Society. There is no byline. All but two paragraphs focus on Brace's opening speech, showing the Children's Aid Society had the ear of the newspaper, which relates to my research question. The article contains quotes from the event, making it a useful primary source.